

## **230101-1 Revelation 2, 1-7, Christ's Assessment of the Church at Ephesus— CThurman**

John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day when he heard a voice behind Him that commanded him to write the things which he saw and send that to the seven churches. So, when he turned he saw a vision and in that vision several symbols. The main point is that the work of Christ among the churches, by the Spirit of God, is one of actively trying and judging. That what He speaks is the word of God and voice is among the masses of every nation, kindred, tongue and people. (cf. Re.5.9; 14.6) And that by His resurrection from the dead He has shut up death and hell so that it has no power over His people.

After John sees this the Lord then commands him to write what he *has seen*, what *he sees* presently, and the things which *he shall see*. So, John *has seen* this vision of one like the Son of man and several details concerning Him. In chapters 2 and 3 John *sees* things presently concerning the churches in light of the vision that he saw. These are the things *which are* now, showing Christ trying and judging among the several churches. What follows after chapter 3 are the things which *shall be*. Then John sees future things which come to pass in and after the last days.

John now sees and writes of things *which are*. (Chs.2, 3)

### **Chapter 2**

#### **1 ¶ Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write;**

*write*, γράψον, 2s. aor. **imper.** act. of γράφω, *to write*. (12 times in this book the apostle John is commanded '*write!*'(Re.1.11, 19; 2.1, 8, 12, 18; 3.1, 7, 14; 14.13; 19.9; 21.5)

The angel stands as a messenger to the church. He must be the pastor of the church or whoever is responsible for leading the congregation forward. The things stated to the several churches are written first to this man, and then it will be delivered to the church of which he is a part.

***These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand,***  
***holds fast***

*that holdeth*, κρατῶν, nom. sing. masc. part. pres. act. of the verb Greek verb κρατέω, tss. *to take by, to lay hold on, to hold, to hold fast, to keep, to retain, to obtain*; the noun, κράτος, is tss. *strength, might, power, dominion*.

*stars*, tss. of the noun ἀστήρ, tss. always with the English *star* (24).

***who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;***

*who walketh*, περιπατῶν, nom. sing. masc. part. pres. act. of the verb Greek verb περιπατέω, *to walk, to go, to occupy, to walk about*.

The One whose appearance is *as* the Son of man, and who is described to be the very same Judge at the last resurrection, which the prophet Daniel called *the Ancient of days* (cf. Dan.7.9) holds the seven messengers of the seven churches in His right hand. These stars are the pastors. They are held by the mighty power of God. Christ holds these messengers firmly in His grip and that they are accountable to Him.

*Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

*Heb 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

*Tit.1.9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught (by the Spirit of God), that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*

*2Ti.4.1 ¶ I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;*

*2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

*3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

*4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

*5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

Every messenger, by the grace of God, is to render His service of the word of God in the church and to the church where He has been appointed. Here the pastor receives Christ's assessment of the state of the Ephesian church as it is presently under his care and ministry. In effect the Lord Jesus is saying to him, 'This is what the church is like under your care.' The pastor then is to deliver this assessment to the church.

Can you imagine what it would be like for the pastor to receive one of these reports and have to turn around and deliver it to the church? I wonder if any of them questioned whether they should bring before the church or not? You might say no, surely not. But how many pastors today are not delivering the truth of the word of God recorded in the Scriptures to their congregations? They aren't charged with bringing what someone else says that the Bible teaches. They are charged with bringing from their own studies what the word of God declares. How many pastors brought out of the ovens of their studies in the past week fresh bread for the saints to feast upon?

*Lev.24.5 And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake.*

*6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD.*

*7 And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD.*

*8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.*

*9 And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.*

*1Sa 21:6 So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.*

The judgment of Christ is now revealed to the pastor. The singular second person pronoun *thy* may stand for the pastor or for the church body as a whole. Both would appear to be correct.

Keep in mind what Christ is doing. It is the same as is shown in He.4.12. Notice the Person of Christ, the High Priest judging the among the brethren.

1 Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς Ἐφεσίνης ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ κρατῶν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχνιῶν τῶν χρυσῶν·

**2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience,**

patient continuance

*works, ἔργα, is either nom. or acc. pl. of the noun ἔργον, tss. deed, work, labour, doing. (Re.2.2, 5, 6, 9, 13, 19 [twice], 22, 23, 26; 3.1, 2, 8, 15; 14.13; 15.3; 18.6; 20.12, 13); ἔργον is in the texts Re.2.22; 9.20; 16.11; 22.12). each of the seven churches are bolded.*

*labour, the noun κόπος, tss. trouble, labour (Re.2.2; 14.13), weariness.*

*patience, of the Greek noun ὑπομονή, ὑπό under + μένω, to abide, to continue, to dwell, endure, remain, stand, and tarry; ὑπομονή is tss. patience (Re.1.9; 2.2, 3, 19; 3.10), patient continuance, patient waiting, enduring.*

**and how thou canst not bear them which are evil:**

*canst*, δύνῃ, 2s. pres. ind. of the verb δύναμαι, tss. *can, able, might, power*.

*bear*, βαστάσαι, aor. infin. of the verb βαστάζω, tss. *to bear* (Re.2.2; 2, *bear, 3, borne*), *to carry* (Re.17.7, *carrieth*), *to take up*.

*evil*, κακός, adj. tss. *wicked, evil* (Re.2.2), *harm, ill, bad, noisome* (Re.16.2)

***and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:*** affirm

*hast tried*, ἐπειράσω, 2s. aor. ind. mid. of the verb πειράζω, tss. *to tempt, to prove, to assay, to go about, to examine, to try* (Re.2.2, *hast tried*; 2.10, *may be tried*; 3.10, *to try*).

*which say*, φάσκοντας, acc. pl. masc. part. pres. of the verb φάσκω, tss. *saying, affirming, professing*; IGNT, *pretending*.

*hast found*, εὑρες, 2s. aor. ind. act. of the verb εὕρισκω, tss. *to find, to get, to perceive, to obtain*.

*liars*, ψευδεῖς, acc. pl. masc. of the adj. ψευδής, tss. *false, liars* (Re.2.2; 21.8).

An apostle in this case would be in a lesser sense. Apostle, ἀπόστολος, simply means ‘one sent forth’ and is translated into English either *apostle* or *messenger*.

*Joh 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent (ἀπόστολος) greater than he that sent him.*

*Phl.2.25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger (ἀπόστολος), and he that ministered to my wants.*

And in a lesser sense anyone that might be 'sent forth' from a congregation to do something in their behalf.

*Ac.14.13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.*

*14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas (an apostle in a lesser sense) and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out ... (cf. Ac.14.4, apostles, again including Barnabas.)*

*2Co.8.23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers (ἀπόστολος, Paul, referring to Silas, Timothy, and Titus) of the churches, and the glory of Christ.*

*1Th.2.6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles (refers to Paul, Timothy, Silas) of Christ.*

We know by the word of God that there are only twelve men that filled the apostolic office to the Jews. When Judas Iscariot vacated his appointment to the apostolic office by killing himself that was filled by the selection of only one man, not two, three, four, etc.

*Ac.1.24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two (Why not just put both men into the office?) thou hast chosen,  
25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.  
26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (So, bringing the number back to twelve, and only twelve.)*

*Mt 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Listen, the official apostolic office was an office whose function was to serve *all the churches*.

*2Co 11:28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

Many churches do not know this basic truth concerning the two *servant offices* of the church. The deacon and pastoral offices do not follow men that leave from one church to go to another. A deacon here is not a deacon there unless the church appoints them to serve there. A pastor here is not a pastor there, again, unless the church has appointed him to serve in that capacity in that congregation. Also, be guarded about putting title upon men appoint to either of these offices. These are servant offices and the Scriptures never use the terms deacon and pastor as titles.

What appears to have happened to the Ephesian church is that some men came to them claiming either that God called them and sent them, perhaps implying that the church had an obligation to support their livelihood. Paul touches on this some in 2Corinthians.

*2Co.11.8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.*

I think that Paul is saying that he used the resources that other churches gave to him in support of his ministry and then he used it to provide a service to the Corinthian church. That was necessary for Paul to do because the Corinthian church was unwilling to support Paul in his efforts to help them.

*9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came*

*from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*

*10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.*

*11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.*

*12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion (that would exalt themselves above the saints); that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.*

*13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*

In effect these false apostles were *hirelings*, only providing a service if the church is willing to pay for it. Paul was saying that he would serve whether or not he received a dime in return. And other servants like him should have the same mind.

2 Οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ τὸν κόπον σου καὶ τὴν ὑπομονὴν σου, καὶ ὅτι οὐ δύνη βαστάσαι κακοὺς καὶ ἐπειράσω τοὺς φάσκοντας εἶναι ἀποστόλους καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν καὶ εὗρες αὐτοὺς ψευδεῖς

**3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and laboured, and hast not fainted.** διὰ **for my name's sake hast** because of

*hast laboured, κεκοπίακας, 2s. perf. ind. of κοπιᾶω, tss. to toil, to labour, to be wearied, to bestow labor; see the noun κόπος, in v.2.*

*hast ... fainted, κέκμηκας, 2s. perf. ind. of κάμνω, tss. to be wearied (He.12.3), to be sick (Ja.5.15), to faint (Re.2.3).*

In these things you did not because faint, sickly, wearied.

*Ja.5.15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick (the exhausted), and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*



The Lord said to the Ephesian church that you've been able to continue in the work, and the toil of it, and continued patiently without fainting against oppositions from evil men. You've proved some that have come in the name of Christ, or in the name of another church and found them to be liars. Christ commended them for this. But all of this considered they had fail in a fundamental point.

3 καὶ ἐβάστασας καὶ ὑπομονὴν ἔχεις καὶ διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου κεκοπίακας καὶ οὐ κέκμηκας

ἀλλ' ἔχω κατὰ

**4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because**

**thou hast left thy first love.**

your first love you have left

*hast left, ἀφῆκας, 2s. aor. ind. act. of the verb ἀφίημι, tss. to suffer, to forgive, to leave, to send away, to let alone, to omit, to yield up, to forsake, etc.*

*first, πρώτην, acc. sing. fem. of the adj. πρῶτος, tss. first, before, best, former, chief.*

*love, ἀγάπην, acc. sing. of the noun ἀγάπη, tss. love, charity.*

It's like being married without the romance of it all: the affections, the companionship, the pleasure of being together, and when parted the anticipation of being reunited again, the special communication that says 'I love you.' I think the Ephesian church lost this for Christ. They were doing the things of Christ but without love for Him. Almost like they had become a shell or form of religion without the fervency of faith for love of Him.

Often it is said that this is the love of God, the chiefest of love. While it is the chiefest of the loves it is not always used with reference to God.

*Lu 6:32 For if ye love (ἀγαπάω) them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.*

*Lu 11:43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love (ἀγαπάω) the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.*

*Joh 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved (ἀγαπάω) darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

*Joh 12:43 For they loved (ἀγαπάω) the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

But this kind of love (ἀγαπάω) is to be for the Lord, yes, certain for others, for a cause, but never above Christ.

*Joh 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

*Mt 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

*Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ...*

*Tit 3:15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.*

What kind of love should we have for Christ? A love that should be above all other things and persons.

*De 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

*Mr 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

It is not told *how* or in what way the church of Ephesus church had left their first love but they knew what the Lord meant. That their particular error is not named explicitly is likely because departing from Christ as our most beloved could manifest in many ways. Can it be that husbands or wives might love the other above the Lord? Can it be that parents, especially mothers, might be prone to put their children above love for Him? Is it possible that men might view their jobs more important than Christ Himself? Would brethren ever put love of family above Christ? Is it possible that we might allow friends and friendship in the highest seat in our hearts so that Christ is left out? How many Christians might put community affairs or political causes above the things of Christ? Is there in us a desire to be at leisure that comes before service to Christ? I think all of these, and more, are possible. I think that a culmination of any number of these led to the demise of the Ephesian church as a whole to be charged with having left their *first love*.

Any of us that have been in the faith of Christ for some time know the constant struggle against such things creeping up in our hearts and moving us away from Christ. We have the same in others of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is true. Leaving our *first love* is rarely a single one-time act and all at once. The truth is, the things we did evidenced a cooling of our love toward Christ and we left it unjudged in our lives. We wouldn't correct ourselves; we wouldn't judge ourselves. (cf. 1Co.11.31) Didn't we willingly turn a blind eye to it in our hearts, letting it go on and on until the coolness of the heart turned quite cold to Christ. And then what? Isn't what the Ephesian church facing now a judgment from the Lord? Isn't this because they wouldn't judge themselves? It is. And so it will be for us too if we follow the same path. Then Christ comes to judge us. (cf. 1Co.11.32)

One evidence that others have displaced our love for Christ is our unwillingness to correct bad behavior. We are salt in the earth. (cf. Mt.5.13) When we will not tell others the truth to spare ourselves the trouble, to spare potentially offending our spouse, children, or friends. That

is neither love to Christ or to our neighbor. It is the mark of a cold heart to Christ.

Remember, the Ephesian church was laboring, toiling, and continuing patiently in all of the forms of the faith of Christ. They opposed them that were evil, proved false apostles, being unwearied in their efforts, yet failed to love Christ first. It is true that nothing can separate us from the love which God has for us in Christ. (cf. Ro.8.39) But there are things that we might allow to come into our lives that would separate our love for Him. Jude said,

*Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

*1Pe 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

We can do everything, but without love what it is? Christ is more than just doing the things that He does. It is doing them *they way* He would do them. Faith alone is not enough. We can have the faith to do all things, but what it that without love for Christ.

*Ga 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

*1Co.13.1 ¶ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

*2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

*3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

*4 ¶ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

*5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily*





Remember how the candlestick is defined in the gospels? It is the vessel upon which a candle is set. Every candle is to be placed upon a candlestick.

*Lu 8:16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.*

...

*Mt.5.16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Couple this with how the candlestick is defined, as a church (cf. Re. 1.20), and we know that everyone that will live as witnesses of Jesus Christ should do so from within a NT church. So, to remove the candlestick, would be to remove the church so that the lights have nothing from which to shine forth Christ to others around them. Apart from the love of Christ such a church might continue to appear as any other church, doing the same things but their witness is rendered ineffectual, Christ is no longer with them, the Spirit of the LORD has departed, Ichabod is written over the door. (cf. 1Sa.4.21). Those that otherwise might have been entering in will not come here.

5 μνημόνευε οὖν πόθεν ἐκπέπτωκας, καὶ μετανόησον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποίησον· εἰ δὲ μή ἔρχομαί σοι τάχει καὶ κινήσω τὴν λυχνίαν σου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτῆς ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσης

**6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

Nicolaitans, Νικολαϊτῶν is a name compounded of two words: the verb νικάω, tss. *to overcome, to prevail, to conquer, to get the victory* + λαός, the people; together, to be a Nikolaitan was to have a ruling class over the people of God, i.e., the *clergy* vss. the *laity*. It is in the word *overcometh*, v.7

The name Nicolaitans means conqueror of the people. Evidently the Ephesians hated the idea of having a group of men, lords over the church. They hated what we understand to be a division of a church into two major

parts, a clergy and a laity. It was right to hate this division. Pastors are not lords. Deacons are not lords. They are servants!

*Mt.23.8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*

*9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*

*10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.*

*11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.*

Many of the truths of the word of God contradict how it is in the world around us. And it takes grace to change from that way to the Lord's way. Put away the notion of lords and giving titles to those in this church.

6 ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔχεις ὅτι μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν ἃ καὶ γὼ μισῶ

**7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;**

This statement is made once each of the seven churches. (cf. Re.2.7, 11, 17, 29; 3.6, 13, 22) Six times a statement similar to this is given in the synoptic gospel (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

*Mt 11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

*Mt 13:9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

It is always spoken by the Lord Jesus. As with every instance it assumes that there are present them that do not have an ear to hear.

Obviously by saying this, the Lord Jesus was not singling out those which had the physical organ of an ear and overlooking others that might have had some birth-defect. Again, He wasn't singling out those that could hear sounds and dismissing those that were deaf, because He wasn't directing His words to the natural ear or natural hearing at all. Rather He was being discriminate. He was directing His words to them that He opened their ears to hear His voice; it was the gift to be able to understand the things of Christ.



*Ro 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Hearing comes by the commandment of God, which is an opening of the ears to hear his voice.)*

*1Co.2.12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world (no, that was naturally received; original in Adam), but the spirit which is of God (from the new birth; spiritual in Jesus Christ); that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

...

*14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

To those whose ears Christ has opened to hear His voice are great promises made. Yes, all of the elect of God shall hear His voice. (cf. Jn.10.16; 10.27) But not all of the elect of God live for Christ to the fullest extent.

*Joh 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

These promises belong to the faithful.

***To him that overcometh*** ***will I give to eat of the tree of life,***  
(spoken to every church)

*to him that overcometh, νικῶντι, dat. sing. masc. part. pres. of the verb νικάω (cf. v.5, Nikolaitans).*

Because Christ overcame the world we have. (cf. Jn.16.33; 1Co.15.57; 1Jn.5.4, 5) And the reality of this victory that we have in Christ, if we are of the truth should be demonstrated in practical terms through the way that we live.

*Ro.12.21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

***which is in the midst of the paradise of God.***

*paradise, παραδείσου, gen. sing. of the noun παράδεισος, always tss. paradise (3).*

*Lu 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

*2Co 12:4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

*Re 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

The paradise of God and the garden of Eden refer to the same thing. It is the place where God would have His people be. Some think and speak of heaven as if that it the eternal destiny of the saved, but that is not to speak correctly. To begin with God put His paradise on this earth.

*Ge 2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

*garden, Hebrew, גַּן, gan, and always tss. garden; LXX, paradise, Gr. παράδεισος; but the Hebrew transliterated from paradise is פֶּרְדֵּי, par-dehs, KJV, forest (1, Neh. 2.8), orchard (2, Ecc. 2.5; Song of Sol. 4.13).*

When Adam and Eve sinned against the LORD He drove them out.

*Ge 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

Evidently the LORD then placed it in the heart of the earth where the elect of God would come after dying. Notice what Jesus said to the thief that had come to faith in Christ just before he died.

*Lu 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

*This day* was on the day that they died. Immediately their souls came into this place Jesus called paradise. But there's more. After Christ raised from the dead the place where the elect of God were in the heart of the earth (cf. Mt.12.40) was vacated. Again it appears that paradise was moved into glory where Christ brought His elect.

*2Co 12:4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

Finally, the last time we read of the paradise of God it is on the new earth.

*Re 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

And where is the tree of life?

*Re.22.1 ¶ And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.  
2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

...

*14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (The city refers to the New Jerusalem.*

There is a promise to the Ephesian saints that reaches beyond this time into the endless ages of eternity. For faithfulness they shall have right to enter into that city and eat of that tree of life. The implication is that there are many that will not have access to the city, to live in it or to eat of this fruit. Such are for those that love Christ above all else now. Put Christ above all!

7 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν νικῶντι  
δώσω αὐτῶν φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ παραδείσου  
τοῦ θεοῦ