

## The Church at Ephesus

### Revelation 1:19-20, 2:1-3

#### I. Introduction:

##### A. The Vision

1. At the time of this revelation John was elderly, 90's and was exiled on the island of Patmos as punishment for being a Christian & preaching the Gospel.
2. Jesus came to him in a vision on the Lord's Day, Sunday. See **Revelation 1:9-18**.

#### II. Command to write (Revelation 1:19)

##### A. Outline of the Book

*This verse is an outline of the Book of Revelation provided by Jesus.*

1. – Write the things you have seen.
  - a. Means write about the vision, (experience John's having) which he did in chapter 1.
2. – Write the things which are.
  - a. This would include the current condition of the seven churches of Asia Minor.
  - b. Jesus told John to record what He was about to say concerning those 7 churches.
  - c. This record is in chapters 2-3.
3. – Write the things which will take place after this.
  - a. This is future tense or prophetic. Jesus was going to reveal to John the future.
  - b. This prophetic part of the book is found in chapters 4-22.

##### B. Importance of the outline

1. This outline is important because it speaks to a historical order of real events.
2. Events of chapters 4-22 are prophetic, thus not for symbolic / allegorical interpretation.
3. The literal interpretive method is the correct method for the Book of Revelation.
4. The symbols used in the Revelation speak to real literal people and events.
5. Must understand it in literal, historical, & grammatical sense to understand it correctly.

#### III. Lampstands and Stars (Revelation 1:20)

- *In John's vision Jesus was standing among lampstands and holding stars in His hand.*

##### A. Lampstands

- *The seven lampstands represent the seven churches of Asia Minor. In the vision, Jesus is standing among the local congregations of His universal church.*
  1. – Jesus is present.
    - a. Where 2 or more are gathered in the name of Jesus, He is there (**Matthew 18:20**).
    - b. Jesus specifically said He is in the midst of us. For example: When we meet for Bible study, corporate worship, or fellowship, He is in our midst.
  2. – Light of the world.
    - a. The lampstand is not the light. The lampstand just holds the light.
    - b. The lampstand is a vessel from which the light shines.
    - c. Local church congregations are the same.
    - d. We're not the light; Jesus is the light of the world.
    - e. We're vessels through which Jesus shines. See **Matthew 5:16**.
    - f. Application: The light in us is Jesus. We need to be vessels through which the light can shine unhindered.

**B. The stars**

1. In the vision Jesus is seen holding seven stars in His hand.
2. Jesus said these stars represent the seven angels of the seven churches of Asia Minor.
3. There is some theological debate over the word “angels.”
4. Given the context, the stars represent messengers or pastors of the seven churches.
5. The pastors of these seven churches are in the hand of Jesus, Lord of His church.
6. Application:
  - a – Under shepherds
    - i. Pastors are under shepherds who are accountable to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, for how they exercise stewardship over His flock.
    - ii. Pastors are spiritual shepherds who feed, guard, and care for God’s people.
  - b. – Accountability
    - i. Every pastor will give an account one day for how he shepherded God’s flock.
    - ii. May those who teach and exercise places of leadership in God’s church be reminded we are in the hand of the Master!

**IV. Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-3)**

- *Jesus began His evaluation of this church with a commendation.*

**A. Works or labor**

1. Jesus said he was fully aware of the works / labor of the Ephesian Christians in the ministry of the Gospel. The word “labor” is a qualifier of the kind or degree of work.
2. The Greek word is *Kopos* which means to work hard, to put in all of one’s effort.
3. Jesus commended them for doing the ministry with all their effort.
4. Application: Christian life is not for those who’re afraid to be sacrificially involved.
5. Christian path is one of toil & effort. We’re called to labor in the Gospel’s work

**B. Your patience**

1. Next, Jesus commends the patience of the Ephesian Christians.
2. The Greek word for patience is *hupomone* which means steadfast endurance.
3. It is often used to speak of Christians who endure under pressure and persecution.
4. Ephesian Christians were faithful to serve Jesus with a passion, even in tribulation.
5. Application: The Christian life is a marathon, not a sprint. Paul warns (**2 Tim. 3:12**)
6. We must set hearts & minds on the task Jesus has set before us & refuse to be moved.

**C. Rejected false teachers**

1. Thirdly, Jesus commended these Ephesian Christians for testing those who said they were apostles and determining they were liars, false prophets and teachers.
2. Jesus warned regarding false teachers. See **Matthew 7:15**.
3. False teachers abounded in the first century.
4. Judaizers sought to put church under the law. Libertines sought to make grace a license to sin. Professional beggars sought to live off the good graces of the church.
5. False apostles who sought to make a living of the ministry.
6. Jesus commended this church for measuring the message against what they had been taught and exposing these phonies.
7. Application: False preachers & teachers abound today. We have legalists who would place church under law. We have libertines who make grace a license for sin.
8. We have charlatan preachers who fleece God’s flock for money.
9. The Bereans of **Acts 17:11** searched scriptures daily verifying what was preached.
10. May we be noble in God’s Word, able to discern truth from error.