

A Study Of The Book Of Revelation

May 31, 2020

Revelation 2:1-7
Letter to the church at Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7

Its Strong Qualities

- A. Works (verse 2)
- B. Labor (verse 2)
- C. Patience (verses 2, 3)
- D. Doctrinally Correct (verses 2, 6)

What could be wrong with such a church?

Revelation 2:1-7

What could be wrong with such a church?

"This entire commendation leaves one inclined to question if there could be anything wrong in such a church. It carried on its service in the face of difficulties; it rejected false teachers; it hated sin; it did not grow weary in the Lord's work."

Ray Summers, 110

Revelation 2:1-7

A Church That Left Its First Love

When the Fire is Gone

- I. History
- II. Its Strong Qualities
- III. Its Problem

Revelation 2:1-7

III. Its Problem *"left your first love"*

A. Place of Love

- 1. *Love is essential*
 - a. Love God (Matthew 22:37)
 - b. Love Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)
 - c. Love One Another (Romans 13:8)

Revelation 2:1-7

III. Its Problem
"left your first love"

A. Place of Love

1. Love is essential
2. Love produces action
 - a. Context (verses 4-5)
 - b. Galatians 5:6 – faith works by love
 - c. 1 John 5:3 – love of God – keep commands

Revelation 2:1-7

III. Its Problem
"left your first love"

A. Place of Love

1. Love is essential
2. Love produces action
3. Without love – are nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1ff)
4. Love and hate should be balanced (verses 4, 6)

Hate
Error

←→

Love
Truth

Hated deeds of the Nicolaitans (verses 6, 15); 1 John 4:1;
 2 John 9-11; Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11).
 Can hate the "Deeds" and not the person. Psalms 119:97, 104

Revelation 2:1-7

III. Its Problem
"left your first love"

A. Place of Love
B. First Love – left behind

1. "Honeymoon is over" – Harkrider, 25
2. "Loyal but lacking" – Summers, 108
3. "In form, this was still a 'sound church' which fended off false doctrine, but the fire had gone out. There is more to serving God than adherence to mechanical, traditional routine" – Harkrider, 28
4. Their fire is gone!
5. Love, enthusiasm, excitement – vanished!

Revelation 2:1-7

III. Its Problem
"left your first love"

A. Place of Love
B. First Love – left behind
C. Common Problem

1. Not excited about being Christians
2. Not enthused about worshipping God
3. Not fervent in our actions
4. Not zealous for learning and growing

Revelation 2:1-7

Strong

↓

Opposing
Sin / Error

Weak

↓

Love for
Right / Truth

Revelation 2:1-7

We Are Often Stronger In Our Opposition To Wrong Than Our Love For What Is Right!

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9)

Not enough to abhor evil –
 must cleave to what is good.

Revelation 2:1-7

“They had set out to be defenders of the faith, arming themselves with the heroic virtues of truth and courage, only to discover that in the battle they had lost the one quality without which all others are worthless ... Zeal for Christian truth may obliterate the one truth that matters, that God is love. John is a rigorist who shares the hatred of heresy which he attributes both to the church of Ephesus and to the church's Lord; but he recognized the appalling danger of a religion prompted more by hate than by love.” — C. B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*, 31

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Revelation 2:1-7

Stronger Here	Than Here
Against Worldliness	Developing Godliness
Opposing Sin	Saving Sinners
Against Inst. Music	For Singing
Exposing a brother	Restoring erring
Against Divorce	For Marriage
Women's Lib	For Keeper at Home
Forsaking is sin	Worship of God

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Revelation 2:1-7

A Church That Left Its First Love
When the Fire is Gone

- I. History
- II. Its Strong Qualities
- III. Its Problem
- IV. Its Future

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Revelation 2:1-7

IV. Its Future
At a Crossroads

A. About to lose identity

1. *If they don't change – God will remove their lampstand (verse 5)*
2. *Soon – will no longer be the “Lord's church”*
3. *It is decision time!*
4. *Can't stay in the this lull / rut*

Warning: Revelation 2:7, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches”

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Revelation 2:1-7

IV. Its Future
At a Crossroads

A. About to lose identity

B. Problems are curable

1. *Could be fixed*

“Surely in this milder denunciation we may see a proof that the evil in Ephesus was curable ... But the cooling of the first Ephesian enthusiasm was a failing that lies in human nature. The failing can be corrected, the enthusiasm may be revived.”

W.M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, 244.

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Revelation 2:1-7

IV. Its Future
At a Crossroads

A. About to lose identity

B. Problems are curable

1. *Could be fixed*
2. *Must Repent (verse 5)*
 - a. Prompted by memory (verse 5)
Note: Luke 15 Prodigal son – “The lever of repentance is memory” (Harkrider, 28)
 - b. Change the mind
 - c. Do first works – do what you used to do!

Remember
Repent
Return

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Revelation 2:1-7

A Church That Left Its First Love

When the Fire is Gone

- I. History
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- IV. Its Future

Revelation 2:7, *"To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God."* Note: Genesis 3:22; Revelation 22:2, 14, 19
Victory is the dominant theme. cf. 1 John 5:4

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