

“Christ Evaluates the Churches”
The Revelation of Jesus Christ—Part 4
Revelation 2:1-11

The Church at Ephesus

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:
These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks
among the seven golden lampstands." Revelation 2:1

Why are these seven churches evaluated?

1. Approval—Complimented by Christ!

"I know your *deeds*, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you
cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be
apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have
endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary."
Revelation 2:2-3

This was a hardworking church.

This was a doctrinally diligent church.

This was a sacrificing church.

2. Accusation—Now for the bad news!

"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love."
Revelation 2:4

What is “first love”?

They forgot what was most important.

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many
things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will
not be taken away from her." Luke 10:41-42

Question: *What are the symptoms of losing our first love?*

We lose the joy of the Christian life. (Galatians 5:22-26)

We lose our ability to love others. (I John 4:19-21)

We lose perspective on ourselves. (I Corinthians 13:1-3)

3. Admonition—Three steps to recovery!

"Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you
did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand
from its place. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the
Nicolaitans, which I also hate."
Revelation 2:5-6

Remember when you were really in love with Jesus.

Repent. Confess your current reality.

Return to a life of loving Jesus.

Question: *Who are the Nicolaitans?*

4. Are you listening?

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”
Revelation 2:7

Question: *What do we know about the tree of life? (Genesis 2:9; Genesis 3:22; Revelation 22:2)*

The Church at Smyrna

“To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.”
Revelation 2:8

1. Approval—Complimented by Christ!

“I know your afflictions and your poverty — yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
Revelation 2:9-10

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.
James 1:12

2. Accusation—No bad news!

3. Are you listening?

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.”
Revelation 2:11

Question: *What do we know about the second death? (Revelations 20:6 and 14)*