

The Revelation

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Chapter 2:1-7

The Letter to the church at Ephesus

Introduction

- Ephesus was the largest city in the Roman province of Asia
- The city was the terminus of the great Euphrates trade route and for the road from Galatia; nicknamed "The Marketplace of Asia"
- Having long proved its loyalty to Rome it was made a "Free City", meaning that it had self-government and no Roman troops were stationed there
- It was the center of worship of Artemis/Diana; the temple dedicated to Artemis was one of the 7 Wonders of the ancient world; the temple was 425' x 220' with 120 columns standing 60' high, 36 of which were gilded and inlaid with gold
- Pagan worship was all inclusive having temples to emperors Nero and Claudius
- "Ephesian Letters" were good luck charms which were sought by people all over the known world
- There was a very diverse population
- Paul stayed in Ephesus longer than he did any other place, 3 years (Acts 20:31); Timothy was pastor there (1 Timothy 1:3); Aquila and Priscilla and Apollos were there (Acts 18); tradition says that John lived there and that he gave Mary, the mother of Jesus, a house there and that she is buried there.

Vs 1

- It is Christ who hold the churches in His hand (John 10:28); “kratein” – Greek word meaning “firm control” and “the whole of it”.

Vss 2-3

- Your toil: hard work, sweaty work, exhausting work
- Perseverance: “hupomone” – courageous, grinding, pushing forward hard
- Evil men: Matt. 7:15-20; Acts 20:9

Vs 4

- Your first love: evangelism? Koinonia vs. orthodoxy?

Vs 5

- Remember: from where you were to where you are
- Repent: accept responsibility and with the Holy Spirit make the changes to fix it (Luke 15:18; 1 Sam. 26:21)

Vs 6

- No one knows 100% for sure what the heresy of the Nicolaitans was, but we can start connecting the dots by seeing that they turn up again in the Letter to Pergamum and there it is tied to the teaching of Balaam.
- Balaam is found in Numbers 25:1-5 and he leads Israel to practice the fertility worship of Baal.
- The early church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, all say that the Nicolaitans lived with “unrestrained indulgence” and “abandon themselves to pleasure like goats”
 - Gnosticism: the body is nothing, evil, the spirit is all that matters
 - Gal. 5:13

Vs 7

- “eat will of the tree of life” – Genesis 2:9; Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4)
- Paradise: originally a Persian word referring to a beautiful garden; the LXX translators used it to describe the Garden of Eden and by Christ’s time, heaven.