

# THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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## Mission Statement

This study of the Book of Revelation gives special attention to the testimony it provides concerning our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10; cp. 1:2), leading us to worship and serve Him in everything.

- I. What you have seen (Rev 1).
- II. What is now (Rev 2–3)—the seven churches of Asia Minor.

These letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor present an abundance of material dealing with local church problems and practices. Believers and churches need to study these seven epistles as closely as they study any of the New Testament epistles.

### A. Ephesus (2:1–7)

Ephesus was the city of change. It was once inhabited but now is barren. As the citadel of idolatry, Ephesus boasted of her world-renowned Temple of Diana.

#### 1. Characterization of Christ (v. 1)

- He sovereignly controls the church at Ephesus.
- He preserves the church at Ephesus with His power.
- His presence abides with the church at Ephesus.

#### 2. Commendation from Christ (vv. 2–3, 6)

- He commends the church at Ephesus for its works.
- He commends the church at Ephesus for its orthodoxy.
- He commends the church at Ephesus for its perseverance.

#### Nicolaitans:

- ✓ Best view: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Jerome, Augustine, and Eusebius claim that Nicolaus (Acts 6:5) founded the Nicolaitans.
- ✓ Alternate view: Since “Nicolaitan” means “conquer (*nikao*) people (*laos*),” i.e., rulers over, or oppressors of, the laity, they are a priestly hierarchy.
- ✓ The commitment to false teaching and immorality made Nicolaitans similar to those who followed the teachings of Baalam (Rev 2:14–15; cf. Num 31:16; 25:1–2).
- ✓ Only Revelation 2:6 and 15 mention the Nicolaitans.
- ✓ Compare with the description of the false teachings and immorality of Jezebel at Thyatira (2:20–24).

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## 3. Complaint by Christ (v. 4)

- He complains that the church at Ephesus has left its first love.

## 4. Counsel from Christ (v. 5a)

- He counsels the church at Ephesus to remember what they used to be.
- He counsels the church at Ephesus to repent.
- He counsels the church at Ephesus to return to their former deeds.

## 5. Caution by Christ (v. 5b)

- He warns the church at Ephesus that they are in danger of losing their witness for Christ—their light might go out and its doors close.

## 6. Commitment of Christ (v. 6)

- The overcomers at Ephesus will partake of the tree of life (see 22:2, 14, 19).

## 7. Practical Implications

- Separation without compassion leads to a loss of fervor and freshness in service for Christ.
- Love for Christ must energize the church's compulsion for doctrinal purity.
- Mature service for Christ must include freshness in fervor for Christ Himself.

**Questions for Discussion**

- How can \_\_\_\_\_ gain Christ's commendations that He gave to the church at Ephesus?
- What could cause \_\_\_\_\_ to lose its/his/her witness for Christ?
- How can \_\_\_\_\_ avoid Christ's complaints about the church at Ephesus?