

Week #1 - To the Church in Ephesus



2 *“To the angel (messenger) of the church in Ephesus write:*

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

⁴Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

- Paul started the church in Ephesus and left Apollos, Aquila, and Priscilla there to continue what he had started. It is traditionally taught that the Apostle John came there and led the Church before being arrested.

Paul’s Letter to the Church in Ephesus

Chapter 4 Verses 1 - 5

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Chapter 4 Verses 14 - 16

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Chapter 5 Verses 1 – 3 & 6-7

Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.

Chapter 6 Verses 10 – 17

The Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

I. What is Well Done

- A. Hard work
- B. Perseverance
- C. Does not tolerate wicked people
- D. Tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.
- E. Endured hardships for my name
- F. Not grown weary

II. What is Missing?

You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵Consider how far you have fallen!

- A. The love they had at first – what is that?
- B. Why does it matter so much, considering all they are doing correctly?
- C. What does this tell us about what Jesus values most?

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Matthew 7:21-23

1. They acknowledged Jesus as Lord.
2. They were working to carry out the mission of the Church.

3. They performed signs and wonders.

4. What were they doing wrong?

III. What is Surprising

A. "If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place."

1. What does "remove your lampstand from its place" mean?

2. Does it contradict our imaging of the loving and forgiving Jesus?

B. "You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." – Jesus hates?

1. Who were the Nicolaitans? – Followers of Nicolas, declared himself a Prophet while going against the teachings of Jesus

2. What was the underlying false teaching?

3. Jesus came to set us free from the Mosaic law; therefore, Christians were allowed to do whatever they wanted.

4. Temple prostitutes were used as part of 'worship.'

5. Their behavior was immoral, even by pagan standards

C. Did Jesus hate the Sinners or the Sin? What's the difference?

D. Why did do you think Jesus speak so strongly against this?