

Christ Praises His Own



Introduction

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Revelation 2:2,3,

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars;

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

How beautifully the Saviour praises and commends His children. He takes full account of their fine spiritual attitudes and behavior. He knows that there is weakness amongst them, but as yet He does not cry out against it. Isn't that just like the Lord? He knows how to encourage us in the right matters and discourage us in the wrong matters. We could all learn a good lesson right here in running the church and our families. And better still, we could all learn a good lesson in that God deals with each one of us in exactly this way. Don't ever be discouraged, Saint of God, for God is not ungracious to forget your labors of love. Whatever we do, even giving a cup of cold water to some one, has a reward and blessing from the Lord.

"I know thy works, thy labour, and thy patience." As He walks in the midst of His church, He is aware of the suffering of His people, and He cares. As it was in the days of the captivity in Egypt when He heard their cries, He Who never changes still hears the cries of the oppressed as He walks amongst them. The very word, labour, signifies a weariness through oppression. God's people do not only work for Him in a labour of love, but they suffer for Him with joy. They are patient in bearing the yoke. This first age suffered great

persecution. It had to work hard to preach the Gospel and shed forth truth. Their high calling in life was to serve God, and when their hopes in life were blighted they were patient and committed all to Him Who had promised a lasting recompence in heaven for what they had given up for Him on earth.

I think we ought to stop here and deal with the thought that God's people have always been and always will be persecuted. You know that Genesis is the book of beginnings, and what you find started there will carry right on through the Revelation and never change. There we see that Cain persecuted and killed Abel because the latter pleased God. Then we see a perfect picture in Abraham's son of the flesh, Ishmael, who teased and fought the son of promise, Isaac. And there was Esau, who hated Jacob and would have killed him, had not God intervened. In the New Testament we find Judas betraying Jesus, while the religious orders of the first century attempted to destroy the early believers. The children of this world, controlled by the devil, hate the children of God who are controlled by the Spirit.

No matter how just and upright a Christian is before the public, and how gracious he is to his fellow man, doing naught but good, let him confess Christ as his Saviour and acknowledge the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in tongues, prophecy, healing and miracles, and he will be condemned. The spirit of this world hates the Spirit of God, and because it can't overcome the Spirit of the Lord it tries to destroy the vessel in whom the Spirit of Truth dwells.

Persecution and trials are a natural, normal part of the Christian life. There is only one thing you can do about them. Commit them all to God, judge not, and leave their outworking and final judgment to Him.

"Thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and

hast found them liars.” These Ephesians believed that God's people ought to be holy. According to this verse they took steps to keep the body unleavened from sin. Most evidently the apostasy had already started. Sin had entered into the church. But they were obedient to the words of Paul when he said to put away the wicked from amongst them. They were a separated people. They had come out of the world, and now they weren't going to let the world enter amongst them. They would not put up with sin in the church. Holiness wasn't a phrase with them or a figure of speech; it was a way of life.

“Thou hast tried them that say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” My, that is a blunt statement. “Thou hast tried them who call themselves apostles.” Isn't that presumptuous? What right has a people to try those who call themselves apostles? And how do they try them? Oh, I love this. Here it is in Galatians 1:8,

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have (already) preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

It was the apostles who brought the original Word to the people. That original Word could not change, not even a dot or dash of it. Paul knew it was God Who had spoken to him so he said, “Even if I come and try to give a second revelation, try to make one little change in what I gave originally, let me be accursed.” You see, Paul knew that first revelation was correct. God can't give a first revelation, then a second revelation. If He did, He would be changing His mind. He can give a revelation and then add to it, as He did in the Garden of Eden when He promised the Seed to the woman, and then later designated that Seed had to come through Abraham, and then later said it would come by the same blood lines in David. But it was the same revelation. It only gave the people more information to help them receive

and understand it. But God's Word can't change. The Seed came exactly as revealed. Hallelujah. And see what those false apostles were doing. They came with their own word. Those Ephesians knew that Word as Paul had taught it. They were full of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of Paul's hands. They looked those false apostles in the eye and said, "You are not saying what Paul said. You are, therefore, false." Oh, that sets my heart on fire. Get back to the Word! It is not you that really tries the apostle, and prophet and teacher, IT IS THE WORD THAT TRIES THEM. One of these days there is going to come a prophet to the Laodicean Church Age and you will know if he is the real one sent from God or not. Yes you will, for if he is of God HE WILL BE IN THAT WORD EXACTLY AS GOD GAVE IT TO PAUL. HE WON'T DEVIATE FROM THAT WORD FOR A MOMENT, NOT BY ONE IOTA. In that last age, when there will be many false prophets appearing, watch and see how they keep telling you that if you don't believe them and what they say, you will be lost; but when that LAST DAY PROPHET comes on the scene, if he is truly that prophet, he will be crying out, "Get back to the Word or you are lost." He won't build on a private revelation or interpretation, but on the Word. Amen, and Amen!

These false apostles are the grievous wolves that Paul spoke of. He said, "Once I am gone they will try to come and claim equal revelation; but their purpose is not to help you, but destroy you." Acts 20:27-32,

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing

The Voice Of The Spirit

Revelation 2:7,

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree Of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." It may be that millions will hear these words or read them. But how many will pay heed to them? That we do not know. But he who will lend his ear and want to know the words of truth will find the Spirit of God enlightening him. If your ear is open to the Word, the Spirit of God will make the Word real to you. Now that is a work of the Spirit. I can teach you the truth, but if you don't open your ear to hear it and your heart to receive it, you won't get the revelation.

Now notice, it says that the Spirit is speaking to the churches. That is plural, not singular. The Spirit did not have John write this down for a local Ephesian church, nor for the first age only. It is for all church ages. But this is the church of beginnings. And thus it is like the Book of Genesis. What started in Genesis holds true throughout the entire Word and finally closes out in Revelation. Thus, this church beginning in Acts is God's blueprint for all ages until she closes out in the Laodicean Age. Watch it carefully. Let every age take heed, for what is going on here is only the start. That little tree that was planted is going to grow. It is going to grow through the ages. This, then, is a message for every Christian through every age until Jesus comes. Yes, it is, for it is the Spirit speaking. Amen.

the Word aside, deny the work of the Spirit of God, subjugate the laity, and make it impossible for the laity to worship God unless they come through them or through their pattern, which is nothing but a blueprint of unbelief from Satan himself.

Where, oh where, are we spiritually? We are in a wilderness of darkness. How far we have wandered from the first church. Pentecost is nowhere in view and the Word cannot be found. Apostolic succession, which today abounds, is not found in the Word. It is a man-made device. It supersedes illegally the truth that GOD, NOT MAN, has set His leaders in the church. Peter was not even in Rome. Yet they lie and say he was. History proves he was not. There are people who read history, but shrug their shoulders and go back to believing a lie. Where can you find the 'vicar of Christ' in the Word? No one takes His place, yet it has been done and people accept it. Where can you find that 'added revelation' is accepted by God, especially revelation contrary to one already given? Yet they accept it and rest on it. Where do you find a 'purgatory'? Where do you find a 'mass'? Where do you find 'paying money to get out of hell'? It is not in the Word, but men put it in their own book and by it took over the people, ruling them by fear. Where do you find that 'man has the power to forgive us as though he were God'? "Grievous wolves," is hardly strong enough to describe them. Nicolaitanism. Organization. Man over man.

Get back to God. Repent before it is too late. See the handwriting on the wall. It is writing judgment. As the sacred vessels were desecrated and thus brought the wrath of God, now the sacred Word has been desecrated and the Spirit grieved, and judgment is here, even at the door. Repent! Repent! Go back to Pentecost. Back to the leadership of the Holy Ghost. Back to the Word of God, for why will ye die?

the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things (their own word and ideas, not God's) to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

John knew of them, also, for he said in I John 4:1,

"... many false prophets are (already) gone out into the world."

That antichrist spirit was already infiltrating the church, and it was doing it by going against the Word. Why here is where it all started. Right here in the first church age. Already they were denying the Word and setting up their own creeds and philosophies instead of the Word. That is anti-christ, for Jesus is the Word. To be anti-Word is to be anti-Jesus. To be anti-Word is to be antichrist, because the Spirit and the Word are ONE. If you are anti-Word, you will have to be antichrist. AND IF IT STARTED IN THE FIRST CHURCH IT WILL HAVE TO GROW UNTIL THE END WHEN IT TAKES OVER. And that is exactly what you will see as we cover all the ages. It starts out real small in the Ephesian Age and it grows in every age until the anti-Word, antichrist system takes over entirely and the infallibility of the Word is repudiated by the false apostles of the false church.

Now it is easy to get a wrong impression of what we are talking about because I am making this so strong. It could sound to you as though this anti-Word, antichrist spirit, is a

complete repudiation of the Word, a denial of the Bible culminating in its rejection. No sir. It is not that. What it is, is Revelation 22:18,19,

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

It is the changing of even just ONE word by taking away or adding to it. It is the original trick of Satan in the Garden of Eden. He just added one little word to what God had said. That did it. It brought death and destruction. And in Ephesus, it was just the same. Just a word added, just a word taken away, and the anti- Word, antichrist spirit began to flourish.

Did you get it now? There are those twins again. There are those two trees again, growing side by side in the same earth, partaking of the same nourishment, drinking in the same rain, and benefiting by the same sun. But they come from DIFFERENT seeds. One tree is FOR the Word of God, exactly as God gave it, and loves and obeys it. The other tree is from the seed that is anti the Word of God and changes it where it wants to. It substitutes its own creeds and dogmas for the living true Word exactly as did Cain, who ended up killing Abel. But fear not little flock. Stay with the Word. Keep that Word between you and the devil. Eve did not do that and she failed. And when the church lets down on the Word she goes into the depths of the darkness of Satan.

"And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." This is just about

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Paul saw it coming. But he warned them about this subtle priesthood that would come and take over with its false doctrines. He knew they would implement a way of worship that excluded the people from any part in a Holy Spirit ministry. And even right today among those who claim to be free and full of the Spirit there is not too much freedom in the laity, and the best we can see is a few preachers with inspired preaching while the flock just sits there and tries to absorb it. This is a far cry from Paul who said that when all came together, all had the leading of the Spirit, and all participated in Spiritual worship.

And the church corporate has never learned this lesson from the Scripture nor from history. Every time God gives a visitation of the Holy Spirit and people get free, after awhile they bind themselves right back to the very thing they came out of. When Luther came out of Catholicism, the people stayed free for awhile. But when he died, the people simply organized what they thought he believed and set up their own creeds and ideas and repudiated anyone who said opposite to what they said. They went right back to Catholicism with a little different form. And right today many Lutherans are ready to go all the way back.

Oh, yes! In Revelation 12, that old whore had many daughters. These daughters are just like mother. They set

was fully come, there came a priest with a wafer and said, 'Stick out your tongue,' and he laid the wafer upon it, and he himself drank some wine and said, 'You have now received the Holy Ghost.'" Incredible? That is exactly what Nicolaitanism has come to. They say, "Never mind what God's Word says. You can't understand it. We have to interpret it for you. Furthermore the Bible is not finished. It has to change with the times and we will tell you what the changes are." How contrary that is to the Word of God that emphatically states, "Let God be true, but every man a liar," whenever there is a conflict with the truth. Heaven and earth will pass away, but NOT ONE WORD of God will fail. So the people are led by people who presume to be what they are not. They say they are vicars of Christ, but what they are is antichrist.

Here is another sad story. It is the story of water baptism. In Jesus' day and after Pentecost they were immersed in water. No one can deny that. Educated men say that all they did was pour water on them because it was easy to find little holes of water in many places. And when they pour water on them, they do it in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, as if those titles were real names, and as if there were three Gods instead of just one. But stay in that organization and try and preach the truth of immersion in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be put out. You couldn't be led of God and stay in there. It is impossible.

Now Paul was a prophet, taught by the Holy Ghost. If Paul baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and said anyone that did different from his preaching was accursed, then it is time to wake up and see that the church is no longer controlled by the Holy Ghost but it is controlled by the Nicolaitanes. Acts 20:27-30,

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

the same as was said in verse two. But in verse two the work, labor, and patience were from guarding the sacred Word which was committed unto them. How they kept away the adversaries. What a credit they were to Paul. But in this verse their persecutions and trials and patience are over the blessed Name of Jesus.

You know that is not at all strange, for it is the Word and the Name that brings the enemy pouring after us like a flood. That mighty Word which was manifested in healings, signs, wonders, and other demonstrations, caused the Pharisees to scream out for the death of the true believers. And now that Name, hated and despised by the Jews, is mocked by the cultured as they laughed to think anyone could be so foolish as to believe in a man who died and rose again and is now seated in heaven. So here were the religious persecutors, the Jews, cursing this Jesus, Who to them was a false Messiah; and here were the others laughing with delight and mocking sarcastically at the Name of a new god, Who to them wasn't a god at all.

Now here is something else that started in that age and will continue right down through the ages, getting deeper and darker. That is, people were repudiating that Name. It was not the true Ephesian Church that was doing it. No sir. It was the false apostles. It was the outsider trying to get in and defile the believers. The Ephesians knew that Name and loved it. Recall the origin of that Ephesian Church. A little group of people who were looking for the Messiah heard that a prophet who called himself the forerunner of the Messiah had appeared in the desert of Palestine and was baptizing people unto repentance of sins. These, then, received the baptism of John. But when Paul came to them he showed them that the prophet was dead, that Jesus had come and fulfilled His life as a sacrifice for sin, and that NOW the Holy Ghost was come and would enter in and fill all true believers in Jesus, the Messiah. When they heard this, THEY WERE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, and when

Paul had laid his hands upon them, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. They knew what it was to obey the Word, to be baptized in His Name (Lord Jesus Christ) and in that way they knew they would be filled with the Holy Spirit. You could not get that people to change. They knew the truth. Acts. 19:1-7.

They knew the power of that Name. They saw that Name was so powerful that even aprons taken from the body of Paul and sent in Jesus' Name to suffering people could deliver the sick from all manner of diseases and cast out evil spirits. So manifestly wonderful did that Name perform that reprobate Jews at Ephesus attempted to use it to exorcise devils. Acts 19:11-17,

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul;

So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus Whom Paul preacheth.

And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks

the SPIRIT OF GOD, for the Word and Spirit are ONE. Hebrews 13:7,

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

But see what was happening back there. That false vine was getting a hold and it was teaching that rulership by man was right. It taught that the church had to be governed. It taught a control over the people, but instead of doing it God's way, they simply took authority and vested all the spiritual power in their own hands and came out with a holy priesthood standing between God and the people. They went right back to the old Aaronic system. They became antichrist for they disposed of His mediatorship and imposed their own. God hated that. The Ephesians hated that and any true believer will hate it too. We would have to be stone blind not to see that same thing at work all through the ages and right now it is the worst of all. What it was, was organization. That separated the people. God's people are supposed to be one. By ONE Spirit are they ALL baptized into one body and EVERYONE is to be moved upon by the Holy Ghost and EVERYONE is to participate in the worship of God. But men wanted the pre-eminence, so they took over control, and bishops became archbishops, and with imposing titles they by-passed the Word of God and taught their own doctrines. They got the people to obey them until the time came that their way of worship did not in any way at all resemble the early days after Pentecost. These deeds were the beginning of apostolic succession. From apostolic succession it was one easy and quick step to "church membership" as the means of saving grace. The Word was reduced to a creed. Antichrist by his spirit was predominating the church.

Look at it today. If you read Acts 2:4 the way some do, you could read it this way, "Now when the day of Pentecost

Nicolaitanes. And that spirit is going to be found fighting the True Vine until it is destroyed by God. Now have you got it?

Alright. Now what was the spiritual climate of that church? It had left its first love. Leaving its first love of the Word of God was revealed to us as having fallen from its origin, which was Pentecost. In plain English, that means this church was in danger of being taken away from the leading of the Holy Spirit, the control of the Spirit. This was exactly what took place after Moses led Israel out of Egypt. The way of God was to lead them by the cloud of fire, prophetic utterance, miracles and signs, and God-given wonders. This was to be accomplished by 'God- selected', and 'God- ordained', and 'God- equipped', and 'God-sent' men, with the whole camp being dominated by a Holy Ghost move. They rebelled and wanted a set of rules and creeds to go by. Then they wanted a king. Then they wanted to be exactly like the world and went into complete apostasy and oblivion. That is exactly how the first church age started, and it will get worse and worse, until the Holy Spirit is completely rejected and God must destroy the people.

See how it started out in the early church. It was called deeds. Then it became a doctrine. It became the standard. It became the unbending way. It finally took over and God was pushed aside. Oh, it started so small, so quietly, so inoffensively. It looked so good. It seemed so sound. Then it caught a hold, and like a python, it squeezed out the very breath and killed all the spirituality there was in the church. Oh, that false vine is subtle. It is like an angel of light until it gets a hold on you. Now I want to say that I believe in leadership. But it is not the leadership of men I believe in. I believe in the leadership of the Holy Ghost coming through the Word. I believe also, that God has set men in the church, men who are gifted by the Spirit; and they will keep the church in order. I believe that. I believe also that the church is ruled over by men that God sends to take charge. But that rule is BY THE WORD, so that it is not men really ruling but

also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

They knew the righteous life that accompanied the bearing of that Name, for whosoever nameth the Name of the Lord, let him depart from sin. Be ye holy, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord. Thou shalt not bear the Name of the Lord thy God in vain. These Ephesians were CHRISTIANS. They bore a Name, and that Name was Christ, Who was the Spirit of God within them, and Which was one of the threefold Names of their Lord.

"... And for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." These believers weren't laboring for Paul, or for an organization. They weren't committed to programs and institutions whereby they built up holdings of value. They worked for the Lord. They were His servants, not the pawns of organization. They didn't go to church on Sunday and talk about that Name and then forget it the rest of the week. They didn't give lip service to that Name. No Sir. It was their lives that were given.

All they did, they did in that Name. In that Name they acted, but if they could not act in that Name, then they refrained from acting. These were heavenly placed Christians whose behaviour was in the Lord.

But that false vine group that wanted to defile that Name hung like skulking wolves in the dark, waiting to get in and tear down. But the saints stood the test and kept the Word and the Name.

Your First Love

Revelation 2:4,

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee,

because thou hast left thy first love."

To understand this you must realize that the Spirit is not speaking to the original saints of Ephesus alone. This message is to the entire age which lasted about 120 years. Its message, then, is to all the generations in that span. Now history keeps repeating itself. In the generations of Israel we see revival in one generation, only to see the fires fading in the next. In the third generation, embers may be glowing slightly, but in the fourth there may be no vestige whatsoever of that original flame. Then God lights the fire again, and the same process is repeated. It is simply the manifestation of the truth that God has no grandchildren. Salvation is not passed on by natural birth any more than is there any truth to apostolic succession. It isn't in the Word. You start out with truly born-again believers, and when the next generation comes along they are no longer just plain Christians, but they have taken a denominational name and are now Baptists, Methodists, etc. That is exactly what they are, too. They are not Christians. You have to be born of the will of God, not the will of man, to be saved. But these folks are all coming together now by the will of man. I don't say that some of them aren't right with God. Not for a minute do I say that, but the original fire has died down. They are not the same any more.

The fervent desire to please God, the passion to know His Word, the cry for reaching out in the Spirit, all begins to fade and instead of that church being on fire with the fire of God it has cooled off and become a bit formal. That is what was happening back there to the Ephesians. They were getting a bit formal. The abandonment to God was dying out and the people weren't too careful about what God thought of them as they began to be careful about what the world thought of them. That second generation coming on was just like Israel. They demanded a king to be like the other nations. When they did that, they rejected God. But they did it anyway. That is the history of the church. When it thinks

What are these Nicolaitanes? The word comes from two Greek words. Nikao, which means to conquer, and Laos, which means the laity. In plain fact, somebody was doing something in that early church which was conquering the laity. If the laity were being conquered, then it must have been some "authority" there doing it.

What was it that God hated that was happening in that church? What was going on then, and is now going on today, is exactly what the word Nicolaitane means. The people were being subjected somehow in a way that was absolutely contrary to the Word of God.

Now to get the real meaning of what we are about to go into, I must caution you to ever keep in mind that religion (spiritual matters if you like), is composed of two parts that intertwine but are as opposite as black and white. Religion and the spiritual world are made of those two trees which had their roots in Eden. Both the Tree Of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil stood in the midst of the garden and no doubt their very branches intertwined each other. Thus in the Ephesian Church is that same paradox. The church is made up of good and bad. Two vines make the church. They are like the wheat and tares, growing up side by side. But one is the TRUE. The other is the FALSE. Now God will speak TO each one and He will talk ABOUT each one. He will call them the church. And only the elect will really know which is the true Spirit. Only the elect will not be deceived. Matthew 24:24,

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

So way back there in the early church (a very short period after Pentecost) the false vine got to intertwine itself around the True Vine and we find these deeds of the

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."

Now there are two thoughts on what the Nicolaitanes were. It is said by some that they were a group of apostates who had as their founder, Nicholas of Antioch, a proselyte, who became one of the seven deacons at Jerusalem. They had pagan feasts and were most unchaste in their behaviour. They taught that in order to master sensuality one would have to know by experience the whole range of it at first. Naturally they gave way to such abandon that their degradation was complete. Thus they had applied to them the two Old Testament names that symbolized such extravagances: Balaam and Jezebel. Since Balaam corrupted the people and thus conquered them, it was said that Nicholas did likewise. This group was supposedly forced out of Ephesus and found a place of establishment in Pergamos.

But the problem about this belief is that it is not true. There is absolutely no history for it. It is at best tradition. To adopt such a view would make the church age of Ephesus absolutely historical with no bearing upon today. This is not true, for whatever starts in the early church must continue in every age until it is finally blessed and exalted by God or destroyed as an unclean thing in the lake of fire. That this tradition is actually against Scripture, simply note that in Revelation 2:2, the Ephesian Church could NOT BEAR the evil ones. They thus had to put them out, or it would not make sense to say they could not bear them. If they did not put them out, then they were bearing them. Now in verse six, it says that they hated their deeds. So this Nicolaitane group remained a part of the first age, doing their deeds. The deeds were hated, but the people were not rendered impotent. Thus we see seeds in Ephesus that will continue and will become a doctrine that will go right up to, and into, the lake of fire.

more of conforming to the world instead of conforming to God, it isn't long until you see them stop doing things they used to do, and start doing things they wouldn't do initially. They change their manner of dress, their attitudes and their behaviour. They get lax. That is what "Ephesus" means: relaxed - drifting.

That cycle of revival and death has never failed. All you have to do is recall this last move of God in the Spirit when men and women dressed like Christians, went to church, prayed all night, took to street corners and weren't ashamed of the manifestations of the Spirit. They left their old dead churches and worshipped in homes or old store buildings. They had reality. But it wasn't too long a time until they began to get enough money to build fine new churches. They put in a choir instead of singing unto God for themselves. They put gowns on the choir. They organized a movement and ran it by man. They soon began to read books that weren't fit to read. They let down the bars and goats came in and took over. The cry of joy was gone. The freedom of the Spirit was gone. Oh, they kept on with a form; but the fire had died down and the blackness of ashes is about all that is left.

A few moments ago I mentioned that John understood what it was to love God. That great apostle of love would certainly see it when the church began to lose that first love of God. In I John 5:3, he says,

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments (His Word)."

One little deviation from that Word was a step away from Christ. People say they love God, they go to church, they even shout and rejoice and sing and have a great emotional time. But when it is all over, watch and see if they are in that WORD, walking in it, living in it. If they go through all the other and then don't walk in that Word, they can say they

love God but their lives tell another story. I wonder if John didn't see a lot of that before he died; people saying they loved God but not obeying His Word. Oh, Ephesian Church, something is happening to you. Someone is trying to either add to that Word or take from it. But they are doing it so subtly that you can't see it. They haven't made a move so big you can see it out there in the open. It is under cover, and they are bringing it by way of reason and human understanding and it will take over unless you refuse it. Go back to Pentecost before it is too late!

But as usual people don't heed God's warning. That revival fire built upon the sacred Word is so wonderful, and the manifestation of the Spirit so blessed, that a little fear creeps in and a whisper in the heart says, "How can we protect this truth we have? What can we do to see this revival goes on?" That is when the "antichrist spirit" comes in and whispers, "Look, you have the truth now, see that it doesn't get lost. Organize and set up your creed of what you believe. Put it all in a church manual." And they do it. They organize. They add to the Word. And they die just like Eve did for taking One wrong word. It's God's Word that brings life. And it's not what we say about the Word that counts, but it's what God said.

Remember and Repent

Revelation 2:5,

"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."

God tells them to REMEMBER. Evidently something had left their minds. They had forgotten something. He told them to turn back in their minds to their point of origin. The origin of the first age was Pentecost. They had fallen from it. They had forgotten the glory and wonder of it. It was time to go

back in mind and then in reality. Back to when they could say, "For me to live is Christ." Back to purity when Ananias and Sapphira were dealt with. Back to the Gate Beautiful. Oh, what a reproach it is to drift from God and countenance those acts that defile His Name. Let those who name His Name depart from sin and keep their vessels pure for God. Look at what you once were in your heart, and mind, and in your life. Then go back to it.

And what is the way back? The way is the way of repentance. If a sinner has to come to God by way of repentance then the lukewarm or backslider will have to repent that much more. Repent! Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Prove it by your life. "If you do not repent," said God, "I will remove your lampstand." Certainly. A church in that condition can't give light to the world. Its light has turned to darkness. God will then take away its faithful messenger and its faithful shepherds and leave them to themselves, and they will go on talking about Christianity but be bereft of it.

Repent quickly! Don't hesitate! Evidently Ephesus did hesitate, for her life span was not very long. The glory of God decreased ever so rapidly. It was not long until the city was in ruins. Its glorious temple became a shapeless mass. The land became a marsh inhabited by water fowl; the population was gone except for a few unbelievers in a squalid village. There was not even ONE Christian left. The lamp was rent from its place.

Now it does not mean that she could not have repented. It does not mean that we cannot repent. We can. But it must be quickly. It must be a true heart cry to God in sorrow, and then God will restore. The glory shall come again.

The Seed Of Nicolaitanism

Revelation 2:6,