

# “The Seven Churches: Ephesus”

(Rev 2:1-5)



Truth Matters Church, Inc.

# Recap of Context



- ∞ The Father gave vision to □ Jesus □ angel □ John
- ∞ Both the Father and the Son speak throughout chapter 1
- ∞ Both the Father and the Son are coming
  - ∞ Jesus 1<sup>st</sup>: then the Father at the very end
  - ∞ JESUS IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS
    - ∞ EVERY EYE will see Him
- ∞ The Father is the Highest Authority and gave His Son all authority
  - ∞ Jesus is the Faithful Witness
- ∞ John described in His vision what he saw
  - ∞ 7 golden lampstands
  - ∞ The glorified Son of Man standing in the middle of the lampstands
  - ∞ The posture of Jesus is ready to Judge and Reward and wage war

# Reminder of Approach



- ∞ We're taking it chronologically as it is given
- ∞ We're viewing it with a lens to a literal meaning and fulfillment
- ∞ We're keeping the direct intended recipients in view
  - ∞ Present to John: 7 churches; Future to John: 144K, 2 Witnesses, certain saints
- ∞ Rev 1:19 gives us the method in interpreting this book ("write the things you have seen")
  - ∞ "the things which are" (present tense)
    - ∞ The entire book of Revelation was written to the 7 first century churches and beyond
    - ∞ There are 7 unique letters to each church
    - ∞ But as a whole, the entire book of Revelation was written to the 7 churches, collectively
    - ∞ Just like the other books and epistles, although they weren't written to us, it was written for us
      - ∞ It's truths and prophecies applies and are applicable to us
  - ∞ "the things which will take place after these things" (future prophecy)
    - ∞ Has prophecies that extend beyond the 7 churches to the very end of time
    - ∞ Has prophecies that will be fulfilled after what was written concerning the 7 churches have been fulfilled (we can't get to chapter 4 in this vision, until what was written to the 7 churches in ch. 2-3 have been fulfilled)

# The Seven Churches of Revelation

TURKEY

SYRIA

LEBANON

ISRAEL



# A brief look into the church in Ephesus



- ∞ The apostle Paul wrote to them, the book of Ephesians
  - ∞ Ephesians was a "prison epistle" along with Philipians, Colossians, and Philemon
- ∞ Paul made 2 visits. The 1<sup>st</sup> visit was during his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey in Act 18
  - ∞ Paul spent time there reasoning and tried persuading the Jews in the synagogue
  - ∞ Paul left Priscilla and Aquila there
  - ∞ Sometime after Paul left, Apollos arrived on the scene ("mighty in the Scriptures", only acquainted with the baptism of John)
    - ∞ Priscilla and Aquila helped him understand the way of God more accurately
- ∞ It's likely that Paul, Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos were instrumental in strengthening the church in Ephesus
- ∞ Paul came to Ephesus for another visit in Acts 19 (3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey)

# A brief look into the church in Ephesus



- ∞ By Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> visit (2+ years), Apollos left
  - ∞ It was during this visit that some disciples first received the Holy Spirit (Act 19:1-7)
  - ∞ Paul again tried to reason and persuade the Jews in the synagogue for 3 months
  - ∞ Paul withdrew from them and taught both Jews and Greeks for 2 years
  - ∞ Paul performed great miracles (even handkerchiefs or aprons were anointed)
- ∞ In Acts 19, we get some characteristics of Ephesus
  - ∞ People were demon possessed (v. 13-17)
  - ∞ Many practiced sorcery (v. 18-20)
    - ∞ Books worth 50K pieces of silver were burned
  - ∞ The temple of Artemis of the Ephesians [more about Artemis]
    - ∞ Paul's preaching of the gospel caused a disturbance and uproar
    - ∞ Paul's tearful farewell is recorded for us in Acts 20

# Artemis of the Ephesians



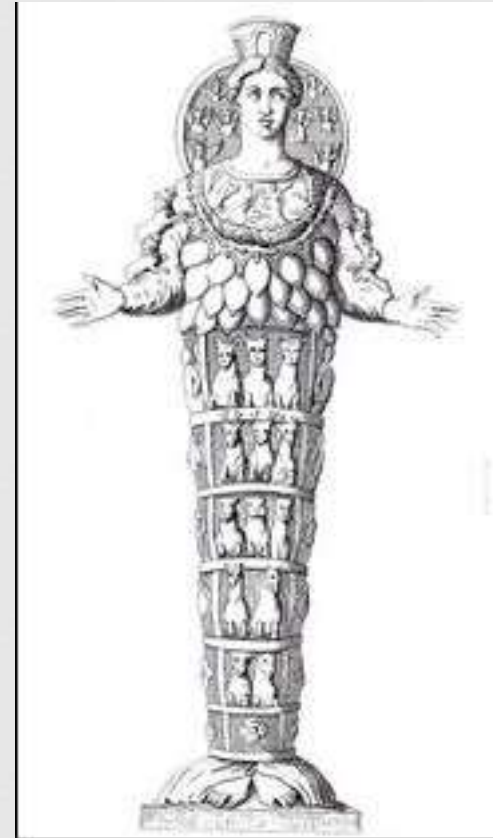
- ∞ Artemis (Greek) or Diana (Romans) in Greek mythology is the goddess of the hunt
  - ∞ "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:34)
    - ∞ The crowd who rioted shouted this for 2 hours!
    - ∞ "Great is Diana of the Ephesians"
  - ∞ Born by Zeus and Leto
  - ∞ Apollo was her twin brother
- ∞ Artemis was said to be the embodiment of the moon
- ∞ Apollo was said to be the embodiment of the sky



# Artemis of the Ephesians



- ∞ Her statue presents her with many breasts
  - ∞ Great Mother of life
- ∞ Artemis was aka the goddess of silver
  - ∞ Hence silver shrines, idols
  - ∞ Claimed to have rode a silver chariot
- ∞ Artemis was aka as the “Lady of the wild”
  - ∞ Wild life was sacred to her
  - ∞ Today’s “save the animals” effort
    - ∞ “animal rights”





# Artemis of the Ephesians



∞ Ephesus was regarded as the guardian of the temple of the Great Artemis and it was believed her image fell to Ephesus from the sky:

Acts 19:35 After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, “Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that **the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from heaven?**”

∞ Artemis’ temple was one of the seven wonders of the world

∞ Formerly to **Cybele** the goddess of abundance

∞ aka “Great Mother”

∞ This temple was destroyed by a Flood and was reconstructed ~7th century BC

∞ ~120 years to construct this temple



Temple of Artemis - Ephesus (as it used to be during ancestry)

# 7 Wonders of the Ancient World



# Scripture Reading



Revelation 2:1-7 (NASB)

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:

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;

3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

# Scripture Reading



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. 6 Yet this you do 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 grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

# Exposit Rev 2:1a



1a “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

- ☞ “to the angel” or “aggelos” is to an angel not a human being
- ☞ There was an angel appointed over each of the 7 churches
- ☞ This letter was not only written to the church, but the angel assigned over the church in Ephesus



# Exposit Rev 2:1b



1b The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

- ☞ “the One” is of course the risen Son of Man in John’s vision from chapter 1
- ☞ “who holds” and “right hand” is a reference to power and authority
- ☞ “seven stars” = 7 angels
- ☞ seven golden lampstands” = 7 churches
- ☞ “says this” directly from the Lord’s lips



TRANSLATION: Jesus has power and authority over the 7 angels over the 7 churches and is walking among them ready to render a verdict and either discipline or bring reward

# Exposit Rev 2:2



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;

- ∞ "deeds" can be rendered works or behavior
- ∞ "toil" is kopos from koptō which means wearisome labor
- ∞ "perseverance" can be rendered patient endurance
- ∞ "tolerate" is bastazō which means to bear or to carry
- ∞ "evil men" of that town, including the "false apostles"
- ∞ "test" is peirazō which means trial or experiment
  - ∞ "lead us not into temptation (peirasmos)" shares the same root word peíra
- ∞ The false apostles were put through a trial or experiment and were found to be false
- ∞ Who is this initially addressed to?
  - ∞ Clue v.1

# Exposit Rev 2:3



3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary

☞ "you" Who is this now addressed to?

☞ This is now addressed to believers

☞ How do we know? Angels do not persevere nor endure for Christ's Onoma nor grow weary. Believers do

☞ From here we get a flavor that there is a dual audience in these letters

☞ The **angel** assigned over that church

☞ And **believers** who are in that church

☞ This helps explain why Paul said in Eph 6 "our struggle is not against flesh and blood"



# Exposit Rev 2:4



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

∞ "I" is the Lord Jesus the One

∞ "you" is speaking of believers (but it could also mean that angel)

∞ "have left" is future-tense, prophetic

∞ This is prophecy sometime after 95/96AD

∞ "left" is *aphiēme* which means to let go from oneself

∞ "first love" is *prōtos agapē* which means first and foremost love

∞ We use this in our vernacular, this person was my "first love"

∞ TRANSLATION: Just like Jesus told Peter, you will deny Me three times

∞ Jesus is telling these believers in that church (and likely the angel over it) that they will let themselves go from their first love sometime after the writing of this letter

∞ It's possible that the angelic rebellion extended beyond the Fall

# Exposit Rev 2:5a



5a Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first;

- ☞ “Therefore remember from where you have fallen” has allusions to an angel falling from their rightful place (hence I believe this is addressed to that angel too)
- ☞ Allow me to show an example of this from the OT...

# Exposit Rev 2:5a



Isaiah 14:12-18 (Many believe this is a vision of Satan)

12 “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn!

You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!

13 “But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven;

I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly

In the recesses of the north. 14 ‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’

∞ I would agree that this vision is describing Satan’s fall from his position

∞ But I do want to argue that it’s not just about Satan...

# Exposit Rev 2:5a



Isaiah 14:12-18 (Many believe this is a vision of Satan)

15 “Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit. 16 “Those who see you will gaze at you, They will ponder over you, saying, ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, 17 Who made the world like a wilderness And overthrew its cities, Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’ 18 “All the kings of the nations lie in glory, Each in his own tomb.

- ∞ I believe this vision is concerning both the spiritual and physical realm
- ∞ In the spiritual it's describing Satan's fall from his place of authority, this plays itself out in the physical
- ∞ In the physical it's describing many antichrists, including the Antichrist who when he arrives on the scene will make the earth tremble, including kingdoms, make the world like a wilderness, overthrow cities, and keep prisoners in bondage
- ∞ Back to Rev 2:5a...

# Exposit Rev 2:5a



- ∞ Therefore, when Jesus said “Therefore remember from where you have fallen” I believe is also directed to the angel assigned over the church in Ephesus
  - ∞ SIDE TRUTH: Angels are assigned over cities
- ∞ But when Jesus goes on to say “repent and do the deeds you did at first” I believe is addressed to the believers in Ephesus
  - ∞ How do we know that? Angels do not have an opportunity to repent; only man
- ∞ “repent and do the deeds you did at first” [more on this]