

Church with No Heart

The Church of Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7

Terms found in our text:

THE GLOWING CANDLESTICK

Revelation 1:20a - The stars represent the angels, or the pastors who considered the messengers of the local churches.

Notice that the stars are held in Jesus' right hand. Such is where all his messengers are still held today.

Revelation 1:20b - The candlesticks represent the local assemblies of believers.

Note that Jesus was standing in their midst as He is standing in our midst today.

Ephesus' Historic Background

The apostle Paul lived two years in the city and achieved some of his most brilliant successes in missions. Believers bought together their occult books before the church to burn them and renounce their evil practices. The price of their books equaled 50,000 pieces of silver.

Paul also debated the great doctrines of the faith in this city. Scripture says, he did this until "all Asia had tidings of the truth."

Paul's first letter to the believers at Corinth was written in this city.

- After Paul left, Timothy was appointed pastor of Ephesus.
- The apostle John also made his home there until he was exiled to Patmos.
- Tradition has it that even Mary, the mother of Jesus, lived there with John and was buried in the city.
- Another celebrity in the assembly was Apollos.
- Next to Jerusalem, there are few other cities in the 1st Century with such a glorious history. **Ephesus was a glowing candlestick in a magnificent city, with a magnificent history.** Even as Christ walked in the midst of

this local assembly, he commends them for their tremendous impact in the world.

THEIR MAGNIFICENT TESTIMONY

There are three areas of strength that Jesus acknowledged.

1. **Their Powerful Works** – Rev. 2:2a
2. **Their Perseverance of Faith** is noted – Rev. 2:2, 3
3. **Their Principled Stands** – Rev. 2:2, 6

However, after Paul left the city, and the memory of Apollos faded, Mary, the mother of Jesus was laid to rest in Ephesus, later in time Timothy was martyred in the streets and the Apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos. Then the great light from this church began to flicker and dim.

EPHESUS: A FLICKERING CANDLESTICK

It was a matter of the heart that caused this group to slip, not doctrine. Their heart grew cold. The church had a glowing past, but now prayer was taking second place in the church. People were failing in their private devotional life. Their devotion to the LORD was fading. No longer was Jesus first . . . even second. Sometimes they only thought of Him when they gathered on the first day of the week.

What did Jesus mean “I will come and remove your candlestick?”

HOW TO RECHARGE THE ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS?

1. **Remember** _____ : Rev. 2:5a
2. **Repent** _____ : Rev. 2:5b
3. **Return** _____ : Rev. 2:5c
4. **Regard** _____ : Rev. 2:7d
5. **Receive** _____ : Rev. 2:7e

The church of Ephesus went on for another 350 years and became the seat of the eastern bishops. But its testimony slacked. The people gave up their individual rights to a ruling class of clergy. The city died away and today only ruins remain. It's testimony of greatness and faith never shown as brightly as it did in the early years of her inception.

Such could happen to any group. It is never the church building that dies. It's the people that gather in the church building that spiritually die. It begins with the loss of their first love for Christ. Then it overflows into their attitudes and into their spiritual walk.

It then ends with the church assembly withering away to nothing, then the windows are boarded up, the grass grows long, and the building is sold and made into a private home, office spaces or is torn down.

But remember it was the people's faith that faded first. Then came the loss of souls, i.e., people in the community who perished because the assembly selfishly indulged in their carnality and took their eyes off the Lord.

Maybe you are here today and you are examining your heart and you see that your first love has dwindled. Today is the day that we turn back to the Lord.