

# What God Expects of the Church

Lesson 6

Revelation 2:1-7

January 8, 2023

## Keeping First Things First

### INTRODUCTION

The port city of Ephesus was a large commercial city that boasted the Temple of Artemis. It was the home of John. He lived there prior to and after his exile in Patmos.

Paul the Apostle lived and ministered at the Ephesian church for more than two years. Timothy was one of its leaders, and this church was noted for planting churches throughout the region.

At the time the book of Ephesians was written, the church was thriving. It was truly the mega church of its day. Paul's letter to the Ephesians was a letter of praise and guidance.

God praised the Ephesian church for its hard work, perseverance, holding to the scriptures, and enduring for His sake. But this church no longer exists. Its site is nothing but ruins in the country of Turkey. So, what happened?

The church forsook the love it had at first. As we go through the text of this lesson, we will look at this church and glean from its experience what churches today can take away from its fall.

***Memory verse: "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first."—Revelation 2:4***

Pray, and read Revelation 2:1-7. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

## **OBSERVATION: What does the passage say?**

1. What/who are the seven stars, and who walks among the seven lampstands? (Revelation 1:17-20, 2:1 [and Bible commentary for interpretation of the seven stars])
2. Why is God praising the Ephesian church? (Revelation 2:2-3)
3. What is God holding against the Ephesian church? (Revelation 2:4)
4. What are the consequences of disobedience? (Revelation 2:5)
5. What is the promise for obedience? (Revelation 2: 7)



3. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (written approximately 60 AD) was primarily a letter of praise and guidance. Revelation was written in approximately 95 AD, and God tells the Ephesians they had "forsaken the love you had at first". (Revelation 2:4) What did Paul pray for, and what advice did he give? How did the Ephesians later lose their first love? (Ephesians 3:14-21, 4:17-24, 6:10-18; Revelation 2:5)

**APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?**

1. Every day God hears our worship, our singing, prayers, and conversations. What would He praise our congregation for? If you could actually see His presence, how would it change your worship, singing, praying, and interaction with others?

2. The Nicolaitans were a sect in the early church that practiced some of the teachings of Balaam. Their primary sins were eating food sacrificed to idols and promoted acts of immorality. Where in the church today do you see sinful practices? When you see these practices, what is your response? When you are tempted to join in with these practices, what is your first line of defense?

3. God admonished the Ephesians because they had left their first love. Examine the passion, excitement, and joy you felt at the beginning of your Christian walk and compare it to your walk today. How does it differ? Write a prayer to retain or regain that excitement.