

Jesus Wants a Passionate Church

(Revelation 2:1-7)

Revelation 2:1-7 (NKJV) – Bible passage [my explanatory notes]

¹To the angel ["angelos" or "messenger", that is the pastor] of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds ["echo" in Greek, meaning "to hold in one's firm grasp" or "hold tightly" the tense of the word means Jesus is constantly holding them and won't let go] the seven stars [these stars are the messengers (see Rev. 1:20), which are the pastors of the seven churches] in His right hand [a place of honor, protection, security and accountability], who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands [symbolically saying Jesus walks in the middle of His churches]:

- Haggai 1:13 says, "Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger ["malak" in Hebrew, but "angelos" in the Greek Septuagint (LXX)], spoke the Lord's message to the people..."
- Malachi 3:1 says, "Behold, I send My messenger ["malak" in Hebrew; "angelos" in Greek LXX]." Malachi 2:7 says "For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger ["malak" in Hebrew; "angelos" in Greek LXX] of the Lord of hosts."
- Luke 7:24 refers to men who were followers of John by saying, "When the messengers ["angelos" in Greek] of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John..." Luke 7:27 says, "This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger ["angelos" in Greek] before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You'."
- James 2:25 refers to the two men who came to Rahab by saying, "Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers ["angelos" in Greek] and sent them out another way?"



The Temple of Artemis was a Greek temple in Ephesus dedicated to the goddess Artemis (identified with Diana, a Roman goddess).

"According to Pliny, the Temple of Artemis was situated on a platform about 425 by 239 feet. The temple itself was **342 by 163 feet**, with **127 columns that were 60 feet tall and over 6 feet thick**. 36 of these columns were sculptured and overlaid with gold.... At one time, the waves of the Mediterranean could actually come right up to one side of the temple."

- <https://drivethruhistory.com/the-temple-of-artemis-at-ephesus/>

Extra Notes:

- Additionally, Jesus charged these “angels” with the responsibility of presenting the encouraging words or corrective words of the exalted Christ to the seven churches. “[Y]et nowhere does the New Testament teach that heavenly angels are involved in church leadership or deliver messages to local congregations.”¹

²“I know [know by observation and experience] your works, your labor [or “toil” – to the point of exhaustion], your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil [they refused to compromise with the worldly festivals and pagan rituals]. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars [They had great discernment. See Acts 20:22-29 and 1 Thess. 5:20-21];

³and you have persevered and have patience [or, “endured patiently” – they had remained faithful for 40+ years since the church was founded], and have labored for My name’s sake [They were willing to suffer for Christ. They took up their cross and followed Christ – Matthew 16:24] and have not become weary.

⁴Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left [abandoned or forsaken] your first love [the passion you had for God when you first became a Christian].

⁵Remember [Greek tense means “keep on remembering”] therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works [those things that continually you did when you loved Jesus the most!], or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place [or, “remove your church from its place of usefulness and Gospel impact”]—unless you repent.

To “repent” is more than simply feeling remorse for sin. It is to change one’s mind about sin, which leads to a change in conduct (Luke 13:3, 5).

⁶But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

The Nicolaitans affirmed and condoned immorality, idolatry and an “anything goes” lifestyle in Christian conduct.

“Irenaeus writes that Nicolas, who was made a deacon in Acts 6, was a false believer who later became apostate; but because of his credentials he was able to lead the church astray. And, like Balaam, he led the people into immorality and wickedness....

“Clement of Alexander says, ‘They abandoned themselves to pleasure like goats, leading a life of self-indulgence.’ Their teaching perverted grace and replaced liberty with license.”²

⁷“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes [see 1 John 5:4-5] I will give to eat from the tree of life [first seen in Eden (Genesis 2:9, 17; 3:1-24). It appears again in the new Jerusalem in Revelation 22:2], which is in the midst of the Paradise of God [refers to heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:3].” ’

¹ Rick Renner, *A Light in the Darkness: Seven Messages to Seven Churches, part 1* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 2017), 100.

² John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1994.