

# The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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## Session 4

### Section 2: The Letters to the Churches – Rev 2&3 EPHESUS: Returning to Our First Love (Rev. 2:1-7)

#### I. THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS

##### A. Background

1. Ephesus was the capital and largest city of the Roman province of Asia Minor with a population of approximately 250,000 people and a public theatre seating 25,000. It was a financial center in being a leading seaport on the Mediterranean Sea. This seaport city was known for immorality. Ephesus was also a major center for idolatry in Asia. The central place of worship in the city was the great temple of Diana, which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (425 feet long, 220 feet wide, 60 feet high held up by 127 marble pillars). It combined religion and sexual immorality. The silversmith trade was prosperous because of the demand for gold, silver and bronze idols of Diana to be used as one's household deity (Acts 19:25).
2. This church was a revival center for Asia (Acts 19:26) being the third most prominent church in the Book of Acts after Jerusalem and Antioch. It was a lampstand bringing light to many. Paul established a church on his third missionary journey (Acts 19-20) which he used as his ministry base for three years (Acts 20:31). The people responded so fervently to the gospel that the market for purchasing idols dramatically reduced. The once fervent worshipers of Diana had become red hot in their devotion to Jesus. The revival resulted in many coming to Jesus with such extreme devotion that they burned magic books worth 50,000 silver coins or drachmas (Acts 19:13-20). A drachma was an average day's wage (\$100/day would have been \$5,000,000).

3. Paul prophesied to the elders warning them that false teachers would rise up as `wolves' that would harm the church (Acts 20:17-38). After Paul left, Timothy became the primary apostolic leader (I Tim. 1:1-3). In approximately 65 AD, John became the primary apostolic leader there until his imprisonment on the island of Patmos about 60 miles from Ephesus. At this time, Jesus' mother Mary also lived there. John wrote Revelation about forty years after Paul established the church. The church of Ephesus was the recipient of 8 NT books (Gospel of John, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation). Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus.
- B. Revelation of Jesus
1. He holds the 7 stars in His right hand
  2. He walks in among the 7 lampstands
- C. Affirmation
1. I know your deeds/works
  2. Your toil – beating of the breast in sorrow, labor resulting in weariness.
  3. Your patient endurance
  4. Cannot bear with those who are evil
  5. You've tested those who call themselves apostles and are not (I have not sent them!) but you found them false.
    - a. Apostle = Sent
    - b. Found them – research, examined, tested, acted like the Bereans (Acts 17:10)
  6. Your patient endurance and bearing up for my name's sake and you have not grown weary.
  7. You hate the deeds of works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- D. Rebuke
1. You have abandoned, left your first love, the love you had at first
    - a. Restore the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment to 1<sup>st</sup> place – Love Me with wholehearted love.
    - b. Consider 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
- E. Exhortation
1. Remember!
  2. Repent!

3. Love me how you loved me in the midst of revival!
  4. Or I will come and remove your lampstand from its place!
- F. He who overcomes – the rewards
1. I will grant to eat of the tree of life that is in the garden (paradise) of God
- G. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.
1. Dream