

Revelation 2 Part 2

This is Richard Oliver, with part five of the look at the book of Revelation, we're in chapter two where it starts in verse one, *'Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;'*

Now we know that this was Christ. When John looked back in chapter one he saw the seven branch candlestick. He was told that this represents the seven churches and in the midst of that candlestick he saw Jesus Christ.

He also says in chapter one that He holds the seven stars in His right hand, and those stars are the seven messengers, or angels, one for each church.

Okay, verse two, *'I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil:'*

The early church could deal very firmly with things that were wrong, people lying, people cheating, people living lives that were simply not according to the Christian faith. They didn't have to judge and deal with them specifically and cause punishment by stoning or anything like that. These people were judged by God. As an example the book of Acts tells us a story of Ananias and Sapphira his wife, they sold a possession and decided that they would keep back part of the price but tell the church that they were giving all of the money to the church. And, of course, each in turn died. So there was God's judgement on people within that early church.

And, going back to chapter two Revelation, *'and thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and has found them liars;'*

An apostle is a missionary, a man appointed by God to start churches, to be a leader, a setter in order, a key member of the early church. St Paul was an apostle. Silas was. Peter, James, John, all of those were all apostles. So they were missionaries, I suppose is the closest word we would get. And that carries with it automatically a vision of someone with authority, with power, with responsibility, someone people can look up to. And, of course, there's always people who want to try and take those positions for their own good, and to gain influence and power over other people. But the Ephesus church obviously sorted them out.

Verse three, *'And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.'*

'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.'

Now this is the church from about the year 52 through to year 150. They had started as a great move of God, fearlessly reaching out. This was the lion church, the church that was turning the Roman world upside down, in fact the whole world upside down. They were brave. They fearlessly brought the message of Christ, even though it sometimes meant the loss of their own lives.

But the love had gone. It's the love of those who are going to be lost, love for them that should be driving the Christian church. We want to save people because we do not want to see them lost. We love them.

On to verse five, *'Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.'*

'But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.'

Now, if you look up Nicolaitan in many theological books it will talk about a mysterious sect within the Christian church, but, in actual fact, it is people being people. 'Nico' means 'to conquer'. 'Laitan' is the 'laity'. This is the beginning of the separation of the laity from the clergy. The clergy tend to think themselves superior to the laity, and of course that isn't the case at all. Each one of us is given a gift and a calling by God. It is up to us to use it for the good of the Kingdom, and for the good of all the people there. Jesus Himself talked about who is greater, he who sits at meat or he that serves. And from a purely natural point of view, the one that sits at meat is the greater, the one that sits down in the restaurant is the one being looked after, the king that sits there and the waiters look upon him, and bring him the food. That, the person who sits at meat is the greatest. The cook, the waiter etcetera are there to serve, and the cooks and the waiters are actually the ministry, the people who prepare the Word, the spiritual food and bring it to the people.

The early church, the Ephesians, hated the Nicolaitans. They saw that the body of Christ was made up of all sorts of different people each with their gift. So they rejected them.

And verse seven, *'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;'*

Now that's interesting, because it isn't just a case of reading what's there and taking it at face value, there is a spiritual message behind each church message. And that's one of the reasons we can see that this is a church age, and it needs a spiritual ear to catch what's going on.

'To him that overcometh', to finish verse seven, 'will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.'

The Tree of Life, of course, was in Eden, and it will be in the heaven to come or the time to come. And the Tree of Life is, of course, the person Jesus Christ.

May God bless you.