

CHAPTERS TWO AND THREE – SEVEN LETTERS TO SEVEN CHURCHES

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – REVELATION 2:1-7

The passage here in Revelation 2:1-7 is the first of _____ letters written to the key churches of Asia Minor. This particular epistle is to the church of Ephesus (signified by their appearance before God in heaven – *the angel*). Its scriptural value is threefold:

- 1) Historical – Written to the actual church in Ephesus around 91-96 AD...
- 2) Doctrinal – Details the events and circumstances taking place during the church age around 90 AD thru 200 AD...
- 3) Devotional – Contains commendations, condemnations, praises and warnings to _____ churches at _____ times in history... (including the blood-washed assemblies of believers saved during the tribulation period as seen in verse 7)

As we study today's text let's keep our focus personal and allow God to speak to our heart, convicting each of us in the way we ought to go, in order to walk closer with Christ according to the _____ of the word and words of God.

The name Ephesus means: Purposed; _____

The commendation – Revelation 2:2-3, 6

- It was hard _____ – *"I know thy works"*
- It was persevering – *"and thy labour, and thy patience; ... And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."*
- It was doctrinally sound – *"and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:"*
- It hated the same thing Jesus hates – *"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."*
 - This term is a *transliteration* from the Greek word –
 - Nico = To destroy; to _____ & Laitan = Laity; _____
 - Nicolaitans = Conqueror of common men; a clergy class that is _____, that lords over, common people

The condemnation – Revelation 2:4, 5

- It left its first _____ – *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."*
- It must _____ or else lose its ability to shine as a _____ in darkness – *"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."*

Historically – 91 AD – 96 AD

- Ephesus was a good church that _____ the gospel, made disciples, and planted churches – Acts 19:10.
- They were assaulted with _____ doctrine from the very beginning – Acts 18:24-25.
- Ephesus was the center of worship of the female mother goddess Diana with pagan _____ of worship called “_____” – Acts 19:27-37.
- They were plagued with _____, dressed as sheep, who sought to destroy the work of God through _____ and by gaining _____ over the church body... saying they were representatives of God (apostles), but who were actually the servants of the Devil – Acts 20:28-31; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

Doctrinally – 90 AD – 175/200 AD

- The Ephesus time was a fully purposed church period that spread the gospel, made disciples, and planted churches...
- They used a line of Bible manuscripts that can be traced back to Antioch, Syria where they were first called “Christians”
- They were assaulted with false doctrine from the very beginning: They began to deviate from the word of God by using other non-biblical leadership titles, words, phrases, and concepts...

Examples of deviation from men called “_____”:

- Clement of Rome - Spoke of a division between the Pastor and the Common man
- Ignatius - He is the first to use the word “_____”; He refers to himself as the “*Son of the Church*.”
- Papias - Wrote the “*Explanation of the Lord’s Discourses*”...
- Epicurus - Merges Christianity with _____
- Basilides - He promoted “*higher learning*”; He said that Christ was only human in appearance...
- Polycarp - He said, “*Faith is the _____ of us all.*” The result was the belief that salvation is through the church
- Justin Martyr – Started teaching baptismal regeneration (began by sprinkling babies)
- Origen - Pioneered the Allegorical Method of Bible Study ... The Bible is only spiritual, not to be taken literally

Note: These deviations will eventually become the _____ of lies used by Satan to establish his counterfeit religious system... ultimately employed as the one-world-religion of the antichrist during the tribulation period.

- They were plagued with wolves, dressed as sheep, who sought to destroy the work of God through lies and by gaining leadership over the church body... saying they were representatives of God (_____), but who were actually the servants of the Devil:
 - A diabolical “*religious and theological*” school was started in Alexandria, Egypt by a man named Philo (20 BC – 50 AD). During the Ephesus period of Church History the school was led by false apostles, namely: Panteus, Clement of Alexandria, and the Kingpin or Godfather of false doctrine and _____ false Bibles – Adamantius Origen. Origen is called by most all modern church leaders as our greatest church father...
 - What Origen believed:
 - He believed God wrote the Bible
 - He believed Jesus was the virgin born Son of God
 - He believed Jesus died on a cross, was buried, and rose on the third day...
 - He did not believe Genesis 1-3 was literal
 - He believed in the allegorical method of Bible study (Except for Mt. 19:12)
 - He believed Christ was a created sub-god, not God
 - He believed the Holy Spirit was a created being or force
 - He believed in salvation by works, not grace
 - He believed in baptismal regeneration and the sprinkling of babies
 - He believed Jesus death was paid as a ransom to Satan
 - He did not believe in a literal hell, but a “*purgatory*”
 - He believed in universal salvation for all
 - He believed the Devil would be saved one day
 - He denied the bodily resurrection, but spiritualized it
 - He denied the coming millennial kingdom
 - He believed in the pre-existence of the human soul (this originated with Philo)

- Origen's life and work:
 - He is called the "Father of textual criticism"
 - He wrote the famous "Hexapla" – He altered the Antiochian Bible texts in over 30,000 places to agree with his own personal lifestyle, philosophies, and beliefs...
 - He castrated himself in 231 AD and was excommunicated from the church at Alexandria
 - He then went to Caesarea to establish another so-called "Christian School"
 - By this time he was an established author who wrote over 6000 volumes
 - In 249 AD, under the Decian Persecution, Origen was arrested and tortured
 - Though the torture did not kill him, in 254 AD he died from the after effects
 - He bequeathed his library to his favorite student, Pamphilus
 - When Pamphilus dies in 309 AD, he passes on the corrupted bible readings to one of his disciples, the famous church historian and bishop of Caesarea, a man named Eusebius.
 - All modern English Bible versions are traced back to Eusebius from Origen... All bibles except one – the Authorized Version, _____ Bible of 1611...

- Throughout this period of church history, there remained faithful believers who loved God and served Him. They were true to the teachings of the Bible. They performed their mission with the spirit of *1 Thess. 2:4*. However, those men who were considered leaders of the churches ... those viewed as replacing the apostles, began to _____ from the clear teachings of the Bible. When this happens there will be an eventual and inescapable corruption of Christian lineage.

Devotionally – The influences of this church period press upon us in our present time, our church, and our individual life

- There is _____ final authority existing on Earth – the "_____ " Bible texts were lost...

- The best of the world=s wisdom is to be _____ to biblical truth to make it acceptable to the masses...

- The more _____ a man has the closer he can be with God – because he can tell us what the original languages really mean...

- Ultimately, those who are Christians leave their first _____...