

THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS
REV. 1:1-7

Introduction:

A. History of the church.

1. Paul visited it on his second missionary journey.
 - a. Acts 18:18-21.
2. Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. 18:18-19.
3. Apollos taught here with burning zeal. 18:25.
4. Paul taught here three years on his third missionary journey. Acts 20:31.
 - a. "for the space of three years."
5. Received letter from Paul. Ephesians.

B. The relationship of Christ to them.

- [the stars] 1. "unto the angel (messenger of the church write."
[the candle] 2. "he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand."
[the sun] 3. "who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS.

A. "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil."

1. know = oida - to perceive, or see, hence to have knowledge.
2. works = ergon - that which is brought into being by labor, the result of employment.
3. labor = kopos = wearisome labor, toilsome effort, a beating, as of the breast, wailing grief, being beat out.
4. patience = hupomone - a remaining under.
5. bear = bastazo - to lift, to carry, to carry a heavy burden.

B. "and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

[I Cor. 1:13-15]

1. tried = peirazo - essay, to make an attempt, make proof or trial off, to put to the test.
2. say = lego - to say before, to relate.
3. found = heurisko - to find by search, discover.
4. liars = pseudes - false, deceiving, lying.
5. Paul's last sermon had lasting effect, some 40 years later, Acts 20:17-38.

C. "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

1. borne = bastazo - to lift and carry a heavy load.
2. patience = hupomone - a remaining under, patient endurance, holding out.
3. laboured - kopiao - to be weary, faint.
4. fainted = kamno - to be weary or sick.

II. THE PROBLEM AT EPHEBUS. U4

A. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

1. "For this I have against you, you have abandoned your first love.
2. left = aphiemi - to send forth or away, to let go from one's self, to let go from one's further notice, care, etc. to leave, to let alone.
3. Mark 1:18, "And forsook their nets and followed Him." [Simon and Andrew.

B. It was during the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96) that John was banished to Patmos. He was released and died during the reign of Trajan. Tradition relates that at a very old age John, too feeble to walk, would be carried into the church and would admonish the members, saying, "Little children, love one another."

Thus it will be evident that the church at Ephesus was more than forty years old when Christ dictated this epistle. Another generation had arisen. The children did not experience that

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intense enthusiasm, that spontaneity and ardour which had been revealed by their parents when the latter first came into contact with the gospel. Not only this, but they lacked their former devotion to Christ. A similar condition occurred in Israel after the days of Joshua and the elders (Judg. 2:7,10,11) The church had departed from its first love.

"MORE THAN CONQUORERS" by: William Hendrikson, Baker Book House, 1940, page 61.

1. Our work may be accomplished because we love the work, or because we are loyal to the work as these Ephesians were. However, we will never please the Lord until we work because we love Him:
2. The second generation may love a building, or property, or church, or group, or class, or person, or memory, and in so doing, leave behind, let loose, let go of Jesus Christ.

III. THE SOLUTION TO THEIR PROBLEM. V5

A. This consisted of three things.

1. "remember therefore from whence thou art fallen."
 - a. remember = mnemoneuo - to call to ones own mind.
 - b. fallen = ekpipto - to fall out of, as a place.
2. "and repent."
 - a. repent = metanoeo - to change one's mind and purpose, to reform, to have a genuine change from worse to better, to not only stop an act but to change one's thinking about it.
3. "and do the first works."
 - a. first = protos - foremost, hence first in every aspect, place, order, time, or dignity.
 - b. works = ergon - that which is accomplished by labor.

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO REPENT.

A. "or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

1. quickly = tachos - quickness, swiftness, with speed.
2. remove = kineo - to move, to put in motion, to shake
3. place = topos - a place, a spot.

B. The degeneration that occurs because of forsaken love is swift and complete. It will not take ten generations to become heretical. The lump is leavened overnight.

1. There is no Ephesus now!
2. They never tolerated heresy, but without their first-love fervor, they died.

VI. THEIR HATRED WAS IN PROPER FOCUS. U6

A. "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

1. hatest = miseo - to hate, usually implying active ill-will in words and conduct.
2. deeds = ergon - work, action, business, labor.
3. Nicolaitans = Acts 6:5. Nic-o-la-us = Victor over the people. People Conquerors.
4. Psalm 139:21-24.

B. What is our first love?

1. Matt. 22:36, "Master which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, this is the first and great commandment."
2. Col. 2:18, "...that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."
3. When the church, God's people, forsake or leave God because He is no longer the object of "first love" they will always fall.

C. Why did they forsake or abandon their love of God?

1. They had become weary in well-doing.
 - a. Gal. 6:8,9.
 - b. The cure is to do good.

2. They had begun to labor for others.
 - a. Gal. 3:23, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men."
 - b. ek-psyche - out of the whole man.
 3. They had fallen out of love with Almighty God!
- B. The Ephesians hated the deeds of a certain sect of people in the church. They hated the deeds and work of these people so deeply that they openly spoke and worked to root them out. And lest some person point this out to them as being incompatible with the Christian faith, Jesus said, "Which I also hate."
1. Hate the doers of wicked workers.
 2. Actively oppose them.

VI. THE PROMISE OF GOD TO THE CONQUEROR.

- A. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
 1. Some have ears to hear, some don't.
 2. Churches plural, interchange letters.
- B. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
 1. overcometh = nikao - to be a victor.
 2. paradise = paradeisos - a park or garden.
- C. Those who "hear" the word of God and apply its truths by faith will be a part of the predestined plans of God.
 1. rev. 22:1
- D. Whatever this means, it teaches that God is not pleased with "saved only."
 1. If you don't serve God, worry!
 2. If you aren't baptized, worry!

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS.

- A. Paul's first visit.
 - 1. Acts 18:18-21.
 - a. Entered the synagogue.
 - b. Left Priscilla and Aquila.

- B. Apollos came to Ephesus.
 - 1. Acts 18:24.
 - a. His qualifications. v25
 - 2. Taught by Priscilla and Aquila. v26.

- C. Paul's second visit to Ephesus. Acts 19:1-
 - 1. They submitted to anabaptism.
 - a. v5.
 - b. Why? Not by proper authority.
 - c. The word grew mightily.
 - d. They overthrew idols.

- D. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders.
 - 1. Acts 20:17-38.

- E. The Ephesian letter.

