



The Perfect Father/The Perfect Son.

Jehovah God/Jesus, His Son –

Note:

- The Father does things in order and his message is always in order. He doesn't change.
- Therefore, since His Son only sees what His Father is doing ("If you have seen me, you have seen the Father"), Jesus puts everything in order and does not change.

In his relationship with the Church, His Bride, Jesus puts everything in proper perspective.

He tells each local church (those precious ones who make up "the Church"), I am the One who knows you the best. Therefore, I am going to let you know what I love about you, what I dislike about you, what you need to do to improve, and what your reward will be when you do improve to where I want you to be."

The Specific Order of Christ to the Seven (7) churches of Asia...and to us who are members of the Church today.

Commendations, Condemnations, Corrective Actions necessary, Consequences if you don't, and Challenges to meet the Goal.

Every Business Leader, Every Pastor, and Every Person who works people under their authority need to take heed with the order Christ mentors His Bride (the Church)

Seven Churches in Asia (Now Turkey).

Included Ephesus: Where John had settled and where he was exiled from. The seven were not the only churches in Asia, i.e. Colossae, Hieropolis, Troas, and Miletus.

The seven were probably chosen for their position in the region (postal districts---letters could easily be circulated to the other churches. Since letters had to be handwritten, they would have to go to the area that would most easily reach the greatest number of people.

Revelation 2:1-7, Letter to the Church at Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-3, “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.”

To understand the reason the spirit of the Lord is addressing Ephesus, one must understand the history and conditions of Ephesus at the time of writing.

Ephesus—Considered the greatest city in Asia.

A Roman writer stated that it was the “Lumen Asiae”...Light of Asia

Factors which made it the greatest city:

✓ Greatest Harbor in Asia

- Sturbo...ancient geographer, called Ephesus “the market of Asia” and “the gateway of Asia”**
- Was the highway to Rome.**
- Ignatius (another philosopher) stated Ephesus was the “Highway of the Martyrs”...Ephesus to Rome**
- Wealthiest city because of the position
Called the “Vanity Fair” of the Ancient World**

✓ Certain Important Political Distinctions

- Called the “Free City”...because of their services to the Empire**
- Own limits of self-governing**
- Exempted from having Roman troops garrisoned there**
- Favorite city for the Roman Governors**
- Annual Games held in Ephesus**

✓ Center of Worship of Artemis, “Diana of the Ephesians”

- Temple of Artemis...one of the seven wonders of the ancient world...425' long; 220' wide; center portion was roofed over with cypress wood**
- Famous temples to Roman Emperors**

(In Ephesus, Pagan religion was at its strongest)

✓ Notorious Center of Pagan Superstition

- Home of the Ephesian Letters, Amulets and Charms**
Supposedly cured illnesses, brought children to the childless couples....they had to believe or touch the charm to ensure success....
- People came from all over the world just to get to Ephesus**

✓ Population Mix...Jews, Greeks, original citizens, those that came from Athens, etc....

- *The temple possessed the right to asylum (any criminal was safe there if he could reach it)...basically, a “Sanctuary City.”*
- *100s of priestesses in the temple (supposedly sacred prostitutes)*
- *Center of immorality.*
- *Anything goes...so long as it was bringing in the money. The battle cry was “it’s the economy, stupid!” (A familiar term)*

Yet Paul stayed in this city longer than he did any other...

Timothy was there....

Priscilla and Aquilla was there

Appollos was there.....

Legend has it...that John took Mary to Ephesus...and that she was buried there!

Why? Why in this God-forsaken city?

- *Where sin is rampant...and evil is thriving...the preachers find that people are hungry for a change...*
- *Sin is fun...for a while.....and then, it is devastating on minds and hearts (body, soul, and spirit)*
- *Where there is sin....there are people seeking something better....there are people that will listen to a better way...*
- *And where people are, God wants the gospel preached and taught. He wants his children to be bold...and offer the sinners something better...something satisfying.*

“The fields were white unto harvest”

Ephesus....Today

- ✓ *Little left of Ephesus but ruins*
- ✓ *6 miles from the sea*
- ✓ *Unapproachable by ship...silt from the Caester River*
- ✓ *What was once the Gulf of Ephesus is now.... “A marsh of reeds.”*

Great cities, great men and women, and great countries fall when man tries to please self...where money is God...and God is mocked!

It has fallen...and any city or man will fall when God is not in the plans!

What is the Spirit saying to the Churches...In America today?

Positive Attributes of the Church at Ephesus...COMMENDATIONS

The Risen Christ praises the church for:

1. Their Toil

Greek word used was “kapos”/”kapian”

Meaning “hard work” “labor”

Describes the kind of toil which takes everything of mind and sinew that a person can put into it.....

The Christian is to be a toiler for Christ....

Even if physical toil is impossible, he/she can still toil in prayer.

2. Their Steadfast Endurance....

Greek word used is “hypomone”...not patience that accepts things...it is the courageous gallantry that accepts suffering and hardship and turns them into grace and glory.

3. Their Testing of Evil Men and Proving Them to Be Liars.

Evil men...what kind?

- ✓ Wolves in sheep's clothing
 - Paul warned of the grievous wolves that would attack and invade the flock (the church at Ephesus), Acts 20:29
- ✓ Jews who tried to undo Paul's teaching (saved by grace)
- ✓ Those who tried to turn liberty into “license...to do as they please.”
- ✓ Professional beggars who preyed on the charity of Christian congregations.
- ✓ You hate the practice of the Nicolaitan's
 - Deeds were hated, not them! Very Important!
 - “Those who hold the teaching of Balaam”

What kind of practices???

- ❖ Unrestrained immorality
- ❖ They said to the church members... “Don't lose touch with reality; you only have one time to go around in this world, give it all the gusto you can.”
- ❖ Compromise with world...you can't win them if you are not part of them...let you know that you are no better than they are.
- ❖ “You are responsible for yourself....Don't let others tell what to do. Meet the world and it will meet you.
- ❖ **Humanism**...”Why live life by a decision that someone else makes or has made for you? Your parents, your teachers, your preacher do not have the right to influence you.

“You have to live with the decisions you make...so why let others make them for you?”

The Nicholaitans taught “loose living.”

Necessity for Testing....

Scripture bears it out....

- ❖ **1 John 4:1-6...Spirits who claim to come from God Should Be Tested by their willingness to accept the incarnation in all its fullness.**
- ❖ **1 Thessalonians 5:21...Test all things and then hold on to that which is good.**
- ❖ **When prophets preach, subject to the testing of the other prophets...**
 - 1 Corinthians 14:32, “The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.”**

Hardest test of all----“By their fruits ye shall know them.”

It doesn’t mean we are to judge (Judge not lest ye be judged!)

But...You can inspect the fruit...and if it doesn’t look good nor smell good....chances are it’s rotten, ruined and it will make you sick if you partake!

Ephesian Church....Tested and Weeded Out All Evil and Misguided Men.

Christians....Our church should seed, feed, weed, lead....and heed God’s word.

Don’t ever get too big for our britches...

Must listen more than we talk...

But, must be doers...and not just listeners!

Staying under the shadow of the Almighty. Staying under the shelter of His wing. Not trying to fly until we are ready. We must be strong....and mature before we try to fly on eagle’s wings.