

REVELATION 2:1-7

THE JEALOUSY OF JESUS

JESUS AS ALL I REALLY LOVE

God's Truth transcends culture and geography.

God's Word is timeless and always relevant.

This evening the needs of Ephesus and the truth for the believers who lived there are exactly what we need to hear for life in Tulsa tonight!

As we look at Ephesus tonight it reads like tomorrow's Tulsa World.

WELCOME TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS:

If you were arriving in Ephesus this evening, there is only one sight that would catch your eyes. Not the bustling harbor teeming with boats, not the roads lined with the exotic spices and goods from the east. No it would be the lustrous golden gleam of the Temple of Diana. The largest building ever built in the ancient world, the size of a city block, 10 stories high and covered with gold...

EPHESUS was FAMOUS for its BEAUTY: The Seventh Wonder of the World was at Ephesus: The Temple The temple of Artemis itself had been rebuilt after a great fire in 356 BC, and ranked as one of the seven wonders of the world until its destruction by the Goths in AD 263. After years of patient search J. T. Wood in 1870 uncovered its remains in the marsh at the foot of Mt. Ayasoluk. It had been the largest building in the Greek world. The temple of Diana was four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens. It was 425 feet long, 225 feet wide, with a forest of about 130, 30,000 pound, 60 foot high columns, all being gifts from kings of the ancient world. Each column around the altar to Artemis (Diana Romans), had life size figures all covered with pure gold.

EPHESUS was FAMOUS for its RELIGION: It contained an image of the goddess which, it was claimed, had fallen from heaven (*cf.* Acts 19:35). Indeed, it may well have been a meteorite originally. Silver coins from many places show the validity of the claim that the goddess of Ephesus was revered all over the world (Acts 19:27). They bear the inscription *Diana Ephesia* (*cf.* Acts 19:34).

EPHESUS was FAMOUS for its POSITION: Ephesus was second among the cities of the Empire. Only Rome exceeded her in wealth and power. The church in Ephesus is addressed first of the seven (Rev. 2:1-7), as being the most important church in the *de facto* capital, and as being the landing-place for a messenger from Patmos and standing at the head of a circular road joining the seven cities in order.

But in the midst of all that --

Point #1: CHRIST was SHINING IN HIS Church at EPHESUS: 2:1a **"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,**

THEY HAD POWERFUL FOUNDING: They were heirs to the greatest days of Paul's earthly ministry and the longest. Acts 19:11 describes extraordinary miraculous events. Verse 19 reports amazing conversions and life transformations.

THEY HAD GODLY NURTURING: Paul sent Timothy who stayed until church history records a mob killed him for his strong preaching against sin. John the Apostle lived there until his exile in Patmos. And then returned from Patmos to continue in ministry there.

THEY HAD TREMENDOUS HISTORY: Mary the mother of our Lord lived and died there and John the apostle gives this city an honor no other knew-- Ephesians was the only church that had 2 apostles write them inspired letters. A generation from its founding Ephesians was mature. Two generations from Pentecost, the church at Ephesus had some of the richest history.

POINT #2: EPHESUS WAS AN ASSEMBLY THAT PLEASED GOD 2:1-3, 6: **'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 6 "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate**

One structure dominated Ephesus. One location flavored the entire life of the city. The magnificent palace to gross immorality was the temple of Diana.

THERE WAS IN EPHESUS: STRONG IMMORALITY. **YOU CAN STAY PURE FOR CHRIST IN ANY CULTURE, ANY TIME, ANY SETTING.** All day long in the confines of this glittering structure, thousands of prostitutes, male and female,

gave themselves in the sordid worship of the pagan fertility deities. At dusk, they would go into the city to earn a living in the bustling atmosphere of travelers from both land and sea. We can learn the secret of how to resist an impure world and stay pure and holy for Jesus. Here is what Paul taught them 40 years earlier. You can stay pure by --

- **REPENTING OF YOUR PAST:** Ephesians 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
- **SEEING YOUR CALLING:** Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
- **LEARNING THE SPIRITUAL SECRET OF PUTTING OFF AND PUTTING ON:** Ephesians 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts
- **SEEKING CHRIST TO DEEPLY PENETRATE YOUR LIFE:** Ephesians 5:3-5 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- **RENOUNCING ALL TOUCH WITH YOUR OLD WAYS:** Ephesians 5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. (KJV)

THERE WAS IN EPHESUS: STRONG EVIL INFLUENCES. YOU CAN STAY TRUE TO CHRIST IN ANY CULTURE, ANY TIME, ANY SETTING.

Because this Temple was the most revered site in the ancient world to literally millions of worshipers, a custom had arisen that anyone was free within a 200-yard security zone. Thus, criminals came from far and wide to find a haven. And, their presence only permeated the city with evil. So how did Paul train them to stay good in that evil setting?

- **COMMIT TO TRUTHFULNESS:** Ephesians 4:25-32 wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.
- **FLEE ANYTHING THAT GRIEVES GOD:** Ephesians 4:26 be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with [his] hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be

ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (KJV)

THERE WAS IN EPHESUS: STRONG MATERIALISM. YOU CAN LIVE FOR CHRIST IN ANY CULTURE, ANY TIME, ANY SETTING.

Because of the nearly universal worship of Diana, no one would dare to rob her, thus behind the altar was a world bank, for the safe keeping of currency and treasures.

- **KNOW YOU GOT IT.** Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
- **KNOW YOU ARE SECURE.** Ephesians 1:14 which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
- **KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE.** Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
- **KNOW YOU GOT MORE THAN CAN BE COUNTED.** Ephesians 2:7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
- **KNOW YOU GOT MORE THAN YOU CAN DREAM OF.** Ephesians 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (KJV)

THERE WAS IN EPHESUS: STRONG SATANISM. YOU CAN TRIUMPH THROUGH CHRIST IN ANY CULTURE, ANY TIME, ANY SETTING.

As Acts 19 records, there were many who used and followed occultic books and their witchcraft powers of Satan.

- **JESUS IS ABOVE ALL OTHERS.** Ephesians 1:20-22 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places], 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all [things] under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church,
- **SATAN WAS OUR OLD MASTER.** Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience
- **DON'T LET SATAN IN!** Ephesians 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.
- **DON'T RELAX AROUND SATAN'S CRONIES THROUGH THE MEDIA.** Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [them]. Ephesians 6:10-16 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that

ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (KJV)

There was in Ephesus: STRONG FALSE WORSHIP. YOU CAN WORSHIP CHRIST IN ANY CULTURE, ANY TIME, ANY SETTING.

The whole worship of Diana, the silver 'letters' as the images made and sold there were called, led to very alluring, sordid and ecstatic worship. But Paul taught them what worship really was. They knew that true believers are also true worshippers of the true Lord God Almighty. So as they lived in Ephesus they were offerings a fragrant cloud of worship to God.

- THEY KNEW THE CHURCH IS A BUILDING THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED. Ephesians 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord
I like what my old friend Lehman Strauss, now in glory, used to always say about Christ's Church. He would say, "The Church is --
 1. A body that never dies
 2. A building never destroyed
 3. A brotherhood never divided
 4. A bride never divorced
 5. A battalion never defeated
- THEY KNEW THAT TRUE WORSHIP IS SPIRITUAL. Ephesians 5:18-21 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. (KJV)

POINT #4: JESUS GIVES THEM AN ADMONITION: YOU HAVE LEFT/QUIT/FORSAKEN YOUR FIRST LOVE. 2:4 "*nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*"

But watch out. You can fail Christ no matter how well you have done in the past. Never stop guarding your heart. The saints were holy but they slipped:

1. THEY FELL EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE DISCIPLED BY PAUL: They were heirs to the greatest days of Paul's earthly ministry and the longest of three years

[Acts 20:31]. Acts 19:11 describes extra ordinary miraculous events. Verse 19 reports amazing conversions and life transformations.

2. **THEY FELL EVEN THOUGH THEY THEY WERE SERVANTS OF CHRIST:**
Revelation 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: (KJV)
3. **THEY FELL EVEN THOUGH THEY THEY WERE SECURE IN THE LORD:** Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (KJV). **HOW? BECAUSE THEY KNEW THEY WERE:**
 - REALLY SAVED
 - REALLY HIS
 - REALLY HEAVEN BOUND!

Jesus has a requirement of us His children. He wants us to love Him supremely. What is First Love?

1. **COMFORTING LOVE**, Like Jacob: First love made him think 7 years seems as nothing for his bride.
2. **OVERFLOWING LOVE**, Like David: First love that breaks out of the shepherd on a lonely hillside swelling into Psalms
3. **SACRIFICING LOVE**, Like Mary Magdalene: First love that breaks alabaster boxes of ointment
4. **ASSURING LOVE**, Like the woman at Christ's Feet: First love that loves much for much is forgiven
5. **FOCUSING LOVE**, Like Mary of Bethany: That sits at the feet of Christ
6. **ENDURING LOVE**, Like Paul: That loves his appearing
7. **HUNGERING LOVE**, Like the Berean Christians: First love is that insatiable desire to read God's word.

BEWARE OF THE JEALOUSY OF JESUS

At the end of an incredible life, John the Apostle wrote some arresting words. He had met and followed Jesus as a very young man. After those climactic days of the Crucifixion, resurrection and birth of the church -- John had outlived them all. As the final Apostle he closes his message with this warning:

In First John, the last words of John to believers are a warning against idols. 1 John 5:21 Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. (NIV)

What some modern day idols? Look at some old ones the Lord condemns, and we can see the new.

BEWARE OF THE IDOL OF DISTRACTION: Jesus is so jealous He doesn't even want you to have friendship with the world. What is this? worldliness is forgetting

God, friendship/idol is on mind all time, willing to sacrifice for, blocks out other things;

⇒ Jam 4:6

BEWARE OF THE IDOL OF CAREER, JOB, OCCUPATION OR TECHNOLOGY:

Habakkuk 1:15-16 The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food. (NIV)

BEWARE OF THE IDOL OF APPETITE, DESIRE: Philippians 3:19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. (NIV)

BEWARE OF THE IDOL OF MONEY: Job 31:24-28 "If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,' if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained, if I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendor, so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage, then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high. (NIV)

POINT #5: JESUS APPEALS TO THEM. 2.5 "Remember therefore from where you Have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place— unless you repent..

3 words-

- Remember - GO back to where you departed.
- Repent - change your will,
- Repeat- things you had at the start.

What does God truly want from us? Listen to Jesus: Matthew 22:37-38 Jesus replied: "' Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. (NIV)

Point #6: JESUS ASSURES THEM. 2.7 "he who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes i will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." '

--Those with spiritual ears will listen

--Those who listen "my sheep hear my voice" and are saved.

--Those who are saved overcome

--And saved ones (overcomers) get to go to God's paradise, heaven and live endlessly.

TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE AN ABUNDANT LIFE Revelation 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. (KJV)
= Has infinite life in paradise regained - John 3:16

- AN OVERFLOWING LIFE: John 7:38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (NIV)
- AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE: John 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. [] exceeding some number or measure or rank or need, over and above, more than is necessary, superadded, exceeding abundantly, supremely something further, more, much more than all, more plainly, superior, extraordinary, surpassing, uncommon, pre-eminence, superiority, advantage, more eminent, more remarkable, more excellent]

Remember, Repent, Repeat and have that first love!!!