

The First-Century Church
"The Church in Ephesus"

Introduction:

1. The New Testament contains a tremendous amount of information that was written "about" as well as "to" various congregations in the first century.
2. By examining this information we can learn the Lord's will for His church today.
3. Many passages relate to the church in Ephesus.
4. Previously, we studied:
 - a. Luke's account of the establishment of this congregation (Acts 18-19)
 - b. the letter written to this congregation [Ephesians].
5. This lesson is a study of the message that the Lord sent to the congregation in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7).

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1) THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS MESSAGE
 - A. (vs.1a) This message was addressed to "*the angel [messenger] of the church of Ephesus.*"
 - B. (vs.1b) Although John wrote this message, it was actually spoken by the Lord who:
 1. holds "*the seven stars in His right hand*" (1:16a, 20b)
 2. walks "*in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*" (1:13a, 20c).
- II. THE LORD COMMENDED THE CONGREGATION IN EPHEBUS
 - A. The Lord was able to commend this congregation because He knew its works (vs.2a).
 - B. (vs.2b-3) He commended the congregation in Ephesus:
 1. for its "*labor*" [toil]
 2. for its "*patience*" [perseverance] (see vs.3)
 3. for its commitment to purity -- it could not bear those who were evil
 4. for its faithfulness to His Word -- it was able to detect "*false apostles*" (1 John 4:1).
 - C. (vs.6) He also commended this church because it hated "*the deeds of the Nicolaitans.*"
 1. These people are mentioned in 2:15, but little is known about them.
 2. Uninspired writings indicate that they were worldly people who believed that Christians could live as they please.
 - D. From the Lord's commendations, it might appear that the church in Ephesus was an outstanding congregation, but the Lord saw a problem.
- III. (vs.4) THE LORD REBUKED THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS
 - A. This church had left its "*first love.*"
 - B. This church had not fallen away.
 - C. Its problem was that its love for the Lord had grown cold.
 - D. The Christians in Ephesus no longer served the Lord because they fervently loved Him, and He held this against them.
- IV. THE LORD EXHORTED THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS TO REPENT
 - A. (vs.5a) The Lord told this church what to do.
 - B. (vs.5b) If this church failed to repent, the Lord would remove its candlestick.
 - C. (vs.7b) Those who repented and overcame this problem would be blessed.
- V. APPLICATION
 - A. (vs.7a) We must listen to the Lord's message to the church in Ephesus.
 - B. The Lord is pleased when His church:
 1. is pure
 2. is true to His Word (Acts 17:11; 2 John 9-11)
 3. has a warm and intimate relationship with Him (Matthew 22:37).
 - C. Let us close with Paul's concluding statement in his letter to the church in Ephesus (Ephesians 6:24).