

THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction

Read Rev. 1:17-20

Passage for this Lesson

Rev. 2:1-7

Angel and messenger are acceptable translations of the same word.

- We might prefer the word messenger due to the feathery, halo-headed images of an angel.
- Messenger allows for a human to speak in God's behalf, whereas an angel refers to a celestial being.

Conservative scholars believe Revelation to be written around 90 AD. That dating would make the seven churches, started by Paul, about 45-50 years old.

The pattern John followed in addressing these seven churches included complimenting, correcting and challenging them.

What were the commendations given to the church at Ephesus?

- Hard work;
- Perseverance;
- Intolerance of wicked men;
- In a time when our culture seeks to be tolerant, how are we to understand the intolerant church?
- Tested false apostles;
- Apostles started churches, ministered cross-culturally and supervised established congregations.

How do you imagine the congregation tested the apostles?

- Endured hardships;
- Not grown weary.

What corrections was the Ephesian congregation to make?

- You forsook your first love.
- Remember the height from which you fell.

What was the challenge to the Ephesian church?

- Repent.
- If you do not repent, God will remove the lampstand. What do you suppose that means?
- Do the things you did at first.

What did the church have in its favor?

- A shared hatred of the Nicolaitans.

How do you explain God hating the Nicolaitans?

- The Nicolaitans were a heretical sect who altered their theology to make themselves acceptable to their culture.
- They maintained spiritual freedom allowed them to practice idolatry and immortality.
- There was some question as to the church's ability to hear what the Spirit was saying.

What would the church need to overcome?

What promise is given to the church if it overcomes?

What is the promised paradise?

- Paradise literally means a pleasant garden.
- Paradise is a place of happiness and renewal between death and resurrection.
- Eschatologically God and humans are restored to the perfect fellowship enjoyed before sin entered into the world.

Explain how this message from God addresses our church's need for renewal.