

Revelation 2:1-7 What Christ Thinks of the Church

Everyone has his or her own opinion of, and agenda for, the church. How often have you or I said, “*The church ought to do this*” or “*The church ought to do that*”? Many of our ideas may be very good, but that is not the real issue. What the Bible tells us is that in the final analysis what you or I may think of the church is important only so far as it lines up with what *Christ* thinks of the church. In this section of Revelation, we begin by exploring what Christ thought of various congregations at the time.

Warm Up Questions

- Share a time when you received an evaluation? How did you feel about the results?
- Share about a time you gave an evaluation? How effective was it?

Discovering the Word

- 1) **Read Revelation 2:1-7.** Who is addressed here? What do know, or have you learned, about this city?¹ This church (see Acts 19)?²
- 2) What good things is this church known for (by Christ)? Which of these qualities also describe you or your church?
- 3) What problem(s) is this church known for (by Christ)? On a scale of 1-10, how big an issue does this seem to be? Why?
- 4) What possible connections do you see between the praise items and the problems in this church? In your church?
- 5) What do you think you would have noticed if you visited this church?
- 6) What does Christ want them to “remember” and why? What should their repentance look like?
- 7) What roles do “remembering” and “doing again” play in rejuvenating one’s “first love”?
- 8) What are the consequences of disobedience and obedience? Do any of these surprise you?
- 9) As time permits, share memories of what you loved doing when you were a new believer.

¹ Watch at least one of these 5-minute videos <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvPCtrZ1K00> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TW5-J0hSrm0> At this time Ephesus was truly a multi-cultural world-class city, the 4th largest city in the Roman Empire (1st = Rome, 2nd = Alexandria, 3rd = Antioch). It was a major financial centre with a major seaport. When it came to sports, it was home to the Pan-Ionian Games (surpassed only by the Olympic Games in Athens) and was a major religious centre with temples for emperor worship and the temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient World (the size of two football fields). It also had an amphitheater that could seat 24,000 people. (Johnson, 53-54)

² The church was started by the apostle Paul (Acts 19) and then led/pastored by Priscilla & Aquila (Acts 18:18-19; 1 Cor. 16:8,19) then Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3). According to church tradition John later became the pastor of the church in Ephesus and wrote the fourth gospel there. It was a very influential church in an influential city.