

Revelation 2:1–7 (NIV)

“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. ² I 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. ³ You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

⁴ Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶ But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Part 1: Sermon Notes

Introduction: Revelation is a Book of Hope

Background:

7 functions as a symbol of completeness and perfection

Form follows Function: Identify the Form recognize the function

- I. Introduction
 - a. Address (to the angel of the church...write)
 - b. Prophetic Identity and Character of Christ (“these are the words of him who...”)
- II. Body of Message
 - a. Strengths (I know your deeds...)
 - b. Weaknesses (Yet I hold this against you...)
 - c. Solution (Repent...)
- III. Conclusion
 - a. Call to Listen (Let anyone who has ears, let them hear...)
 - b. Encouragement to Overcome (To anyone who overcomes...)

Prophetic Oracle / Royal Edict

Angel – Heavenly Spiritual Being tasked with protecting and representing the church in a certain area. Also stands as the spiritual representative of the identity of the church, the message is given to the angel for the whole church.

Context: **The City of Ephesus**

- One of the four most powerful and influential cities of the Roman Empire
- The Chief city of the Roman Province of Asia Minor with a population upwards of 250,000 people
- It was famed for its temple to Artemis the Goddess of fertility, the “Artemision”. One of the seven wonders of the ancient world, it lay just outside the city and was the largest temple in the Roman Empire. Over 100,000 square feet with 127 marble pillars 60 feet high it was four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens and twice the size of a football field.
- Paul help to found the church. He left Priscilla and Aquila to help establish the church. He later returned and spent over two years in Ephesus teaching and encouraging the church. He was forced to flee the city because the spread of the gospel disrupted the sale of idols of Artemis and so the smiths rose up and shouted “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians,” and caused a riot in the streets. Ephesus became a central hub of spreading the gospel. Timothy was sent to help the church deal with false teaching. Later the apostle John would become the leading pastor of the church.

Prophetic Identity and Character of Christ

“These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.”

- Emphasis on right to rule
- Emphasis on ability and presence to inspect

Strengths

- Hard Working
- Discipleship that costs nothing is worth nothing
- Diligent and conscientious
- Persevering
- Theologically Sound
- Endure hardship
- Not grown weary
- They hate what the Lord Hates

Weakness

- **Forsaken your first love**

Solution

- **Remember**
- **Repent**
- **Re-do**

Part 2: Discussion Questions

- **In what do you feel discouraged and hopeless?**
- **As you think about this message to the Ephesians as a general message to churches and Christians of every age. In what do you think your church family exhibits the strengths of the church of Ephesus?**
- **In what ways do you think you exhibit the strengths of the church in Ephesus?**
- **In what ways do you think your church family exhibits the weakness of the church in Ephesus?**
- **In what ways do you think you exhibit the weakness of the church in Ephesus?**
- **Remember a time when you were living in relationship with Jesus with a “first love” sort of love and share a little about that experience.**
- **What are some of the things you might “re-do” in order to rekindle your “first love” for Jesus?**
- **What do you think was the main word Jesus was speaking to you through the message and passage of Scripture?**