**The Unveiling Letters**

**Ephesus- Return to Me My Darling**

1. Ephesus background

Out of all the churches we know more about Ephesus because of its place in the book of Acts and the epistle of Ephesus itself.

Surprisingly it all paints an interesting picture.

Ephesus was a metropolis of its time. Having a vast of cultured and uncultured, wealthy and poor, learned and illiterate people. No different than any bustling city we currently live in today.

The ministry in Ephesus started off dramatically, and even saw radical transformations.

In Acts we see Paul take Pricilla and Aquila to Ephesus, which they later meet Apollos and lovingly correct him. See Apollos was a good man, loved Jesus but whether due to ignorance or spiritual laziness never grasped the message of Jesus. Being the great teacher he was, he preached a message of John the Baptizer and led many to Christ on a knowledge lever.

Paul later comes back to and meets 12 of Apollos disciples and wrecks them with the introduction of the Holy Spirit, which leads to Paul teaching and preaching. Meeting resistance, Paul without planning starts the beginning of revival. This is where we read about one of the largest revivals in the New Testament.

 Just like any move of God the enemy hinders what he can, so while the expression of God was manifested, imitators arose, men desiring to accomplish the same results, but lacking in power.

This is where the sons of Sceva story takes place. And shows that power without authority can be dangerous because it leads you away from the Father.

This broke in fear amongst all and lead to the revival and the burning of all books in magical arts. Paul gained new opposition in those that practiced those magical arts.

Paul later left Ephesus and in Miletus met with leaders of the Ephesian church and left them parting instructions.

John later arrives and heads the church there in Ephesus.

Paul understood onething and he knew how fickle the hearts of man can be. Paul then writes the epistle of Ephesus and in a quick glance summarizes a few points.

In its begging chapter he writes a poem that points to Gods awesome work HE accomplished in Jesus and through forgiveness and grace through Jesus He is building a covenant family.

He ends with a prayer to “experience” the power of the Gospel not just “know” it.

(I believe the lasting effects of Apollos was something that appeased those that were not willing to surrender all, this was probably the first seeker friendly, shallow roots gospel)

Paul continues in Ch. 2 about this idea of a multiethnic family made up of Jews and Non-Jews coming together under Jesus ‘ family.

He continues in Ch 3 to tell Ephesians to be strengthen by God’s Spirit and to Grasp the Love of Christ.

He closes out with the theme of Oneness. That unity is not uniformity, but that under One Spirit we are one Body and we are to operate in this oneness.

So Paul tells us that this influence looks like 4 different ways:

1. sing out loud
2. sing alone
3. being thankful
4. elevating others

Which Paul elaborates further this forth point by using Christian marriage.

How a wife is to submit to her Husband and how a Husband is to treat her as himself.

And beautiful irony Paul describes the role of the husband to be like Jesus, who willfully dies for His bride out of intense Love, and that of the woman to symbolize the church who respects he bridegroom and allows and receive this very love.

It’s the same idea used between children and parents and slaves and masters.

Paul then reminds Ephesians how there are spiritual evils that will try to compromise their new spiritual humanity, then Paul challenges them to stand firm and put on this Spiritual armor which Paul got from Isaiah as he would describe the messianic king in his letters.

1. Jesus letter to the Ephesians.

With this you can now come to understanding of what Jesus is after. Your Heart!

This letter as much expresses His heart in how He views us. Ephesus in Greek means desirable or darling. This is the word used in area under Grecian influence when you had the desire to marry someone.

 ***2 Write the following to[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12004a)***] the messenger of the congregation in Ephesus.[***[***b***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12004b)***] For these are the words of the one who holds the seven stars firmly in his right hand,[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12004c)***] who walks among the seven golden lampstands:***

***2I know all that you’ve done for me—you have worked hard and persevered. I know that you don’t tolerate evil. You have tested those who claimed to be apostles and proved they are not, for they were imposters. 3I also know how you have bravely endured trials and persecutions because of my name, yet you have not become discouraged.[***[***d***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12006d)***] 4But I have this against you: you have abandoned the passionate love you had for me at the beginning.[***[***e***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12007e)***] 5Think about how far you have fallen! Repent[***[***f***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12008f)***] and do the works of love you did at first.[***[***g***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12008g)***] I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place of influence if you do not repent. 6Although, to your credit, you despise the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also despise.[***[***h***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12009h)***] 7The one whose heart is open let him listen carefully to what the Spirit is saying now to all the churches.[***[***i***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12010i)***] To the one who overcomes[***[***j***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12010j)***] I will give access to feast on the fruit of the Tree of Life that is found in the paradise of God.[***[***k***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12010k)***]***

1. With the wonderful history that Ephesus has in the New Testament and the writings of her in Acts and in Paul’s Epistle to her, there is something beautiful that Jesus sees in the fact that she makes such a splash in the bible. At the time, Ephesus was one of the largest and most influential churches since Jerusalem was scattered in AD 70.

But it’s the heart He saw and His pain to have to write this.

So just like a love of your life that is falling away, the most assuring message to that lost one is the comfort that they are being held.

This is what Jesus says to us, to those who are lost in confusion, in ignorance of who He is, to those who have backslidden…

***I am the one who holds the seven stars firmly in his right hand***,( He says here that with His Power and Authority, He’s got you and will never let you go, that you can trust Him)

***who walks among the seven golden lampstands:***

1. ***2I know all that you’ve done for me—you have worked hard and persevered. I know that you don’t tolerate evil. You have tested those who claimed to be apostles and proved they are not, for they were imposters. 3I also know how you have bravely endured trials and persecutions because of my name, yet you have not become discouraged***

Jesus here points out 5 things that many ministries and churches do:

- working hard for the Kingdom

- Persevering

- not tolerating sin

- examining the claims of ministries

- enduring trials bravely

These attributes Jesus points out are great, but look at them closely, and those very same attributes applied without Love, without Covenant love, His Love can come across very heavy handed.

We all have had experienced such disconnected “Christians” before…

* those that work hard because somehow they think that what they do matters to how God see them
* those that are patience and toil with the gospel but their secrets life is void of such truth
* Those that do not tolerate sin but attack it on the human level
* Those that tear down brothers in Christ because they are not like oneself
* justification for their beliefs because it all falls apart

Jesus wants us to operate in these five areas, but out of love, from that place of humility.

-You work because you realize that life without Him is meaningless and in that realization you become like Him and act and do like Him.

-You persevere because you have a promise and assurance that He is the first fruits of the resurrection and Loving Him is not done in vain, but in Love

-You attack sin at the Spirit level, because Sin originates in Satan and you have power over sin and death through Jesus

-If a brother is wrong, you simply go to him, and lovingly explain where you think they went wrong. The best scenario is that either your right and they humbly repent, or you two have a conversation and you see where you went wrong and you repent and you both grow.

-The worst is you see an unteachable and hard heart come forth, and you know then what you are dealing with and how to intercede for that person.

You endure because you are so lovesick with the Father and His Son that you do not fear the repercussions of this life, so that gives you the strength to carry on.

Which leads to this:

***4But I have this against you: you have abandoned the passionate love you had for me at the beginning***

Jesus saw and sees that the human heart is fickle, and without deep conviction it strays.

That is why Pauls letter to the Ephesians had the blueprint.

Invitation into Covenant Family, to experience the Power of the Jesus’ good news, being strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

All attributes of a life in deep covenant with it’s Bridegroom.

1. Redemption

***5Think about how far you have fallen! Repent[***[***f***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2&version=TPT#fen-TPT-12008f)***] and do the works of love you did at first] I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place of influence if you do not repent***

Jesus points out three simple steps…..

two weeks ago we heard Todd Beery say that we have all had and seen a miracle, the very thing that saw us come to Jesus, your testimony of when you realized you needed Jesus.

So Jesus says the same thing, REMEMBER where you were…..then REPENT because I am a faithful Husband and I will see you as a Chaste Bride… then He says DO…..do not go about doing as a slave trying to earn His freedom…..DO as a bondservant, someone who is free who willfully still serves His master, DO as a Son.

***I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place of influence if you do not repent***

The next part is simply a warning, If you do not, everything you have built, whether big or small will be stripped from you.

1. What a Promise

***To the one who overcome] I will give access to feast on the fruit of the Tree of Life that is found in the paradise of God.***

I think there is a physical aspect to this promise/reward that is amazing, but I think there is a deeper spiritual part of it too, that can surpass. Kinda of like the idea that as a son I get to ride in Ferrari’s, but its because I am a SON first.

For the physical side of things,

***God caused every tree to grow that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life was also in the midst of the garden… (Gen 2:9)***

***2The river was flowing in the middle of the street of the city, and on either side of the river was the Tree of Life….14Wonderfully blessed are those who wash their robes white so they can access the Tree of Life and enter the city of bliss by its open gates. (Rev 22: 2,14)***

***NKJV*** says ***….which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*** which leads you to think that the midst or middle of is reserved for overcomers

but…

This is a description the Bridegroom King Gives to His Beloved in Songs 4:11-15

***Your loving words are like the honeycomb to me;
    your tongue releases milk and honey,
    for I find the promised land flowing within you.[***[***k***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3286k)***]
    The fragrance of your worshiping love
    surrounds you with scented robes of white.[***[***l***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3286l)***]
12My darling bride, my private paradise,
    fastened to my heart.
    A secret spring that no one else can have are you—
    my bubbling fountain hidden from public view.
    What a perfect partner to me now that I have you.
13–14Your inward life is now sprouting, bringing forth fruit.
    What a beautiful paradise unfolds within you.[***[***m***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288m)***]
    When I’m near you, I smell aromas of the finest spice,
    for many clusters of my exquisite fruit
    now grow within your inner garden.
    Here are the nine:
    pomegranates[***[***n***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288n)***] of passion,*** “Pomegranate” is taken from a word that means “exalted.” The temple pillars and the robe of the high priest were adorned with pomegranates.

***henna[***[***o***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288o)***] from heaven,*** “Henna” comes from a root word for “ransom price” or “redemption.” The fruit of mercy is seen in his maturing bride. ***spikenard[***[***p***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288p)***] so sweet,*** The Hebrew root word for “spikenard” means “light.” She (the bride) is walking in the light as he (Christ) is the Light. ***saffron[***[***q***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288q)***] shining,*** “Saffron” is the crocus, the lover’s perfume, costly and fragrant. ***fragrant calamus[***[***r***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288r)***] from the cross,*** “Calamus” is taken from a marsh plant known as sweet flag, which produces fragrant oil. The Hebrew word for this spice can also mean “purchased” or “redeemed.” ***sacred cinnamon,[***[***s***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288s)***]*** Cinnamon emits a fragrance that is representative of an odor of holiness to the Lord. It was used in the sacred anointing oil of the priests and the tabernacle. ***branches of scented woods,[***[***t***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288t)***]*** This is the incense that would be burned on the golden altar in the Holy Place. ***myrrh, like tears from a tree,[***[***u***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288u)***]*** Known as “tears from a tree,” myrrh was a resin spice formed by cutting a tree. It is a picture of the suffering love of Christ dripping down from Calvary’s tree.

 ***and aloe as eagles ascending.[***[***v***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3288v)***]***  Aloe is considered by many to be a healing balm. The presence of the Lord within her is released as a healing balm to those she touches. Jesus’ robes smelled of aloe (see [Ps. 45:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps.45.8&version=TPT)). One of the names used by some for aloe is “eagle wood.” Like eagles, we fly above our wounds, free from the past as we walk in intimacy with Jesus. ***15You are a fountain of gardens.[***[***w***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3289w)***]
    A well of living water springs up from within you,
    like a mountain brook flowing into my heart![***[***x***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs+4&version=TPT#fen-TPT-3289x)***]***

All the other rewards deal with a place where we can experience Jesus in an unimaginable way…

What if?

If we learn to Love Him the Way He loves us, now, on this Earth where our choices are so valuable because we choose who we serve,

The reward is then He experiences us in a way that is only allowed by our heart posture to Him now.