

V.1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

V.4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

V.5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—

V.6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

V.10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

V.11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

V.12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

V.13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

V.14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

V.15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

V.16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

V.17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

V.18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

V.19 "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

2:1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

V.2 'I **know** your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

V.3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake^(remained consistent) and have not grown weary.^(perfect tense)

V.4 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

1) "'But I have this against you...you have left your first **love**'"

a) 35 years earlier Paul wrote this: **Eph.1:15 (NP)**

Eph.1:15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,

16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers;

- b) **What happened** to the Ephesians? Why did they turn away from their love of God?
 - i) They had a **famous love for God** & man to – 35 years later – not so much
- c) The **love referred** to here is **not brotherly love** – it is **love for God**
 - i) Brotherly love is incorporated in love for God
- d) Is your love for Christ stronger now than ever before?
 - i) Maybe you **don't know** how much you love God!
 - ii) How can you tell if your love for Christ is real?
- e) Do you love other believers?

1 Jn.4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.
- f) It is impossible **to love God & not** love other believers
 - i) You may **need to mature** into love for others
 - ii) As you grow up you will love them more & more

1 Thes.4:9 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,

1 Jn.3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does **not practice righteousness** is not of God, **nor the one** who does not love his brother.

1 Jn.2:9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

*It does**n't** say he is **lost** – he is out of fellowship w/ God
- g) Do you want to do what God wants you to do **(NP)**

- h) Do you have a deep desire to do what God wants you to do?
- i) This doesn't mean that you always do His will but it is your desire
- Jn.14:15** "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
- Jn.14:21** "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."
- V.23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."
- i) Do you want to know Him better?
- i) The more you love Him – the better you want to know Him
- Phil.3:8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,
- *Paul was already saved so this means knowing Him better not being saved
- j) Do you **desire** to live a **pure life**?
- i) Living a clean life before your Savior becomes very important
- Phil.1:9** And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,
10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;
- k) Has the world lost some of its appeal?
- i) The values of the world become tainted
- ii) What the world holds in high esteem – you see as useless
- 1 Jn.2:15** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- *This doesn't mean you check out of the world
*You don't become a monk
*It does mean that you **clearly discern** what is temporary & what has eternal value<<<
- 1 Jn.2:15 (NP)**

1 Jn.2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

l) It is **impossible** to **love** the world's value system & love God too

i. No room for both love of world & love of God

1 Jn.2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

m) Do you have a **genuine longing** to be w/ Him

Phil.3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

2 Tim.4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

n) Your love for Him & your abiding joy are intricately tied together

1 Pet.1:8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

o) Some of the **meanest people** happen to be **believers**

i) They fool only themselves when they are **unloving** & think its ok b/c God understands

ii) It is sheer ignorance to go thru life w/ a **bad attitude toward others** – & think it's ok w/ God

iii) It doesn't matter if you are an **harsh employer,** an **employee,** a **mean husband,** **wife,** or **rebellious teenager**

iv) God has set a standard by which He will judge believers

1 Cor.13:1 (NP)

1 Cor.13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am **nothing**.

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it **profits me nothing**.

*I know a man who has given hundreds of thousands of dollars to his church – he should have kept it!

*He sees his job is to bully his employees – God will not accept that

V.4 x But I have this against you, that *you have left your first love*.

1) "you have left your first love"

a) The word "left" is an interesting word – sometimes used translated **divorce**

1 Cor.7:11 (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not **divorce**^(same word) his wife.

12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not **divorce**^(same word) her.

13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not **send**^(same word) her husband **away**.

b) The Ephesian's love **didn't** just slowly cool off – **they sent it away!**

c) They began to **substitute knowledge** & **discipline** for loving God

d) **You can** give enough money to God's causes that you feel a little superior

e) **You can** know enough Bible to become **condescending**

f) **You can** do enough good things that you somehow **feel special** to God!

g) But God doesn't buy it!

h) The world will make you cynical / angry / unloving

Mt.24:12(NIV) Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

i) The **world** has always had a **contaminating effect** on believers

j) That is why **Rom.12:2** was written **Rom.12:2 (NP)**

Rom.12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

*Don't let the world neutralize you on what is important

V.5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

1) "remember"

- a) They had a love for God at one time
- b) You may just be learning to love Him – no one starts off loving God
 - i) You start dead in trespasses & sins

2) "repent"

- a) Second step is to turn around
- b) Word literally means to change your mind – turn around
- c) The **world** is never told to repent – but the Church is told to repent

3) "do the deeds you did at first"

- a) Third step is to **be proactive** about your love for God
- b) Pray, study, look at grace God has shown you, love is an action – not feeling

4) "will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent"

- a) Do you know where the Church of Ephesus is now? I don't either!
- b) Where the church & city were is now a mosquito filled bog
- c) Stagnant marshes; and malaria and oblivion reign supreme
- d) Islam is the religion of the day – Turkey

V.6 'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

1) "the Nicolaitans"

- a) Irenaeus and Hippolytus take this sect to be followers of Nicolaus of Antioch, one of the seven deacons (Acts 6:5), a Jewish proselyte, who is said to have apostatized.
- b) Nicolaitans is combo of 2 words
 - i) Some understand from the meaning of the name ("conquering of the people")
 - (1) "νῖκος" – from **Nike** meaning – victory
 - (2) "λαοδικεύς" – from Laos – inhabitants/ people
 - (3) Victory over the people – clergy over laity – common people

V.7 (NP)

V.7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

1) "I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God"

- a) **Not** talking about salvation
- b) The people spoken of are already in heaven
- c) It must be a tree that offers full life as we can't know it any other way
- d) The **cure** for **backsliding** or growing cold is – **Keeping your eye on eternity**
- e) **Only** by keeping your **thoughts on heaven** you can stay spiritually healthy
- f) Listen to Paul when talking to Ephesian elders

Acts 20:24(NIV) However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may **finish** the race and **complete** the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

1 Pet.1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, **fix your hope completely** on the **grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

I CHALLENGE YOU TO SPEND THE WEEK THINKING ABOUT ETERNITY & not become more excited about Jesus Christ, more in love w/ Him. You can't do it. When you think about your future w/ Him eating from the tree of life which is in Heaven basking in His presence, totally free from pain, sorrow & death; surrounded by those whom you love and who love you, it is impossible, if you are normal, to not energized. That is why Scripture says to focus on those things.