

Jesus Evaluates His Churches, Part 3

Laying a Foundation for what's to come

Revelation Chapter 2:1-7 -- 02/21/2014

NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

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Today's TEXTs: Revelation 2:1-7

"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ²"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ⁴ Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

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

1. Notice that John is writing this to the "**Angel of Ephesus**" ... this is why we are interpreting those "Seven Angels of the Seven Churches" as Human Messengers, as we talked about in the last two weeks. Angel = Messenger. This "Angel" is the Messenger who brings God's Message to the People of God is a particular church, in this case Ephesus.

Messenger of God's Word ... the Pastor, or Lead Pastoral Elder, in this case ...

But, think about How God can you use to be his Angel of the Gospel to those around you.

Since the Pastor, Elders, Pastoral Elders are to be Examples of God's Message, bringing God's Message to you ... so it is, that you are to be God's Messenger of His Message (His Word) to those around you ... Be that Messenger that God wants you to be.

2. In each introduction to each of the 7 churches, Jesus Christ is introduced in Symbolic Language that draws from the Symbolic Imagery that we saw of Jesus Christ in Chapter 1.

'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands

This helps us see that He knows what's going on in each local church family ...

He walks in the midst ... in our midst ... the golden lampstands represents local churches

3. Jesus **knows** all of our Trials, Tribulations, that we **suffer when we Stand Up for Him and His Word** ... He knows it well ... and He does NOT shield us from it ...

²"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

He knows ... Our Faithful Service in His Name, for His Name's Sake is always noticed ... He does not and Will NOT Forget ... → Jesus is Encouraging this Local Church, BTW

4. **EVALUATION** → Jesus has the **Right To Evaluate** every local church family. He has the right to evaluate every individual believer, as well. They've been a great, busy, Ministry-Minded Church ... they've done lots of things up to this point for the Name of Christ ... BUT ...

⁴ **Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.** ⁵ **Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.**

Left your First Love → has everything to do with Being In-LOVE with Jesus Christ, intimately, personally and as a congregation. Instead of just going through the motions, being madly in love with Jesus is what Jesus is talking about here.

Being In Love with Jesus Christ has everything to do with Valuing Him above and more than anything or anyone on the planet, including our own lives –

see Matthew 10:27-39; Mark 8:35-38; Luke 14:25-27 →

Loving Jesus Christ more than anyone or anything . . . It is a Jealous LOVE ... remember God's Name is Jealous -- He is Jealous over us and for us.

Sometimes Ministry, doing Ministry Stuff can become our LOVE, our INTEREST ... we are so passionate about Church Ministry, Christian Ministry, etc... and be doing it well ...

Yet, Jesus Christ is left on the curb ... outside knocking on the door ...

Well, for Ephesus, it hadn't quite got to the "Kick Jesus to the Curb" but unless Jesus, intervened it would be just around the corner.

REPENT and DO the Things you used to do ... ??? what???

⁵ **Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.**

Change your thinking, change your heart about these things, focus back on being in love with Jesus and Ministry will flow from that relationship, NOT the other way around.

Do the things you used to do when you first came to Jesus → Pray a lot, Praise a lot, Read the Bible, and Share the Word and the Gospel with others, because you were so overjoyed, etc.

Removal of the Lampstand represents that their "LIGHT of JESUS CHRIST" in the area in which they live will be darkened (turned out, blown out) ... they would have NO GOSPEL Effectiveness anymore with their surrounding community

5. The **Nicolaitans** → Jesus HATES them ... what are they?

Niké – Laitan ... the Separation of the Clergy (upper class, high, exalted, better) from the Laity (the common people). This kind of CLASS Separation should never exist within the Church. Jesus said that we are all Brothers and Sisters in Christ, God being our Father.

But the Pope, Cardinals, Exalted Bishops ... above the common church folks ... that is the perfect picture of this ... Jesus says that He hates this. We need to pay attention to His Hate

6. Are you listening? → ⁷ **"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."**

If the people of that local church in Ephesus would listen to and obey Christ's Voice by His Spirit ... there would be a Great Reward for them. This does not have to do with Salvation, losing or gaining it ... it has everything to do with Rewards for Faithfulness. He wants us to succeed and be blessed in Him. We MUST be IN LOVE with HIM personally to be blessed.