



SESSION 5 | REVELATION 2:1-11

*Verses 1-7 are also included in Session 4*

## THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS | REV 2:1-7

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### THE DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST | V. 1

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- The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand
  - If these messengers are interpreted as pastors, then they are held in His hand. However, this word for held is an almost violent word, used here more in the sense of being held accountable than held in protection.
- The one who walks among the seven golden lampstands
  - The seven golden lampstands are the churches (1:20). Note that a lampstand is not a lamp, but that which holds the lamp (Matt 4:15). When the church tries to BE the light, it fails. The church LIFTS UP the light. The light of the world is Jesus.

### THE MESSAGE TO THE MESSENGER | VV. 2-6

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- "I know..."
  - There are three Greek words for knowledge.
    - Ginosko - to know by experience
    - Epistamai: to know by proximity (see the use of both terms in 1 Cor 13:12)
    - Eido: to know with the mind's eye, a mental perception.
  - Here, Christ knows in His mind, as in Matthew 6:8.
- Commendations:
  - Works, labor, and patience (v. 2, 3)
  - Intolerance of evil men (v. 2)
    - The Greek word for tolerate / bear is *bastazo* is the root of our English "basis." Literally, "you give no footing to evil men."
  - Testing of apostles
    - The apostolic test was to have received instruction directly from Jesus Christ, with no intermediary.
  - A hatred for the deeds of the Nicolaitians
    - Literally, the "followers of Nicolas."
      - The name means "victory people," perhaps an indicator of their love for power, victory, and achievement."

- **Condemnations**
  - Having left the first love.
    - The first love of the Ephesian pastor had been left, and remedy was to "remember and repent" and "do the first works."
    - It seems that the first love was a work, not a Person. The pastor was reprimanded for losing a love for *something* not *someone*.
    - Since the pastor was already commended for his works and labor (v. 2), this is some kind of deed that he *first* did, but no longer does.
    - The most likely possibility (drawn from extra-Biblical sources) is the support for Jewish believers.

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#### THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH | V. 7

- In each letter, a portion is given to the Pastor, and a portion to the church.
- The reader can discern the difference by watching closely the use of 2nd person singular for the Pastor and 2nd person plural or 3rd person singular for the church.
- The overcomer is the one with the ultimate victory, a play on words from the *Nicolaitans*. The true Victory People are described in 1 John 5:4-5.
- The overcomer will be granted to eat of the tree of life in the "Paradise of God." This phrase is used in two other places of Scripture, and refers to Heaven, prior to the establishment of the Kingdom. See Luke 23:43 and 2 Cor 12:4

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### THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA | REV 2:8-11

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#### THE DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST | V. 8

- The word *smyrna* means *myrrh*. The same Greek word is used in Matthew 2:11, Mark 15:23, and John 19:39.
- Christ is presented as "first and last"
  - *Protos* and *eschatos*
  - This is a phrase used of God the Son. See note on Rev. 1:17.
- Christ is the one who "became dead" (literal translation) and lived.
  - John 10:18 sheds light on the middle voice of the word.
  - Middle voice is something done to oneself, translated in the active, not passive.

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#### THE MESSAGE TO THE MESSENGER | VV. 9-10

- "I know..."
  - Works, tribulation, and poverty (v. 9)
    - Note: Works is not included in modern translations
    - Tribulation and poverty are both strong selections of words
      - Not afflictions but tribulations
      - Not going without but being a beggar
  - The blasphemy of those who claim to be Jews but are not.
    - The blasphemy itself: they claim to be Jews
      - The truth: they are not Jews at all
      - Biblically, to be Jewish, one must be a descendent of Jacob

- This Scripture is notoriously interpreted *theologically* rather than *grammatically*.
  - Furthermore, the theology is wrong! It is the theology of *suppressionism* (replacement theology).
  - Consistency demands that Revelation 2:2 be interpreted the same ways as Revelation 2:9, yet very few commentators are consistent.
- The commendation:
  - Do not fear the things which you will suffer (v. 10)
  - Be faithful unto death, and receive a crown of life (v. 11)

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#### THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH | VV. 10-11

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- The devil will cast some of you into prison (v. 10)
  - You will be tried
  - You will have tribulation 10 days.
    - While we are prone to take this figuratively, there is no place in the book of Revelation where a time period is given in figurative manner.
- The overcomer will not be hurt by the second death.
  - The first death may overtake the overcomer, but the second death will have no power.