



Hillside Baptist Church Sunday Night Study

An Exposition of Revelation

Letter to the Church in Ephesus **Revelation 2:1-7**

An Overview of the Seven Letters

1. The Letters address both immediate issues within the specifically addressed church, but are also prophetic in their application to the church universal.
 - a. The Body of the letters correspond to the body of Revelation.
 - “It is in this sense that we can call the letters the literary microcosm of the entire book’s macrocosmic structure.” - GK Beale
 - b. The Structure of the Letters
 - Consists primarily of Seven Sections:
 1. A Command to write to an angel of a church
 2. A Self-Description of Christ
 3. A Commendation
 4. A Criticism
 5. A Call to Repentance
 6. Call to hear the Spirit
 7. Promise to the conquerors.
 - c. The churches find themselves in situations of:
 - Faithfulness, suffering, or compromise in persecution
 - Spiritual complacency, apathy, or vitality
 - Doctrinal Purity or Compromise
 - Moral purity or moral laxity
 - d. The Promises to the Conquerors (níkayō)
 - The Promises are eschatological
 - The Promises are to those who can hear (Born-again believers)
 - The Promises are found alone in the OVERCOMER - Jn. 16:33
 - Conquering is a metaphor for the Perseverance of the Saints
(1 John 5:4-5; Rev. 21:7-8)

The Letter to the Church In Ephesus

I. The Opening Address and Self Identification of Christ (2:1)

A. To the Angel of the church in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-41; 20:17-38)

B. The Words of Him (Son of Man - Jesus)

1. Who holds the seven stars in his right hand (1:16a)

2. Who walks among the seven golden lampstands (1:13)

*Establishes the prophetic aspect of the letters, "Thus says the Lord"

II. Word of Commendation (2:2-3, 6)

A. I know your works, your toil, and your patient endurance

B. How you cannot bear with those who are evil (Acts 20:28-32)

1. but tested those who call themselves apostles and are not (1 Jn. 4:1)

2. Found them to be false (2 Cor. 11:12-15)

3. You hate the work of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

- Nicolaitans taught that you could live a double life as a Christian. Integrate yourself with the world publicly, devote yourself to Christ privately.

C. Patiently enduring and bearing up

1. For My Name's Sake (Matthew 5:12-13)

2. And you have not grown weary (Isaiah 40:31; Hebrews 12:3-5)

* What incredible commendation as a church! Hardworking, doctrinally sound, discerning, faithful and perseverant all for the name of Christ.*

III. Word of Criticism (2:4)

A. But I have this against you

B. You have abandoned the love you had at first (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

1. Love for God? - Jeremiah 2:2

2. Love for Each Other? - 1 John 3:16-18

3. Love for Witnessing? - Matthew 24:10-14; Acts 19:10

* They key to understanding this first love which has been abandoned is the introduction and warning found in the letter. The statement that Christ “walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands” is intended to remind the Ephesian church that their primary role in relation to their Lord should be that of a light of witness to the world, not hermits in isolation.

III. A Call to Repentance and Warning of Judgment (2:5)

A. Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen (Being Christ’s light to the perishing)

B. Repent and do the works you did at first (Bold and Passionate witnesses)

C. If Not...

1. I will come to you

2 and remove your lamps and from its place

...unless you repent.

* This was precisely God’s judgment on Israel, and its remains his judgment on the true Israel his church (Isa. 42:6-7; 49:6). The entire purpose of our existence is for the proclamation of the light and glory of Christ our King and God our Father (Matt. 5:14-16; Mark 4:21). If you will no be faithful with the light, the one in the midst of the lamps will remove the extinguished church.

IV. A Call to Hear and Look to the Promise (7)

A. He who has an ear, left him hear what the Spirit says **to the churches..**
(Ezek. 3:27; Matt. 13:9) - Words will comfort the believer and have a judicial effect on the unbeliever.

B. To the one who conquers (Rev. 21:7)

1. I will grant to eat of the tree of life (Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2, 14)

- The lampstand in the tabernacle represented the tree of life and the presence of God.

2. Which is in the paradise of God (Rev. 22:1-5)

Application

1. Doctrine understood is only as good as doctrine applied.
2. There is no such thing as private Christianity.
3. Any mindset, action, or attitude that causes us to hide the light of Christ from the world is anti-Christ.
4. If we bury our talents they will be taken.
5. Our love for witnessing is directly tied to our love for Christ.