

Difficult Days, Part 6: The State of the Church
Leaving its First Love
Revelation 2:1-7

I. Jesus Christ is the One who examines His church (vs. 1).

- A. Because He is the creator, it is Jesus' place to judge.
- B. Because He is the Righteous One, it is Jesus' position to judge.

(Revelation 16:7; 19:1-2)

II. Jesus commended the church at Ephesus for several things they were doing well (vs. 2-3).

- A. The Ephesian church kept busy doing good deeds.
- B. The Ephesian church did not accept evil men.
- C. The Ephesian church exposed false teachers.
- D. The Ephesian church endured the difficulties that arose against her.

(Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; 2 John 10-11)

III. Jesus addresses the sin that the Ephesians had fallen into (vs. 4-6).

- A. Jesus names the specific sin that the church at Ephesus had committed.
- B. Jesus commanded the Ephesians to repent.
- C. Jesus offered a word of encouragement to the Ephesians.

(Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Matthew 4:20; 22:34-40)

IV. Jesus ends with an invite to any who would listen (v. 7).

Scripture References and Notes

Revelation 1:9-16 (NASB)

⁹ I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." ¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; ¹³ and in the middle of the lampstands *I saw* one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. ¹⁴ His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

Revelation 16:7 (NASB)

And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

Revelation 19:1-2 (NASB)

¹ After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; ² BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER."

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NASB)

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.

2 John 10-11 (NASB)

¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting; ¹¹ for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

Acts 17:11 (KJV)

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

left [ἀφίημι (aphiēmi)]

- to send away, leave alone, permit
- I send away, (b) I let go, release, permit to depart, (c) I remit, forgive, (d) I permit, suffer.
- (from *apó*, "away from" and *hiēmi*, "send")

Matthew 4:20 (NASB)

Immediately they **left** their nets and followed Him.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NASB)

⁴“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Matthew 22:34-40 (NASB)

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.

³⁵ One of them, a lawyer, asked Him *a question*, testing Him, ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And He said to him, “‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

“The story is told in New England about two girls who worked in a cotton mill. They were friends, but when one of them quit working there, they lost touch with each other. Finally, they met one day on the street. The working girl asked her friend. ‘Are you still working?’ ‘No,’ she said, ‘I got married!’ When that girl worked in the mill, she watched the clock, and every evening when five o'clock came, she had her coat on and was on her way out. It was hard work, and she didn't like it. Now she is married and she says that she has quit working. Well, if you could look at her life, you wouldn't think she had quit working. She gets up earlier than ever before to prepare breakfast for her husband and to pack his lunch. Then she throws her arms around him as she tells him good-bye. All day long she is busy cleaning house and washing clothes and caring for two little brats who are two little angels to her because they are hers. Then when five o'clock comes, she doesn't put on her coat and leave; she starts cooking dinner. About six o'clock here comes her husband. She is right there at the door to throw her arms around him and tell him how much she has missed him that day. When a man comes home in the evening, opens the door, and hears a voice from upstairs or from the rear of the house calling, "Is that you?", he knows the honeymoon is over. But this girl is in love. Her husband's workday is over, but hers has only just gotten started. She serves dinner to her husband and feeds the children. Then she washes the dishes, puts the children to bed -- and that's not easy -- and works around getting things ready for her husband for the next day. I tell you, she is weary when she finally gets into bed -- but she's not working anymore, she says! Why? Because she is in love. That's the difference. My friend, when your home life and your church life become a burden, there is something wrong with your relationship with Christ. When you get that straightened out, other things will straighten out also.”

– J. Vernon McGee, *Revelation Chapters 1-5*, 69-70.

repent [μετανοέω (metanoēō)]

- I repent, change my mind, change the inner man (particularly with reference to acceptance of the will of God), repent.
- (from *metá*, "changed after being with" and *noiéō*, "think")
- properly, "think differently after," "after a change of *mind*"; to *repent* (literally, "think differently afterwards").