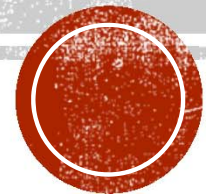


REVELATION 2

Letter to the churches



By Richard Osei

INTRO — WHERE ARE THE LAMPSTANDS?

- ¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. Revelation 1:19-20



THE SEVEN CHURCHES

- Why these seven?
- On phrase that echo's through out the letters (He that heath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches)
- Levels of Application
 1. Local – Sir William Ramsay conducted an intensive archeological investigation (Had local problems that the letter address)
 2. Admonitory to all churches (all the seven letters were sent to all the seven churches, with one specifically that that church)
 3. Homiletic (Personal)
 4. Prophetic



SEVEN DESIGN ELEMENTS

- In each of the Letters to Seven Churches
 1. Name of the Church
 2. Title of Christ Chosen
 3. Commendation (2 letter - nothing good to say about them)
 4. Concerns (2 letter - nothing bad to say about them)
 5. Exhortation
 6. Promise to the Overcomer
 7. Close: "He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches."



LETTER TO EPHEBUS

- The word Ephesus in Greek means “Desired One” equivalent to darling
- “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,
 - Title that of Christ:
- “These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:



LETTER TO EPHEBUS

■ Commendation:

- “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.
- Cling to sound doctrine
- Paul’ farewell warnings (farewell to the Ephesian Elders: Acts 20:25-31 also 2Cor 11:14-15; Thess. 5:20-21)
- John’s warnings:
 - 1 John 4:1-3 and 2 John 9, 10



LEVELS OF APPLICATION

- Local
- Admonitory (to all churches)
- Personal (Homiletics)
- Prophetic



LEVELS OF APPLICATION - LOCAL

- Founded in 1400 BC, with an early temple to an ancient Hittite fertility deity who later became identified with Diana (Tacitus)
- Ionian colonists from Athens settled there about 1100 BC
- 6th Century BC: the Lydians captured the city
- 541 BC: Croesus, their king, was routed by the Persians and Ephesus was joined to other cities in the Ionian confederation.

-it was at this time that the tutelary deity became identified with Diana (or Artemis).

- Ephesus was involved to its own disadvantage in the Peloponnesian and Persian wars (431-404BC) and served as a key naval base.



LEVELS OF APPLICATION - LOCAL

- In 334 BC: it fell to the Macedonians under Alexander
- - After his death, Lysimachus became master of the city and added great improvements.
- Ephesus unwisely sided with Antiochus of Syria against the Romans
- Eventually became the Roman capital of the province of Asia
- - But as a free city, Ephesus had its own municipal government and senate (Strabo & Josephus)



GEOGRAPHY

- Ephesus was called the “Queen of Asia”
- Proud capital of Ionia and chief harbor of the proconsular Asia
- An extremely wealthy and beautiful city, located near the mouth of the river Cayster (now Lower Meander)
- It was the principal line of communication between Rome and the eastern provinces
 - - One major road eastward through a pass to Sardis and then to Galatia and beyond
 - - A 2nd led to Magnesia and up the valley of the river Meander to Iconium
 - - A 3rd ran through Collosae and Laodicea to the Euphrates





ARCHITECTURE

- Architecturally superb, its theater was 495 feet in diameter and held 25,00 people (Acts 19)
- The Marble Way, lined with statues and fountains, ran from the temple of Artemis through the city to the Megnesia Gate.
- The Arcadian Way, another main road from the theater to the harbor, was 1735 feet long and 70 feet wide, lined with columns and shops and illuminated at night.
- The Temple of Diana
 - - The most outstanding architectural feature was the temple of Diana (daughter of Zeus, sister to Apollo)
 - - The temple of Diana, one of the “seven wonders” of the ancient world
 - Ecstatic sexual rites took place at the temple involving both male and female prostitutes





EPHESUS — NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD

- Ephesus was the largest city of its day
- As the harbor gradually became unusable, traffic diverted to Smyrna
- Ephesus was the center for the study of arts and magic
- - renowned over the world for talisman, incantations, books, charms, etc. (Cf. Burnings, Acts 19:19)
- Paul's first visit was brief and was directed toward the Jewish community
- Paul later made a 2nd visit—driven from the synagogue and settled in the school of Tyrannus for 2 years until the uproar in 58 AD (Acts 19:24-41; 20:1)
- Ephesus later became the center for missionary operations throughout Asia. Imitators followed, but without power. (seven sons of Siva: Acts 19:12-17)



EPHESUS — NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD

- Timothy may have become Ephesus first bishop (1Tim. 1:3)
- It is here that we find Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos.
- According to Eusebius and others, John returned there in 95 AD, after Patmos and spent his closing years there.



EPHESUS

- In each of the Letters to Seven Churches
 1. Name of the Church → Ephesus
 2. Title of Christ Chosen → Rev. 2:1
 3. Commendation → Rev. 2:2-3
 4. Concerns → Rev. 2:4
 5. Exhortation → Rev. 2:5-6
 6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” → Rev. 2:7
 7. Promise to the Overcomer → Rev. 2:7



CONCERNS → REV. 2:4

- Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.
- They are too busy on the business of the King, to have any time for the King
- Luke 10:38-40
- God will prefer devotion in addition to or rather than doctrine



EXHORTATION → REV. 2:5-6

- 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. ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- Nicolaitans
 - A 1st century sect claiming apostolic authority for their opinions?
 - An untranslated word?
 - Greek work – Nicao: Conquer, overcome, rule
 - Greek work – Laos: Laity; People
 - Using their clerical stature or position to rule over the laity vs. Washing of feet

Creation of a hierarchy

Jesus perspective on the church - John 13:14-15



ADMONITORY (TO ALL CHURCHES)

- Ephesus – Jesus acknowledge that, they had Doctrinal purity

Abhorrence of heresy

- Lacking Devotion to our King
 - “Left their first love”
 - Being too busy on the business of the King rather than for the King Himself



PERSONAL (HOMILETICS)

- He wants devotion, not just doctrine
- First commandment: (Deut 6:5)
 - You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deut 6:5)
- No thought of self: “If I speak with tongues of men ...” 1 Cor. 13
- First love is the abandonment of all for a love that has abandoned all
- The 3rd Commandment:
 - Ambassadorship, not vocabulary
- Devotional life
 - Private worship
 - Commitment, not melodies



CLOSING PHRASE AND POST SCRIPT

- Close: “He that hath an ear, 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.



DENOUEMENT

- Paul's warning is Acts & John's letter(s): Where 's is Ephesus lampstand today?
- Ephesus is now over six miles from the sea, unapproachable by ship
 - What was a major harbor is now a marsh dense with reeds
 - What once was the key city in Asia is now a desolation



NEXT READ CHAPTER 2 & 3

- Outline the Letter to Smyrna (2 are missing)
 1. Name of the Church
 2. Title of Christ Chosen
 3. Commendation
 4. Concerns
 5. Exhortation
 6. Promise to the Overcomer
 7. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”

