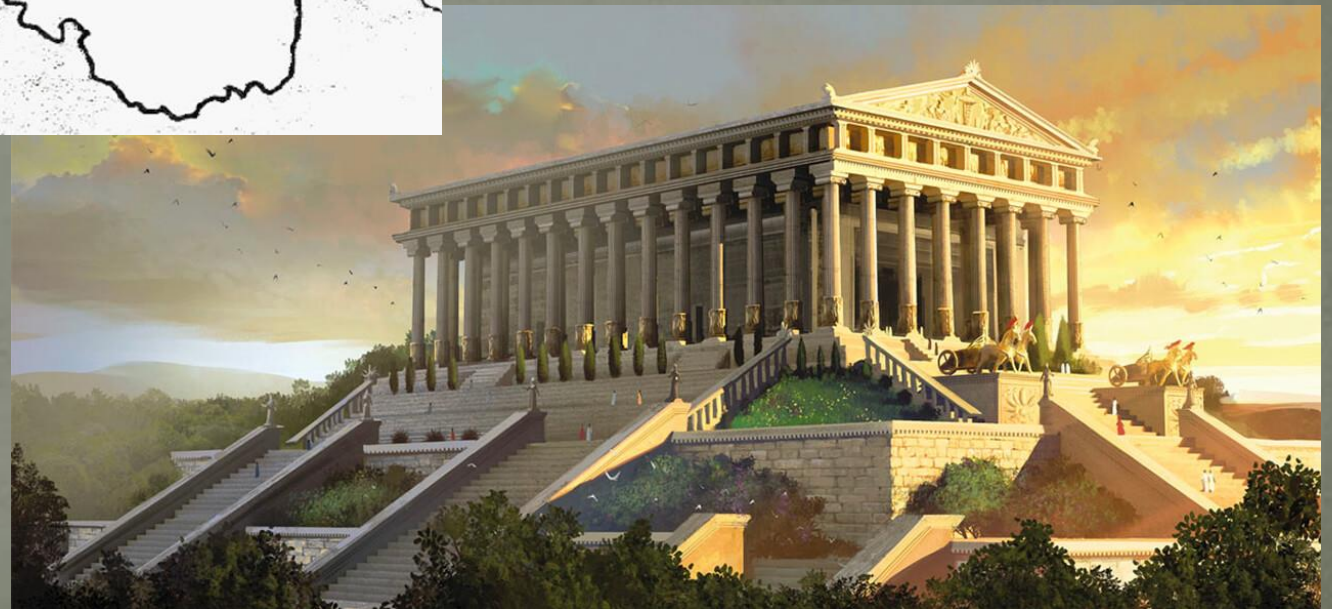


REVELATION

The Church at Ephesus:

Loveless faithfulness



To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how **you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.**

I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that **you have abandoned the love you had at first.** Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

Yet this you have: **you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:1-7

1. Christ reveals His control over the church

- A. Christ is active among the churches.
- B. Christ absolutely knows the churches.
 - ❖ Since He knows them fully, He can give an accurate evaluation of them.
- C. Christ also knows us this well.

2. Christ commends this church for three things.

A. The church at Ephesus rightly did not tolerate false teachers.



2. Christ commends this church for three things.

B. The church at Ephesus rightly rejected immoral living.

❖ Ephesians 2:8-10: For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

2. Christ commends this church for three things.

C. The church at Ephesus rightly endured in faithfulness.

Apparently, you have to eat healthy more than once to get in shape.



This is cruel and unfair.

2. Christ commends this church for three things.

C. The church at Ephesus rightly endured in faithfulness.

❖ Hebrews 12:1: Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us.

2. Christ commends this church for three things.

C. The church at Ephesus rightly endured in faithfulness.

❖ One may have the strength to take two steps but lack the endurance to run marathon.



2. Christ commends this church for three things.

C. The church at Ephesus rightly endured in faithfulness.

❖ Galatians 6:7-9: Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And **let us not grow weary of doing good**, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

2. Christ commends this church for three things.

Overall, the Ephesian church endured in ***faithfulness***, but they lacked one important attribute . . .

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

But I have this against you, that **you have abandoned the love you had at first.**

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

Revelation 2:4-5

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

A. What love did the Ephesians leave?

- ❖ Did they leave their love for God or their love for others?
- ❖ Can we truly say we love God as we should if we don't love the people He loves? Can we truly love people in a God-honoring way if we don't love God as we should?

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

A. What love did the Ephesians leave?

- ❖ First and foremost, we must love **God**.
- ❖ John 3:16/Romans 5:8: We must also show love to the lost as God did.
- ❖ We must also love God's people.

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

A. What love did the Ephesians leave?

- ❖ At one point, the Ephesians *did* love God's people as they should.
- ❖ Ephesians 1:15-16: For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and **your love toward all the saints**, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

A. What love did the Ephesians leave?

- ❖ But they must *continue* to grow in love.
- ❖ Ephesians 3:17-19: So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, **being rooted and grounded in love**, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to **know the love of Christ** that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

A. What love did the Ephesians leave?

❖ But they must *continue* to grow in love.

❖ Ephesians 4:15-16: Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, **makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

B. Why did the Ephesians leave this love?

- ❖ Perhaps they became complacent in their love for God.
- ❖ Perhaps they grew cold and calloused toward people after finding so many who were not what they claimed.
- ❖ Perhaps their goal in doctrinal and practical purity became more about proving themselves right than lovingly correcting those in need.

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

B. Why did the Ephesians leave this love?

❖ 2 Timothy 2:24-26: And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

C. How important is this love?

❖ “*But* they had so much doctrinal and practical purity! Doesn’t love sacrifice purity?!”

❖ Revelation 2:5: Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent**, and do the works you did at first. **If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.**

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

C. How important is this love?

- ❖ If they didn't repent of leaving this love,
 - ❖ It didn't matter that they **rejected false apostles**
 - ❖ It didn't matter that they **hated the works of the Nicolaitans**
 - ❖ It didn't matter that they **endured in faithfulness**

Christ would still remove their lampstand!!

- ❖ They were characterized by a **loveless faithfulness**.

3. Christ condemned their lack of love.

D. God still offered the opportunity to repent.

- ❖ God offered hope.
- ❖ They needed to repent and turn back to the loving works for which Paul commended them in Ephesians 1.

Conclusion: What do we do with what God has revealed?

We must not abandon our love for God and others.

- We can start extremely well, and that should be *commended*.
- But we must constantly be vigilant that we do *not abandon or drift* from this love.

NEXT TIME:
REVELATION 2:8-11

- The Church
at Smyrna