

Weekly Study Guide | 10/20/24

Message to the Church in Ephesus

Read Revelation 2:1-7

1 To the 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. 2 I 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. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider 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. 6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 Whoever 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.

Bible References: [Revelation 2:1-7](#); [Genesis 3:8](#); [Exodus 25:31-40](#); [Matthew 5:14-16](#); [Acts 19:11-41](#); [Ephesians 1:15](#); [1 John 4:19](#)

Questions:

1. What are the themes of the above passage? What is the main message to the church in Ephesus? Summarize it in a word or a short sentence.
2. In what way is the church in Ephesus commended? In what way is it being corrected? What happens if the church doesn't repent? What if it does?
3. What does "first love" mean to you? Why is it so important that we return to our first love? Based on this passage, what does it mean to be victorious?
4. What do you think the Spirit is saying to the Church today? Is there a specific message for us today? The church in America? The church in our valley?
5. Share a few takeaways from this lesson. What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How can it help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make to your daily outlook?

For later: What about you? Prayerfully consider how this lesson relates to you. What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How can it help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make in your life? Is there anything you need to change in light of this lesson?

Summary:

Ephesus was the capital and the largest city of the Roman Empire's province in Asia Minor. The city was famous for its temple dedicated to the Greek goddess Artemis, one of the most revered deities in Greek mythology. Pilgrims came to Ephesus from all over the Mediterranean world to worship this goddess. This was a source of great wealth and influence.

Acts 19 chronicles a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This revival of sorts was accompanied by extraordinary miracles, healings, and deliverance from demonic influences. It upset the religious status quo that had been in place for almost 1000 years (Acts 19:27). Paul ended up staying in Ephesus for three years teaching and training new believers. During this time, a vibrant church was established.

Consequently, the church in Ephesus played a significant role in the region and was central to the spread of Christianity during the first century. It had more Biblically well-known ministers than any other. Paul, Apollos, Timothy, John, and possibly even Jesus' mother, Mary, visited or lived here. This influential church is mentioned multiple times in Scripture, in the book of Acts, the letter to the Ephesians (written during Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome), and Revelation. Paul also wrote two letters to Timothy, the pastor he left in charge when he departed.

Suffice it to say, that the Ephesian church was important. Yet, even with its renowned history, this church had left its first love. Though they were known for many good things, their actions ceased to come from a place of God's unconditional agape love. Unless they repented and had a change of heart, they would lose their place of influence. They needed to remember from where they had fallen, then return and repeat the works they did at first. Everything we do should flow from our relationship with God. God's love must always be the source of our love for others. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).