

- B. Positive consequence/reward: the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.
- i. This hearkens back to the garden of Eden, paradise, and the tree of life.
 - ii. An Ephesians connection (Acts 19)

LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Who are the 7 churches and what is the general condition of the church in Asia minor?
- What interpretive difference might it make to understand chapters 2–3 as prophetic messages, part of the whole vision, rather than 7 cover letters?
- What is the significance of lampstands in Scripture? How does this help us understand the church as represented by lampstands?
- What is the commendation that Jesus has for the Ephesians? How did the Ephesian church test so-called apostles?
- What was the “love they had at the first” which they have lost?
- Explain orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and Orthopathos and why each is important to the witness of the church.
- What was the corrective which Jesus prescribes for the church?
- What is the consequence which will happen if the church does not respond properly?
- Churches are to be “thriving communities that bear witness to the inbreaking reign of God that Jesus announces and embodies, in all that we do and are.” We are to be “a picture of and testament to God’s reign.” (Kavin Rowe) How does this relate to our text?

Revelation: Worship and Witness in a Winner-takes-all World

Ephesus: Don’t Lose Your Lampstand

Jerry Cisar — September 25, 2022

Text: Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction to the Seven Prophetic Messages

A. Who are the Seven Churches

B. Prophetic Messages

Jeff Weima: “Despite their almost universal identification as the seven ‘letters,’ these seven passages do not exhibit even a single formal feature typically found in either NT letters or secular letters of that day.”

C. The Condition of the Churches

D. Angels

I. Christ’s Credentials (2:1)

- A. “...him who holds the seven stars in his right hand...”
 - i. The heavenly bodies represent the heavenly beings.
 - ii. *Jesus holding the seven stars is subversive against Rome, and Domitian, the present emperor, in particular.*

Weima: “After the death of his ten-year-old son in AD 83, Domitian declared that the boy had become a god and that his wife, Domitia, became the mother of a god. He issued a coin to honor his deceased son that portrays [the son] sitting on a globe in a position of power over the world. Depicting his heavenly dominion over the whole universe, he holds seven stars, representing the seven planets, in his outstretched arms.”

- iii. That Jesus “holds” the seven stars in his right-hand expresses *power over them*.
- B. “... walks among the seven golden lampstands.”
 - i. He is not only powerful; He is present.
 - ii. Why are the churches represented by lampstands?
 - a) Lampstands highlight deeds and witness.
 - Isa. 42:6; 49:6
 - b) Jesus’ teaching on lampstands & the church (Matt. 5:14-16)

“Let your light shine so brightly that others can see their way out of the dark.” – Katrina Mayer

II. Christ’s Commendation (2:2-3, 6)

- A. This commendation is heart-felt and significant.
- B. The Ephesians believers would not put up with false apostles.
 - i. The Ephesian disciples tested these *would-be apostles* by their fruit, their deeds.
 - *Orthodoxy* is revealed by *orthopraxy*.
 - ii. “You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”
 - iii. Jesus had warned, “many false prophets will appear and deceive many people” (Matt. 24:11).

- C. Jesus also warned, “Because of the increase of wickedness, *the love of most will grow cold*” (Matt. 24:12).

III. Christ’s Criticism (2:4)

- A. What is this love which they had at first?
 - John 13:34-35
- B. Orthodoxy >>> Orthopraxy >>> Orthopathos
 - i. Compassion is a feeling. It moves the person to action. It starts deep within.

G. B. Caird: “[The Ephesians] had set out to be defenders of the faith, arming themselves with the heroic virtues of truth and courage, only to discover that in the battle they had lost the one quality without which all the others are worthless.”

Augustine: “Whoever, then, thinks that he understands the Holy Scriptures, or any part of them, but puts such an interpretation upon them as *does not tend to build up this twofold love of God and our neighbor*, does not yet understand them as he ought.”

IV. Christ’s Corrective (2:5a)

- A. Remember
- B. Repent
- C. Do the works you did at first.

V. Christ’s Consequence (5b, 7)

- A. Negative consequence: remove their lampstand from its place.

- B. Positive consequence/reward: the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.
 - i. This hearkens back to the garden of Eden, paradise, and the tree of life.

 - ii. An Ephesians connection (Acts 19)