



## Part 2: Ephesus-A Church Just Going Through The Motions

### Revelation 2:1-7

#### #1 - Remember Who's In Charge, Revelation 2:1

#### #2 - Good News & Bad News, Revelation 2:2-3, 6, 4

##### A. Approval, Revelation 2:2-3, 6

- This was a serving church
- This was a sacrificing church
- This was a steadfast church
- This was a separated church

##### B. Disapproval, Revelation 2:4

#### #3 - Recovery Is Possible, Revelation 2:5

The church is called first, to remember; second, to repent; and third, to activate themselves in terms of what they did “at first” or in the earliest days of the church in Ephesus.

- A. **Remember:** The Ephesian Christians are asked to remember the lofty perch of the early development of the church when most and perhaps all of them had experienced the new birth, the release of the burden of the guilt of sin, and the elation of knowing that one is right with God.
- B. **Repent:** In calling the Ephesian believers to repentance Christ was asking them to change their attitude as well as their affections.
- C. **Reset:** They were to continue their service not simply because it was right but because they loved Christ.
- D. **Retribution:** Jesus warned them that if they did not respond, the light of their witness in

Ephesus would be extinguished: “I will ... remove your lampstand from its place.” In the midst of what seemed to be such a successful evangelistic and missionary foray into the most prestigious city of that part of Asia Minor, the congregation has been threatened with removal because of improper motivation.

#### #4 - Reward For The Victors, Revelation 2:7

There’s a power word-picture here, which was especially meaningful to the Ephesian Christians. At Ephesus was the temple of Artemis, the goddess of fertility, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The focal point of this elaborate temple was a large garden. In the heart of that garden, there was a tree, either an oak or an elm.

This “tree-shrine” was a special holy place for the worship of Artemis. Evidence suggests that it was, in fact, the most sacred of all the parts of the famous temple shrine and may even have been spoken of as a “tree of life.” The image appears in some form on most of the coinage from ancient Ephesus along with the additional symbols of the stag and the bee, which were associated with the worship of Artemis. John’s readers in the church at Ephesus knew well that this tree could provide no life at all, but there was a tree with which the Scripture writers were familiar from the earliest biblical stories in Genesis 1–3. This tree of life to which our first parents had access had been lost to them as a result of sin and their exclusion from the garden. John suggests that just as that tree of life was found in the midst of the initial paradise of Eden, so it has been somehow transplanted to “the paradise of God.”

Jesus says, that to the overcomer/victor, those in the Ephesian church who were genuine Christians and by this token had overcome the unbelief and sin of the world are promised the right to the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

