

Losing Your First Love Revelation 2:1-7

Background

Ephesus: Location

- One of the most important cities in proconsular Asia.
- Situated on the Aegean Sea.
- Major commercial export for Asian markets.
- Three great trade routes converged at the city: From the Euphrates by way of Colossae; from Galatia through Sardis; and from the Meander Valley to the south and east.
- Vast library: The Library of Celsus.

Ephesus: Religious

- Home of one of the seven wonders of the world: Temple of _____ or _____.
 - 4x the size of the Parthenon in Athens.
- Paul visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19) where he dropped off _____ and _____.
- Priscilla and Aquila were to meet and disciple _____ in this city (Acts 18:24).
- Paul was opposed by _____, the silversmith, in this city over the issue of idol worship and economics (Acts 19:23-41).
- Paul visited here once again on his _____ missionary journey and stayed for three months teaching and preaching in the synagogue (Acts 19:8).
- Ephesus was Paul's last stop before heading to Jerusalem and then to _____. He warned the elders about _____-coming into the flock there (Acts 20).
- Paul placed _____ in Ephesus as its pastor (1 Tim. 1:3)

- Cite of the Third Ecumenical Counsel of 431 which dealt with the issue of Christ's nature and the issue of _____ being called *Theotokos* (God-bearer).
- Mary and the Apostle _____ were traditionally said to have lived in Ephesus after his exile to Patmos.

Our biblical text – “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write...”

In the following messages to the churches a pattern develops. It is as follows:

1. A _____ of Christ Jesus.
2. A _____
3. A _____
4. An _____
5. And a _____

The Description: (v. 1) "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who _____ the seven stars in his right hand and _____ among the seven golden lampstands. (Rev. 2:1 NIV)

Q. What is significant about the description of Jesus as it applies to this church?

A. “Him who holds the seven stars in his right hand” =

“He walks among the seven golden lampstands” =

A Commendation: (vv. 2-3, 6) ² “I _____ your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I _____ that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have _____ those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them false. ³ You have _____ and have endured hardships for my name and have not _____.” (Rev. 2:2-3 NIV)

⁶ “But you have this in your favor: You _____ the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” (Rev. 2:6 NIV)

Definition: Nicolaitans

The early church fathers (Irenaeus of Lyon, Tertullian of Carthage, and Hippolytus of Rome, (c. A.D 100 – 300) believed that the Nicolaitans were either followers of Nicholas of Antioch, one of the seven _____ appointed by the church in Acts 6:5 or used his name for group validation.

Acts 6:5 tells us that Nicolas was a convert to Judaism and then to Christianity, but he was believed to have deserted or apostatized from the faith – encouraging people to live a life of _____ sensuality and indulgence, i.e. sexual immorality and participating in the feasts to other gods. He is often associated with the spirit of Balaam (Nu. 22:7; 2 Pt. 2:15-16)

Q. Overall, how is this church described?

A.

1. They were a _____ church.
2. They were an _____ church.
3. They were a _____ church.
4. They were a _____ church.

A Condemnation: (v. 4) ⁴ “Yet I hold this against you: You have _____ the love you had at first.” (Rev. 2:4 NIV)

Q. What does this mean?

- A.
1. Organization over _____.
 2. Tasks over _____/_____.
 3. Work over _____ [Martha/Mary]

An Exhortation: (v. 5) ⁵ “_____ how far you have fallen! _____ and _____ the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.” (Rev. 2:5 NIV)

Q. What three things are they to do to correct the situation?

- A.
1. _____ how it was in the beginning.
 2. _____. Change how you are thinking about the Church and Christ Jesus.
 3. _____. Go back and do the simple things that brought a sense of intimacy and joy with the Lord and with others.

Q. What does it mean for Jesus to remove their lampstand?

- A. He will remove their _____ - their church.

A Promise: (v. 7) ⁷ “Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is _____, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the _____ of God.”
(Rev. 2:7 NIV)

Q. Victorious doing/over what?

- A. 1. It can mean victorious in _____ the specific condemnations given in the text.
2. It could be the general usage of victorious connected with 1st John 5:4-5: a _____ to our precious faith.

⁴ “...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 Jn. 5:4-5 NIV)

Q. What is the Genesis 2/3 citation connected to?

- A. A _____ . Remember that Adam and Eve were cut off from the tree of life after they had sinned. But now, Jesus sovereignly holds out to us the _____ and _____ to be restored to that past place of privilege and eternal life the way it was intended (without sin, in perfect fellowship with God).

Our Application: