

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from?****What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from?, on: 2007/8/12 8:15**

Rev 2:1-7

2:1 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;

2 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:

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

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

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.

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

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.

KJV

Exactly what events took place in the church of Ephesus to show they had left their first love?

What things were the church of Ephesus doing displeasing to the Lord or what were they not doing and what change had occurred and why, in Chapter Rev 2 and was this a change that occurred in their heart and therefore manifested into actions or was it something they had been doing and had discontinued in their heart or actions or both?

And what do you think the golden candlestick and the lampstand represent, they were in danger of having removed and how would they go about making the correction to prevent the candlestick from being removed from the church?

We can see they were to repent, but to turn from what and to what? What were the first works?

edit:

Very interesting comments thus far and much appreciated. Let's take it a little deeper.

Is any love just merely an inward thing, or is it true love only when the one being loved observes a manifestation by an outward expression which shows that true love, such as in marriage or any relationship? We can tell our wives or husbands or our Lord that we love them regularly, but is merely stating that love enough to demonstrate that it is indeed true love, will they believe us, will they have reason to believe that love, if we don't demonstrate it in the things we do to prove that love to them and also verification to ourselves we love them? None of us who are saved have no doubt Christ loved us by what he did for us on the cross, right. He left heaven to do that, he did not have to, he did it freely. What exactly is being referred to here, in the church of Ephesus on this subject? We know that the church had left their first love, but was there a lack of outward expression in some things that the church had been instructed to do? Was that church omitting something or had changed some things in their service and instruction or was it just that they lost just the inward love and zeal or both. He said remember from whence you have fallen. Was Jesus saying to the church, backtrack and see how your love was being demonstrated previously, by your obedience to my WORD then, and when you see that evidence and manifestation of your love for me, but now I do not see that evidence and how did Jesus instruct the church in correcting that loss of zeal in that first love they had that previously that the all seeing, all knowing, God observed and rebuked?

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from?**

**Re: What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from? - posted by HopePurifies (), on: 2007/8/12 8:50**

Wow... I have no idea... o.O;;

I need to reread Revelation. This has shown me that this should be next in my Bible study....

I look forward to reading the replies.

**Re: What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from? - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2007/8/12 9:24**

Quote:

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moe\_mac wrote:

Exactly what events took place in the church of Ephesus to show they had left their first love?

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Just a thought, perhaps Christ was being intentionally allusive about this, much like Paul about his "thorn in the flesh" in 2 Corinthians, and his covetousness in his Roman epistle. After all, I'm sure the Ephesians would have known what he was talking about. Also, Christ would have known that he was dictating to John what would be Scripture. If he had elaborated, then we could have said "Oh, that's what leaving your first love is. Well, I haven't done that." However, leaving it unaided, causes us to be cautious, examining our heart to see if we are at least as in love with Jesus as when we first trusted in him.

Quote:

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And what do you think the golden candlestick and the lampstand represent..

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Scripture answers Itself:

Quote:

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The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

**Rev 1:20**

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David Pawson made the observation that each of these churches ceased to exist as a result of Islamic expansion. It would seem that in the end Christ made good on his threat.

Quote:

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We can see they were to repent, but to turn from what and to what? What were the first works?

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Again a stab, perhaps these "first works" are to go back to the beginning of their walk with God, in order to find their first love. They were obviously very well advanced, as Christians. After all, their doctrine was sound, to the point of being able to detect false apostles, and trip them in their words, exposing their lies, and could see through the errors of the Nicolaitans.

Perhaps they had run a little ahead of themselves, and had forgotten the God that they served, out of neglect of communion with Him. This also would make sense of the offer to eat of the tree of life, to those who would overcome. After all, the tree of life was forbidden for Adam and Eve, to protect them from becoming immortal in the "knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 3:22-24). In other words, those who would forsake their need to be "right", to pursue the simplicity of knowing Christ alone, and trusting Him for wisdom and knowledge, will overcome.

I hope this helps. :-)

**Re: What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from?, on: 2007/8/12 11:46**

Here is a church that was doing everything right. You can't fault them for anything, in fact this would be the "perfect" church to go to in our day. Out of all that we long for in a church there was something that was lacking in their zeal, the love for God.

Do you remember when you first got saved?

How you loved the LORD and how much time you spent with Him?

Do you also remember how you started to learn about different doctrines and teachings and how you started to drift away from that time spent with Jesus?

The church at Ephesus had everything going for itself, but with all that she had she had forgotten what we have forgotten that time spent with Jesus is more important than maintaining a ministry and even seeing souls saved.

The first works is to love the LORD our God with all our heart soul mind and strength, and love our neighbour as ourselves.

Has anyone ever tried to redevelop a relationship that had gone sour? It's hard isn't it? Especially if you cheated on your wife, it's hard work to convince her that you can be trusted again. When you go out, she wants to know where you going, and why? In time you'll learn to include her in your outings, and you'll also learn that getting your own way and doing your own thing is not worth it.

Can anyone see the spiritual side of this? God was being neglected in the Ephesus church, they had it altogether, but without God. Their love was in duty not God. A lot of ministries today fit this bill to a T. And we too as individuals have replaced the love for God with pet doctrines and teachings. We clobber one another with what we know and we have not any love for the brethren when we do not have a love for God.

**Re: - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/8/12 13:06**

One of the things to keep in mind while studying the seven letters/churches is that while each church was an actual historical church of the day, these letters are also a prophetic layout of the church age.

You will notice that the second letter to Smyrna (one of only two with no warning) was written to a church that will suffer, be tried and have tribulation. Historically, the church went through a period of extreme persecution. Christians were thrown to the lions in the colosseums, as well as executed en masse via crosses that lined the streets.

This ended when Constantine proclaimed Christianity to be the state religion. The next letter to Pergamos addresses this church. Constantine was responsible for mixing pagan religion with Christian worship. I believe bunny rabbits and eggs (both symbols of fertility) becoming part of the Easter tradition stem to this time. Even the word easter is uncannily similar to the goddess Ishtar, though I believe there is room to debate the origins of its use. Marrying the world (committing fornication) I believe is what is meant by the doctrine of Balaam. The doctrine of the Nicolaitins refers to the rule of the people. Nike; to conquer. Laity; the people. During this time the structure of ruling bishops was established. There were 5 or 6 major cities, each with a head bishop that governed the affairs of the church.

This church gave way to the church at Thyatira. During this time the bishop at Rome decreed that he was to be the ruling bishop over all other bishops. This established the papacy. This church has a female (Jezebel) central to their theology. It is also noteworthy that the dark ages occurred at this time during which the black plague sent many to their deathbed, including children.

The following letter to Sardis represents the reformation church. They have a name that they are alive, but they are dead. This represents the majority of the Lutheran, Anglican and Episcopalian churches born in the reformation.

The next letter is to Philadelphia. Only the second not to receive a reprimand. This church represents the church of revivals! It was during this time period that all the great revivals we all study and long for took place. It is noteworthy that all of the major cults of today (the synagogue of satan) began during this period. Also of note is that this church will be kept from the hour of trial, which I believe supports a pretrib rapture. (please lets not get going on the rapture debate here!)

The last letter is written to that lukewarm church at Laodicea. It is all too clear that this letter represents the climate of the

e modern day church.

The church at Ephesus is therefore directly tied to the early church. One of the things that occurred in the early church was to create a liturgy for church services. They reasoned that there were certain elements of worship that needed to happen every time believers met for worship. In order to achieve this they wrote prayers that were to be recited at certain times in each service. The end result was that services began to take on a tone of religiosity rather than the heartfelt expression of devotion.

There is much more to study and understand in regard to these passages. I am no scholar and have only given an overview based on the best of my understanding. I hope it helps.

In His Love,

Doug

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/8/12 17:35**

the first love is a parallel to Jeremiah 2 where God reminds the people of Israel about the first year of their Covenant with him. It was spent in the wilderness building the tabernacle and was the time when Israel was totally given to God. They delighted to build the Tabernacle and were not hurrying towards the promised land but were enjoying God himself. It was almost like the injunction that a Hebrew couple were to spend the first year together without distraction. During this year Israel gave lavishly to God until they had to be stopped. They were reckless in their abandoned devotion to God. Jeremiah is some 800+ years later but God had never forgotten this time.

The Ephesian church is similar. First love is the honeymoon. If this is lost everything else is pointless. This is the only church which is threatened with the removal of the lampstand.

**Re: What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from?, on: 2007/8/12 19:55**

Quote:

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moe\_mac wrote:

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KJV

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Thank you for this.

I don't know either, but one thing did come to mind when reading these words again...

The Ephesian church was so "correct"...And yet....!

If there was a perfect New Testament church, Ephesus was the one. Jesus Himself commends them for so many things. They endured, they worked, they exercised discernment and discipline, they examined and rejected false teachings and teachers.

And yet.....

With the rich young ruler they could have asked, "All these things I have done from my youth..." What more did they lack?

As with the ruler maybe, except that their riches were not those of physical possessions, the challenge was, in some sense, to "let go" of those things that made them rich...

and "...come follow Me".

Maybe they were like a wife who works her fingers to the bone caring for her home, making sure her husband lacks for nothing. Everything is beautiful, comfortable, neat and tidy. His slippers are by his chair, his supper ready to put on the table the instant he arrives home from work. She delights in serving him.

But she is so busy serving that the preparation of the home, the service, becomes an end in itself.

The husband, while grateful and full of praise for his wife must wish for a little more of herself. Does she have to stand with folded hands watching him eat, as if she was a maid, not a wife? Does she have to whisk away the dishes and wash them as soon as he's eaten?

If only she would just sit with him, talk with him of the things that husband and wife talk about, join in the meal with him, keep him company!

So much time spent serving, so much time spent doing, so much time making sure everything is perfect and spotless. But no time for HIM!

Is this His heart for us? Is it possible that what the Lord of heaven and earth longs for most is our COMPANY?

We see the careless "Christian" lives of so many, we see the error and greed in the Church. We see the unfaithfulness, idolatry and sheer laziness of so much that passes for Christian living. We discern the many false teachers who are about these days, we warn, exhort, counsel to have nothing to do with them. We rightly mourn the error, are zealous for Truth, work and work and work, fast and pray and weep and intercede for the lost, and for His rebellious people.

All these things are good, and the Lord commends us.

"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."

And yet....And yet...

In Hlm

Jeannette

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/8/13 9:52**

The church at Ephesus is a sobering story.

The work began in the synagogue through Paul's ministry in Acts 18:19

It was followed up by Priscilla and Aquila who brought Apollos into the full light of the gospel in Acts 18:24

Apollos, mighty in the scriptures, became a key part of the work in Ephesus as we see in Acts 18:28

Later Paul returned to Ephesus, by which time the group were identified as 'disciples' in Acts 19:1,2

Ephesus had its own unique Pentecost and a work of consolidation and evangelism, inspired by Paul, which continued for 2 years.

Paul established a regular public meeting in the school of a local philosopher. Acts 19:9

There were miracles of great power in their midst, and exorcisms. Acts 19:11-18

It was the scene of a powerful reformation as many rejected their occult history. Acts 19:19

The church stirred the whole area to a response. Acts 19:23ff

Later Timothy was commissioned by Timothy to be resident in Ephesus and so the continuity of genuine orthodox gospel

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I was maintained. 1 Tim 1:3

History tells us that John the apostle became resident in Ephesus and so the work went on.

Was there ever a church which has such a foundation and such a rich provision of godly men? They became the launch pad for evangelism in the whole province.

If we move into the Rev, as others have pointed out, they have many things for which they should be commended. What a glorious heritage they had known, and now works of faith and love... and yet, and yet... this church stands on the brink of abandonment by the Lord of the church, because they had left their first love...

The testimony in Ephesus was extinguished for centuries, and rekindled only again in the 1960s, and not because there were not orthodox, nor evangelistic, not because they were without knowledge and discernment, but because they had lost their first love.

He that hath ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches..

**Re:, on: 2007/8/13 10:19**

The Ephesian church was so "correct"...And yet....!

Littlegift wrote:

If there was a perfect New Testament church, Ephesus was the one. Jesus Himself commends them for so many things. They endured, they worked, they exercised discernment and discipline, they examined and rejected false teachings and teachers.

And yet.....

moe\_mac

When we read about the church at Ephesus as Paul wrote to us, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can see the church was indeed a faithful church, and in the center of God's will most of the time. Did they vary from that state that Paul described in Ephesians. What was the difference about the church in Rev 2 according to John? When did it occur? Is it more important to know when it occurred, or what occurred? As our Lord is all knowing and we know HE can and does write history in advance, as we see that the Ephesian church was indeed in the center of God's will? Could we use the things Paul gave us about the church for a pattern in our local body?

When we go to Walmart and buy certain products, they often require assembling. Enclosed is a set of instructions and a numbered part list. First we check and ensure that we no parts are missing and also if we have the right tools. As we follow those enclosed instructions, are able to assemble the product correctly? When those instructions have pictures also, do you find them helpful in assembling the product and do the pictures make it easier to assemble? I certainly think so? In the Old Testament, does God draw us many pictures about people's lives and their relationship with HIM, and are those pictures clear enough to see which ways are successful and pleasing to HIM and which are ones that are not? Could they be helpful to us today?

edit: I felt the need for additional comments to the above, as we do have those Old Testament pictures I spoke of through the lives of God's people the covenant with God but now we have a different covenant through Jesus who has paid our sin debt at the cross, whereas in times past God's people had to offer animal sacrifices and different other things to have a temporary forgiveness of sins. While the pictures in Old Testament pictures may be a bit different now in how we are to be pleasing to him, the principles of obedience remain the same, would you agree?

Also, I noticed one comment, the church at Ephesus, was the only church in the group, to be warned of the removal of the lampstand. You would think Philadelphia did have a Lampstand. Do you think some of the other churches mentioned in Rev. 2 did not have a lampstand to remove, observing the sharp rebuke.

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from?**

**Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2007/8/13 10:31**

Quote:

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philologos wrote:

They delighted to build the Tabernacle and were not hurrying towards the promised land but were enjoying God himself.

..

First love is the honeymoon. If this is lost everything else is pointless. This is the only church which is threatened with the removal of the lampstand.

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Have been deeply convicted about this of late, and have found myself "fretting" for deep communion with God. How easy it is to allow God to be relegated to second, third or fourth place. Even equal first is a compromise. Oh that we (I) could return to the place where every dealing with man is an expression of devotion to Him.

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none that I desire on earth beside Thee."

**Re:, on: 2007/8/13 12:36**

Littlegift wrote:

Maybe they were like a wife who works her fingers to the bone caring for her home, making sure her husband lacks for nothing. Everything is beautiful, comfortable, neat and tidy. His slippers are by his chair, his supper ready to put on the table the instant he arrives home from work. She delights in serving him.

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So much time spent serving, so much time spent doing, so much time making sure everything is perfect and spotless. But no time for HIM!

moe\_mac wrote: Good points

We know from the scriptures that when Jesus visited with Mary and Martha, in like manner, as you stated, Jesus said that Mary done the greater thing at Jesus' feet. But, what if Jesus had entered the house and both Mary and Martha, acted as though he had not come in and ignored HIM? What if, Martha had not prepared the meal? What if Mary was in another room watching desperate housewives on TV. Jesus commented to Martha that Mary did the greater thing. Did Jesus indicate Martha's work was in vain? What if her motives and the attitude of the heart was wrong or the actions? Was it that Martha's offering to Jesus was distracting her from being in HIS presence? Was Martha jealous of Mary's relationship with Jesus rather than sharing HIM with everyone, and was it that maybe Martha's motives was not right in her offering and it really wasn't the deeds that Martha was wrong that were wrong but the attitude and jealousy while doing them. And what if the church of Ephesus who once had the love as Mary and the deeds of Martha with no jealousy. Were they were doing all the right things? Did they have the right motive? Over a period of time when Jesus came to their house, maybe they didn't even notice Jesus was in the house? edit again: Or could it be, the Ephesian church was conducting themselves after a period of time in complacency, as to reveal the fact Jesus was not even in the house?

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/8/13 12:53**

Quote:

-----Also, I noticed one comment, the church at Ephesus, was the only church in the group, to be warned of the removal of the lampstand. You would think Philadelphia did have a Lampstand. Do you think some of the other churches mentioned in Rev. 2 did not have a lampstand to remove, observing the sharp rebuke.

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: What exactly was the church at Ephesus to return to and flee from?**

The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:20 NKJV)

I'm not sure that the church 'has' a lampstand, I think the church is the lampstand. The Tabernacle lampstand was effectively 7 little shelves in the form of an olive tree. The lamps sat on these little shelves. The NT picture is slightly different but again these are lampstands ie to lift the light higher to give more light. The OT light only touched earth in one place ie Israel, it had one foot. The NT light has 'seven' places where it touches earth and is not restricted to a single territory.

Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. (Matthew 5:15 NKJV)

The light will shine on, perhaps in some other place, but the lampstand may be removed if it does not meet Christ's requirements.

**Re:, on: 2007/8/13 13:53**

philologos

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moe-mac wrote: good answer philologos

How many times have I read that passage I then go brain dead and asked that question. Thanks. Brother/Sister I don't know, is it great when someone just copies and paste straight from HIS WORD with an answer. Who could argue with that other than one who would read a sign post and then go the wrong direction. Thanks again for your post all all comments from others as well.

**Re: - posted by gloria04, on: 2011/1/4 7:03**

The church at Ephesus is very prominent city on the western part of the Roman province of Asia. The Ephesians lost their love for Jesus. They have become so busy in their works that they forgot why they labor. The Bible tells us that first commandment is to love Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Ancient Ephesus

**Re: , on: 2011/1/8 11:14**

Surprised to see an old thread pop up. Quite a warning in these verses. I've had my own view of this particular Church, that hits close to home - which, taking it personally, is difficult to express, but I'd like to try. This was written while some of the Apostles & servants who went to Ephesus and dealt with its problems were still alive or greatly remembered or were arrested for having this calling (example: Paul & Timothy), so we can partly understand this zeal that this Church exhibited, by their example and writings.

Rev 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 (or sustained) -  
and hast patience -  
and for my name's sake hast laboured -  
and hast not fainted -  
2:6 \*\* ..... 'thou hatest the deeds' of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

This sounds like a Church with discernment, from those lines marked with \*\*.

They could not bear those who are evil, they discerned and exposed false apostles and found them to be liars and they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans -- they endeavored to keep the Church pure and working properly, laboring without fainting, but they lost their "love".

The LORD never told them to Not do these things but praised them for continuing in these things yet, they needed to return to 'love'.

They had a zeal & even patience - which 'had' to be based on a Love for GOD at some point in time. The LORD commends them for this zeal for truth, purity and patient labors without fainting, but anyone who has dealt for long periods with evil 'in' the Church plus "false apostles" and "heresies" knows that it can take it's toll and eventually cause some to become angry, "hating 'the deeds of' ...." the 3 groups mentioned in these verses.

Even Righteous anger or indignation at evil can turn into another type of anger that chills love. They were commended for keeping the Church pure in it's beliefs and having the discernment to keep out false apostles, so these things are not wrong but praise worthy, yet can become a source of irritation at those whom they find are dangerous to His Body and the strain/pain or effort it takes for those who are trying to protect the Church from these evil doers, imposters and false doctrines can have it's negative, but not excusable affects on those trying to watch over the Church, as Paul did.

In Vs 3 they're commended for what they had endured and for their patience and for the fact that they had "labored and didn't faint" ---- "For His Name's Sake" - which by the wording, was indeed their motive - for His Name's sake.

What I'm more inclined to believe is that their love 'for people' suffered loss because of all that they had to expose & deal with in protecting the Church and that is equally compared to our Love for Him... and not just loving our brothers but going so far as to command us to "love our enemies." His enemies are our enemies, as He said they would be - yet He told us to love them all. To love others as we love ourselves, is included in the First commandment.

1Jn 4:11-13 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time.

IF we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.

1Jn 4:20, 21 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Mat 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Mat 5:43-48 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

etc., like Stephen did.

Jesus and the writers of the N.T. have instructed us on what to do with these false-brethren that were present at Ephesus

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s since had Paul left them -- such as "from such depart" - "have no company with" - "with such, don't even eat" - "don't say to them, God bless you" - "to remove them from The Church" and so forth --- But or Yet, can we still keep our 'Love' in check - without compromising with these?

Apparently we're expected to, from this warning to this Church that Timothy pastored (1 Tim 1:30), where Paul left him to deal with the growing problem of false teachers .... as Paul had warned (with tears) would happen after he himself had left there (Acts 20:28-30).

Those who continued to try to hold back these same forces in this church at Ephesus, , had persevered in this fight, more than likely with the words of Paul & Timothy etc fresh within their minds - But - I am going to interject my own opinion again -- it is difficult to separate, or keep separated, the hatred for the promotion of and allowance of evil-doing in the Church, lying imposter's actions/motives or heresy spreader's 'deeds' and still love these people that you are commanded to 'deal with' and deal with continually and unpleasantly. It was draining for Paul and will continue to cause strain in those who are even so much as 'seeing' these practices go on today.

Jesus and the writers of Scripture warned us that, 'evil doers, false apostles & more, and those who hold dangerous doctrines will only increase'.

I take this warning to this Church personally - hate the sin but love the sinner - love your enemies -- But, protect His Church by doing this 'dirty work' - even when needing to love these dangerous heretics, hirelings and imposters at a distance - pray for them - cry out for His Love for even the worst of them - yet keep on protecting His flock.

Keep protecting ALL Yet keep your love for all. That's a hard saying (that maybe good parents that have been challenged with a rebellious child would understand). Very challenging. Very difficult. So important. GOD help us to do both.

".....thou hast left thy first love. 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."