



## The One Year Bible Club



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**December 10**

**Revelation 2:1-17**

**The Loveless Church**

2 “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: <sup>2</sup>“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; <sup>3</sup>and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. <sup>4</sup>Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

<sup>7</sup>“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

## The Persecuted Church

<sup>8</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: <sup>9</sup> “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup> Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

<sup>11</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”

## The Compromising Church

<sup>12</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: <sup>13</sup> “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

<sup>17</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.”

## OKAY, HERE’S MY TEACHING COMMENTARY

In Chapter two the Lord Jesus Christ reveals to the apostle John the spiritual condition of three churches that he sends individual messages to.

### Church of Ephesus

The history of this church brings with it several spiritual leaders recognized in the New Testament. It was founded by the apostle Paul with a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit accompanied by signs, wonders and miracles. A large following of Christians were established and a Bible school was established sending workers with the message of the gospel all of that part of Asia. Later, Timothy Pastored this church and after him the apostle John. It had strong foundations and it flourished with multiple ministries doing the works of Christ faithfully.

However the Lord pointed out that they had left their first love. You know, sometimes you can get so caught up in serving the Lord that you forget that Christianity is not so much a religion but rather a relationship with God.

Remember the story of Martha and Mary? Jesus was visiting their house teaching the word of God to a multitude that had gathered there. Mary sat at Jesus feet listening to him but Martha was busy in the kitchen distracted and upset that Mary was not in there sweating with her. She started to curse under her breath some four letter Hebrew words then just lost it and came out interrupting Jesus in the middle of his preaching saying don't you care that my sister has left me alone to do all the work! The only place in the whole Bible where God spoke to a woman twice using her first name is right here when Jesus said "Martha, Martha you're worried in trouble about many things but only one thing is needful and Mary has chosen that good part which will not be taken away from her".

What was that good part in Mary that Jesus was defending? The simplicity of just loving the Lord and wanting to be in his presence connecting with him, hearing his word. This also is what the Lord was communicating to the believers at Ephesus. They were full of good works outwardly and they guarded carefully the faith and tried the false apostles so they were very zealous in many ways but their love for just being with Jesus was fading. Simple, sincere love for the Lord is something that every Christian needs to be careful to maintain otherwise you just get caught up and going around the merry-go-round of church services and outreach ministries.

Remember what Jesus said when he rebuked Satan's temptation during his 40 days of fasting and prayer? It is written: *You shall **worship** the Lord your God and him only show you **serve**.* Notice the order worship first service second. That's how it should always be in our walk with God, a heart set on the Lord that loves God and then serves humbly giving God all the glory.

## **Church in Smyrna**

This church was poor by the world's standards but Jesus said they were rich according to God's standards. What were the spiritual riches that Christ praised? Faith and faithfulness to the Lord in the midst of hostile persecution. They didn't cave-in to the pressure from the Jews. The Lord revealed to them that the devil was going to cast some of them into prison and their faith was going to be tried to the max. For this reason, the Lord encouraged them to be faithful to the point dying for their faith and that he would reward them with the crown of eternal life.

It's very interesting that Jesus said who ever overcomes would not be hurt by the second death. To me, this is one of the strongest Christian values that we have that after physical death we enter into eternal life because of the salvation we have through Jesus Christ but the negative side is there is a second death for the unbeliever and according to the Scriptures that is eternal hell and suffering. *Revelation 20:14-15 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death.*** <sup>15</sup> *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

## Church in Pergamos

This church had extremely dedicated disciples faithful to Jesus Christ that gave their lives as martyrs. However, there were a couple of groups of people in this church that believed and practice the corrupt doctrine of Balaam which taught that the people of God could worship idols and live sexually immoral lives. Then there were those that followed the doctrine of the Nicolaitan's. There are various interpretations of this teaching one of which is that they thought that it was acceptable to have a community of wives or what is commonly referred to as polygamy.

The Lord Jesus Christ corrected this false teaching and lifestyle and warned that if it was not forsaken through true repentance that he would come and bring judgment upon those believing and practicing these sinful lifestyles. Has Jesus Christ changed? No, the Bible says he is the same yesterday, today and forever. Ref; Hebrews 13:8. We need to apply the values and high moral standards of Jesus Christ to the church today. Nowadays there are several churches throughout the world that are openly gay and lesbian even ordaining gay and lesbian priests and pastors. This is an abomination in the eyes of God and what we have written here in the letter to the church at Pergamos is the authoritative word of God which condemns sexual immorality being tolerated as an acceptable lifestyle in the church.

The church should always be a place of restoration, forgiveness, healing, deliverance and boldly proclaim the moral standards of God to our generation. People coming to the church that sincerely want help in breaking sexual sins should be able to find that power and help to change. Nevertheless, gay and lesbian couples that come to churches that do not accept those values should not expect churches that do not believe and except that kind of a moral lifestyle based on the word of God to change for their sake. It would be better for them to find a church that believes in their values rather than try to force others to conform to what obviously is something that the Bible teaches is an abomination. Here are a few Holy Scriptures that condemn adultery, homosexuality and lesbianism:

Exodus 20:14 You shall not commit adultery. ( The 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

Leviticus 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It *is* an **abomination**.

Romans 1:26-27 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. <sup>27</sup> Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

Remember, God loves all sinners but he hates their sins and has provided total forgiveness and the power to be transformed spirit, soul and body through the blood of Jesus Christ, in the Word of God and the Holy Spirit but people need to be willing to repent and make Jesus Christ Lord of their lives.

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