

## Revelation 2:1-7—Message to the Church in Ephesus

### **I. Context**

- a. Ephesus major city in Asia Minor- 250,000; center for the Temple of Artemis- Goddess of Fertility; important both religious and business with idol sales
- b. *Acts 19ff*—Paul ministered there; Strong Christian church despite persecution
- c. Paul’s letter to Ephesians indicates an overall strong and healthy church; but even healthy churches can lose their first love

### **II. Seven stars and seven lampstands**

- a. Referred to in 1:20—Stars are the angels of the 7 churches and lampstands are the churches
- b. Emphasizes Jesus’ sovereignty (over the angels)
- c. Jesus’ presence (walks among); Jesus is always present with his churches and knows their affairs intimately

### **III. Commendations (summarized)**

- a. Good deeds
- b. Enduring hardship
- c. Held to true teaching

### **IV. Critiques—This I have against you**

- a. You have forsaken the love you had at first
  - i. What happened? They didn’t give up on Jesus fully but lost the first love; going through the motions; temptation in Ephesus to ‘blend’ their faith with other priorities; Enthusiasm would have declined
  - ii. Does this ever happen to Christians and churches? Go through the motions?
  - iii. Throughout Scripture we are called not just to have right beliefs or actions, but to love God (and therefore Love Jesus) (*Luke 10:27; John 5:42-43, 14:23, 21:17; 1 John 4:19; Deut. 6:5, 7:9; Joshua 22:5; Psalm 31:23, 116:1; Rom. 8:28; Matt. 10:37*)
  - iv. Love for God will lead to love for others in a healthy, gospel-centered way

### **V. Possible Consequences**

- a. Remove the lampstand
  - i. Doesn’t mean God abandons them
  - ii. It means they lost their witness within their city; they no longer represent Christ
- b. There is hope (vv. 6-7)—willing to reject Nicolaitans (false teachers); they are still doing some discerning; God’s word still has some authority for them
- c. Whoever has ears... God’s Spirit is still active

### **VI. So what?**

- a. Religious works have some value; but what about first love for Jesus?
- b. Do we hold to our first love? Why do we do the things we do? Are we just being a busy church? Do we love to talk about God more than we actually love God?

- c. What does it look like for a church to have Jesus as her first love? An enthusiasm for prayer and evangelism; individuals make faith their first priority and then a genuine love for one another and others becomes evident
- d. How do we regain our love and passion? Look back (on God's goodness) and look ahead (eternity)! *Philippians 3:7-11*