

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF  
REVELATION

# CHAPTER 2B

COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY





Verse 4- *But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

Literally, “the love of you (the first) you have abandoned.” They didn’t **lose** their first love but **left** it.

The first generation of believers in Ephesus is described in Acts 19. The second and third generation believers lacked genuine enthusiasm for the work of the Lord.



*Verse 5- Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.*

*remember-* (present tense)- Keep on remembering.

*you have fallen-* (perfect tense)- The decline started long ago and is having continual consequences.



*Verse 5- Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.*

*repent-* (aorist tense)- Immediately! Single action once for all.

*Do the deeds* (aorist tense)- Do at once what you used to do- good marriage advice!



*Verse 5- Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.*

*I am coming-* (futuristic present tense)- I'm already on the way- it is and will be certain. This is before the second coming.

*Remove your lampstand-* Will cease to be a church.



Verse 5- *Therefore, **remember** from where you have fallen, and **repent**, and **do the deeds you did at first**; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.*

*unless you repent*- Church father Ignatius wrote a letter to the church around 110 A.D. praising them for their patient endurance and their resistance to deceit.

- **Remember**- Think about where you used to be.
- **Repent**- Turn around and go back to that place.
- **Repeat**- Do what you used to do then



The key to returning to your first love...



Verse 6- *But you have this, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

Nicolaitans- *nikao* (to overcome) + *laos* (people) = to overcome/conquer the people. The Nicolaitans were known for immorality and idolatry (2:14-15)

Irenaeus and Hippolytus (church fathers) take this sect to be followers of Nicolaus of Antioch, one of the seven deacons (Acts 6:5), a Jewish proselyte, who is said to have apostatized.



*Verse 6- But you have this, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

There may be a relationship between the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:15 ff.) and Balaam (2:14 ff.). The two names (Nicolaitans, Balaam) have very similar meanings in their respective languages:

“Balaam is derived from two Hebrew words “bāla” (he swallows) and “ām” (people). The two groups troubling the church at Pergamos were “swallowers of the people” (the Balaamites) and “conquerors of the people” (the Nicolaitans). It is promoting falsehood for financial gain.



Verse 6- *But you have this, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

Four basic types of church government: Monarchial, Loose Monarchial, Presbyterian, Congregational

What is the relationship of the “clergy” and the “laity?”

The Ephesians didn't let anyone come between them and the Lord or His Word. We shouldn't either!



# GNOSTICISM



Knowledge that is “higher” or “hidden”

- That the only way to attain true spirituality is to **deny the flesh** (matter) of anything that might tempt them to sin. Those who thought this way became ascetics.
- The opposite extreme, that the things done in the body are inconsequential because only the spirit counts. These Gnostics often fell into licentiousness and **indulged the flesh**.



*Verse 7- The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will grant to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.*

*to him who overcomes-* Used repeatedly (verses 11, 17, 26). This phrase is only used referring to believers.

*the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God-*  
Another way of saying “heaven.” (Genesis 2:9, Revelation 22:19)



# Overcomers are believers as opposed to:

Idolators	2:14, 20
Liars	2:2, 9, 20, 3:9
Cowardly	21:8
Unbelieving	21:8
Abominable	21:8
Murderers	21:8
Immoral	21:8
Sorcerers	21:8

1 John 5:4-5

*For whoever has been born of God **overcomes** the world; and this is the victory that has **overcome** the world: our faith. Who is the one who **overcomes** the world, but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

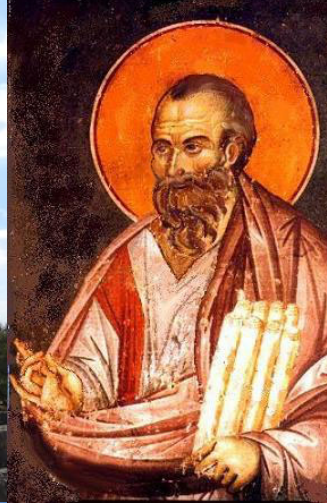


# 7 CHURCHES IN REVELATION

Ephesus  
Smyrna ✓  
Pergamon  
Thyatira  
Sardis  
Philadelphia  
Laodicea







SMYRNA (IZMIR)



# Smyrna (Izmir)

- Smyrna is not mentioned specifically elsewhere in the Bible.
- Mentioned indirectly in Acts 19:10- *“all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.”*
- Harbor that reached the city 35 miles from the sea.
- Most beautiful city in Asia Minor.
- Today an important city in modern Turkey.
- There is a Christian community today in Izmir (Coptic Christians).



# Smyrna (Izmir)

- Strong center of emperor worship and temples to pagan gods. The city of Rome was a goddess (Roma) and Caesar was god.
- Home of Homer who wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey.
- Population of 250,000 (Today, 3.5 million- 3rd largest city after Istanbul and Ankara).
- Every citizen had to burn incense to Caesar annually and proclaim, “Caesar is Lord” to receive a certificate of compliance called a *libellus*- “little book.” Jews were exempt (*religio licita*- an “allowed religion”), but not Christians.





## Myrrh

When a wound on a tree penetrates through the bark and into the sapwood, the tree secretes a resin. Myrrh gum is such a resin. Myrrh is harvested by repeatedly wounding the trees to bleed the gum, which is waxy and coagulates quickly.

After the harvest, the gum becomes hard and glossy. The gum is yellowish and may be either clear or opaque. It darkens deeply as it ages, and white streaks emerge.





## Matthew 2:11

After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.





## Mark 15:23

And they tried to give Him wine mixed with **myrrh**; but He did not take it."





## John 19:38-39

Now after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, requested of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of **myrrh** and aloes, about a hundred *litras* weight.



Verse 8- *“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:  
The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says  
this:*

*angel-* Probably the pastor (possibly Polycarp who was  
martyred about 55 years later in 155 A.D.)

*first and the last-* Much like the Alpha and Omega, Jesus is  
eternal and can promise life that is eternal.

*dead, and has come to life-* Important for martyrs to know.



**Polycarp, Pastor of the church at Smyrna**  
**155 A.D. – Age 86**



**Proconsul:** "Have respect for your old age, swear by the fortune of Caesar. Repent, and say, 'Down with the Atheists!'"

"I will have you burned alive."

**Polycarp:** "For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"

"You threaten fire that burns for an hour and is over. But the judgment on the ungodly is forever. Why are you waiting? Come do what you will."



*Verse 9- 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the slander by those who say they are Jews, and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.*

*I know-* The Lord had personal knowledge as He suffered too.

*your-* (singular possessive pronoun)- I know each of your individual tribulation and poverty.

*tribulation-* Not the Great Tribulation, but daily tribulation (oppression).