

Where Is Your LOVE?

Revelation 2:1-7

Matthew 22:34-40

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

A Vision of Christ

- Revelation 1:12-17

EPHESUS: The City

- Located in west Asia at the mouth of the Cayster River about 5km from the coast.
- The greatest city of the province.
- Emperor gave the city the title “Supreme Metropolis of Asia”.
- Great commercial center because of its harbor and a network of four major roads leading to other cities in the province.
- Host of great athletic events - similar to Olympic games.
- City theater held up to 25,000. (See Acts 19:29)
- Temple of the Goddess Diana – one of the seven wonders of the world. (Acts 19:27, 35)
- The worship of Diana was “religious immorality at its worst.”
- Statue (idol) making was a big source of income for the city.
- The city was deeply involved in magic. (Acts 19:18-19 – the books were worth 50,000 days of workers’ wages.)
- Paul established the church of Ephesus on his third missionary journey. (Acts 19-20)
- Paul warned the elders of coming of false teachers. (Acts 20:17-32) Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus to confront false teachers. (1 Timothy 1:3-4)
- Afterward, Ephesus became the residence of John before and after his exile.

The Master’s Title (Revelation 2:1)

- Christ is “the One who holds the seven stars” in **HIS** hand. Pastors are **gifts** that are given to the church by Christ Himself. (Ephesians 4:11-13)
 - ★ This picture signifies Christ’s authority, control, possession, and provision for His messengers.
 - ★ The messengers have the responsibility to lead and teach God’s Word. (James 3:1; 2 Timothy 2:15; 4:1-4; Hebrews 4:13; 13:17)
 - ★ Christ has **all authority** in heaven and earth. (Matthew 28:18; John 17:2)
 - ★ Christ will provide for and protect His ministers but the ministers must be submissive and completely dependent upon their LORD.



- ★ We ought not confine “stars” to only pastors. All **members** are to shine as stars (Daniel 12:3; Philippians 2:15)
- Christ is **walking** “in the midst” of His Churches. (Cf. 1:13) He is **active** in His Churches.
 - ★ We can take this as a **warning** and as **comfort**.
 - ★ Christ is **with** us (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5-6) **and** sees **all**. (Hebrews 4:13)

The Master’s Commendation (Revelation 2: 2, 3, 6)

- Christ tells **all** of His churches, “**I KNOW YOUR WORKS.**”
 - ★ Christ **knows** with FULL knowledge all that is happening in His churches – In fact, He sees the **HEART** of the church. (1 Samuel 16:7)
 - ★ Christ knows, sees, and tests the motives of His churches. (Jeremiah 17:10; Revelation 2:23; Psalm 7:9; Proverbs 17:3)
- Ephesus was a **SERVING** (“doing”) church. (v. 2)
 - “works” – deeds, actions, or tasks.
 - Churches are to be BUSY working. (Consider 1 Corinthians 15:58)
 - “labor” (κόπος) - working until one becomes weary. Paul uses the same word in Colossians 1:29. See 1 Cor 15:58; Hebrews 6:10; Rev 14:13.
 - ★ Our labor is not to be for ourselves but for the Lord. (v. 3; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17, 23; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
- Ephesus was a **STEADFAST** church.
 - “perseverance” (ὑπομονή) – the ability to **endure**; to remain under **pressure** or **pain** for a long time. “In the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his **deliberate** purpose and his **loyalty** to faith and piety, by even the **greatest** trials and sufferings.”
 - They persevered in the face of severe trials, tribulations, and persecution.
 - They did not **GIVE UP**. (Galatians 6:9)
- Ephesus was a **TESTING** church. (v. 2; Acts 20:28-31; 1 John 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:21-22)
 - Satan has **false** ministers. (2 Corinthians 11:1-4, 12-15)
 - Christ warned us that there will be **many** false teachers. (Matthew 24:11)
 - Christ warned us that **many** would be **deceived**.
 - False doctrine will cause **LOVE** to grow cold. (Matthew 24:12)
 - ★ Three areas of testing:
 - ❶ The purity of their **doctrine**. (1 John 4:1-2)
 - ❷ The manner of their lives. (1 John 3:10; 4:8; Jude; Matthew 7:15f)
 - ❸ The audience they appeal to. (1 John 4:5-6)
- Ephesus was an **INTOLERANT** church. (v. 2; see Ephesians 4:27)
- Ephesus was an **UNCOMPROMISING** church with the world. (v. 6)
 - Nicolaitans seduced believers to compromise with the world.

The Master's Criticism (Revelation 2:4)

- They had **LEFT** (not lost) their first **LOVE**. Their hearts had become hard! (See Hebrews 3:12-13)
- "left" is "to leave, forsake, depart". The point is that this is something done by the Church and the Church is responsible.
- **GREATEST COMMANDMENT**: Matthew 22:36-40
- Above ALL we are to love God with **all** of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 30:6; 1 John 5:2-3;)
- Christ calls His followers (Christians) to love Him above our spouses, children, and family. (Luke 14:26-27; Matthew 10:37)
- Paul compared knowing Christ as a PRIZE that made everything else in the world **dung** or **rubbish**. (Philippians 3:8)
- ★ **WHAT WE DO IS IMPORTANT, BUT WHY WE DO IT IS THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE!**
- We **work** because we **love** God.
- LOVE IS AN ACTION WORD. (1 John 3:16-18)

- ★ Our love for God is demonstrated in our obedience to His commandments. (John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:10, 13-14; 1 John 2:3-5; 5:3)
- ★ Our love for God is demonstrated in our love for our brothers and sisters. (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:10, 16-18; 4:7-8, 11-12; **1 John 4:20-21**; 5:1-2)
- As the letters progress we see Christ walking "in the midst" of His churches but at the end we find Him **outside** His church knocking!
- If we do not love then all our works and obedience are NOTHING. (1 Cor 13:1-8)

The Master's Instructions (Revelation 2:5)

- **REMEMBER** (meditate, remember ALL that God has done; literally "keep on remembering")
- **REPENT** (change your mind, will, and ways) (Luke 13:1-5; Mark 1:14-15) (STOP what you are doing and turn back to the **written** Word of God.)
- **REPEAT** (do again your works **as in the beginning**; see 1 Thess 1:3)
 - ★ A meaningful relationship with Christ through Bible study, meditation, devotion to prayer, meaningful worship, church membership, **love for the brethren**. (All of this is called "abiding in Christ" (John 8:31; 13:34-35; 15:1-10, 1 John 2:6; 2 John 9; Jude 20-21)

The Master's Warning (Revelation 2:5)

- "I will come" Christ is warning that He will come to His Church (locally) to discipline them – even to **remove** their lampstand.

The Master's Instructions (Revelation 2:7)

- The SPIRIT speaks to ALL churches.
 - Christ warned us to be **careful WHAT** we hear. (Mark 4:23-24)
 - Christ warned us to be **careful HOW** we hear. (Luke 8:18; **Acts 17:11**)
- **HEARING = DOING** – Matthew 7:24, 26.
- Only **FOOLS** hear without doing! (Matt 7:26; James 1:22; Hebrews 2:1)
- Fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." or literally, "No God" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1)

The Master's Promise (v. 7)

- Christ's promises go out to **OVERCOMERS**.
- **ALL** true Christians are overcomers. (1 John 5:4; Matthew 1:21)
- How does one overcome?
 - ① By FAITH in Christ. (1 John 16:33; 1 John 4:4)
 - ② By FAITH in the WORD of GOD. (Romans 10:17)
- Christ's promise is **ETERNAL LIFE!** – Eternal life is to those who **persevere** to the end! (Heb 3:6, 14; 6:11; 10:23; Matt 10:22; 24:13; Col 1:23)
- "Tree of Life" is ETERNAL LIFE. (Cf. Genesis 2:9)

Have WE Heard What the Spirit?

IF MY PEOPLE . . . (2 Chronicles 7:13-14)

When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,
IF
My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
(2 Chronicles 7:13-14)