



T H R E A D I N G T H E P E A R L S . o r g

Threading the Pearls of the Book of Revelation

An Expository Study

Session 3: Seven Letters to Seven Churches, part I
Ephesus — the 'desired'

REVELATION 2:1 — 2:7

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You have persevered and have patience,
and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.
⁴"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left **your first love**.
⁵"Remember therefore from where you have fallen;
repent and *do the first works*.

[REV 2:3-5]



REVELATION 2

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he, who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:

To the angel

EPH 3:10-12, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church *to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places* ...

The church

Jesus will gather God's people and the Gentiles to Himself as found in —

ISA 49:5-6, ...Indeed He [God] says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You [Jesus] as a *light to the Gentiles*, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth";

This is again referred to in —

JOHN 10:16, other sheep I have which are not of this fold; *them also I must bring*, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd;

And, Paul gave instruction and warning regarding this flock in —

ACTS 20:28-30, Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to *shepherd the church of God* which He purchased with His own blood...

Ephesus – “desired”

SOS 7:10, I am my beloved's, And *his desire is toward me*;

PSM 73:25, Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has *nothing I desire besides you*;

REV 2:4, I have this against you, that *you have left your first love*.

These are the words of him

1JON 3:11, *this is the message* that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Him who holds the seven stars

EPH 4:21-24, *you have heard Him and have been taught by Him*, as the truth is in Jesus: ²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

In his right hand

MATH 12:49-50, He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! ⁵⁰"For *whoever does the will of My Father in heaven* is My brother and sister and mother".

Walks among the seven golden lampstands

EXO 25:37, *You shall make seven lamps for it*, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it;

REV 1:20, ...The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and *the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches*.

CONSIDER THIS —

PSM 73:25, Whom have I in heaven but You?

And there is none upon earth that *I desire* besides You.

There should be no one else and nothing closer to our heart than Jesus.



REVELATION 2

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil, and thou hast tried them, who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

I know your deeds

MATH 5:14-16, ... "Let your light so shine before men, that *they may see your good works* and glorify your Father in heaven;

JOHN 14:10-12, ... "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and *greater works than these* he will do, because I go to My Father;

EPH 2:10, we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

I know... your hard work

MATH 9:36-38, ... "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. ³⁸"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest *to send out laborers into His harvest*";

EPH 4:28, Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather *let him labor*, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

I know... your perseverance

HEB 3:14, we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence *steadfast to the end*.

You cannot tolerate wicked men

EPH 5:3-4, fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, *let it not even be named among you*, as is fitting for saints; ⁴neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks;

EPH 5:11, *have no fellowship* with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

You have tested them

Paul speaks to Ephesus in —

ACTS 20:30-31, *from among yourselves men will rise up*, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves...;

1JON 4:1, Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but *test the spirits*, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Claim they are apostles

ACTS 19:13-17, some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists *took it upon themselves* to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. ¹⁵And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" ¹⁶Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Found them false

MATH 7:15-17, Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶"*You will know them by their fruits*...

CONSIDER THIS —

1COR 16:22, *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ*, let him be accursed.

By contrast to their name: Ephesus (desired) –
They failed in this one area.

After all, without love, all else is nothing (see 1COR 13:1-2).



REVELATION 2

3 And thou hast patience, and hast endured for my name, and hast not fainted.

4 But I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity.

You have persevered

JAM 5:10-11, My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

¹Indeed *we count them blessed who endure...*;

HEB 6:11-12, ...do not become sluggish, but imitate those who *through faith and patience inherit the promises*.

You... have endured hardships

JAM 1:2-4, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³knowing that *the testing of your faith produces patience*. ⁴But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing;

2TIM 2:1-3, ...*You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*.

For my name

MATH 5:11-12, Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil *against you falsely for My sake...*

You... have not grown weary

EPH 4:1-3, ...walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³*endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace.

I hold this against you

MATH 5:23-24, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that *your brother has something against you*, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

You have forsaken

DEUT 28:20, The Lord will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which *you have forsaken Me*.

Your first love

EPH 3:17-19, *you, being rooted and grounded in love*, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height ¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

CONSIDER THIS —

Peter wrote that it will be worse for those who know the Truth, and yet walk away.

2PET 2:20, if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, *the latter end is worse for them* than the beginning.



REVELATION 2

5 Be mindful therefore from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance.

Remember

DEUT 8:2, you shall *remember that the Lord your God led you* all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

The height from which you have fallen!

EPH 1:3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with *every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places* in Christ.

Repent

MATH 9:10-13, ...go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but *sinners, to repentance*";

ZECH 1:2-4, ...'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Return to Me," says the Lord of hosts, "and I will return to you," says the Lord of hosts. ⁴"Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "*Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.*" ' But they did not hear nor heed Me," says the Lord.

Things you did at first

EPH 1:12-14, we *who first trusted in Christ* should be to the praise of His glory. ¹³In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...

I will come to you

GEN 18:1-3, the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ²So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were

standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, *do not pass on by Your servant.*

Remove your lampstand

LUKE 8:16-18, No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. ¹⁷"For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. ¹⁸"Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, *even what he seems to have will be taken from him*".

If you do not repent

HOS 11:4-5, I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them. ⁵"He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But *the Assyrian shall be his king, Because they refused to repent*;

HEB 12:14-17, Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, *he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance*, though he sought it diligently with tears.

CONSIDER THIS —

EPH 1:14, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance:
until the redemption of the purchased possession.

When will the redemption take place?

What all does the purchased possession consist of?



REVELATION 2

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaites, which I also hate.

7 He, that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches: To him, that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God.

In your favor

EPH 6:10-12, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to *stand against the wiles of the devil...*

Nicolaitans*

* NOTE — Νικολαίτης = Nikolaites, nik•ol•ah•ee'•tace,

Strong# 3531: "destruction of people"

1PET 5:2-3, Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as *being lords over those entrusted to you*, but being examples to the flock;

MATH 20:25-28, Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. ²⁶"Yet *it shall not be so among you...*

Which I also hate

EPH 4:31-32, Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking *be put away from you*, with all malice. ³²And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

He who has an ear

MATH 13:3-9, He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴"And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵"Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶"But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷"And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁸"But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹"*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*"

Let him hear

MATH 13:19-23, *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom*, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart... ²³"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty";

1JON 1:5-7, This is *the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you*, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all...

What the Spirit says

HEB 3:7-8, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, *if you will hear His voice*, ⁸Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness.

CONSIDER THIS —

EPH 4:31-32, Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³²And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

This was true for the church in Ephesus, and is still true for us today!

To the churches

EPH 4:11-13, He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³*till we all come to the unity of the faith* and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Him who overcomes

1JON 2:14, I have written to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God remains in you, and *you have overcome the evil one*;

1JON 5:1-4, ...For *whatever is born of God overcomes the world*. This is the victory that has overcome the world: your faith.

I will give the right to eat

JOHN 6:50-51, This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that *one may eat of it and not die*. ⁵¹"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world".

Tree of life

GEN 2:8-9, the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And out of the ground made the LORD God *to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil;

GEN 3:22-24, the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and *take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever*: ²³Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. ²⁴So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life;

REV 22:14, Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the *right to the tree of life*, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Paradise of God

LUKE 23:40-43, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? ⁴¹"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." ⁴³And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today *you will be with Me in Paradise*".





GROUP DISCUSSION

REV 2:1, He ... who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

- ⊕ **1a. Are the lampstands the physical representation of a spiritual reality?**

Considering these verses:

EXO 25:37, You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it;

And:

HEB 8:4-5, ...there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; ⁵who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

- ⊕ **1b. Are the visible things meant to represent, or signify, the invisible things?**

MATH 5:14-16, You are the light of the world... ¹⁵"do we light a lamp and put it under a basket? No, we place it on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

- ⊕ **2. What are some ways that we can 'give light' to those around us?**

REV 2:2, ...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.

- ⊕ **3a. How might we rightly test for liars?**

1JON 4:1-3, Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.

- ⊕ **3b. How might we defend ourselves against falling for false prophets?**

REV 2:5, 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...

To fall in love with Him again, Jesus tells us to 'do the first works'.

- ⊕ **4. List some examples of 'works' that are done at first in a believer's relationship with Jesus?**

NEXT SESSION —