

Revelation Lesson 27  
Ephesus: The Lagging Church (Expectation) Part 1

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.

We saw last time what the Ephesian Church was lagging in – their first love. Remember that the word first denoted “rank” or “order” and thus something or someone else had taken that top priority placement. Christ rebuked the Church for that. Tonight, we see Him giving the local body of Christ His Expectation or Commandment to them....

**Remember** - J. Vernon McGee said: *"Remember. That is the first thing they were to do. Memory is a marvelous thing. Someone has said that God has given us memories so we can have roses in December."* Out of ALL the people in the Hebrew Bible – our Old Testament – who did Jesus tell the people specifically to REMEMBER? Look at Luke 17:32 – “Remember Lot's Wife.” I call her “Salty” you know they were all (Lot's family that was with him) warned that when they left not to look back. You know, there are two types of looking back – there's remembering, turning soulfully and spiritually so to speak from within, and then there's when the flesh attempts to turn back. The latter is what “Mrs. Lot” did. Jesus reprimanded any of those who would follow Him in Luke 9:62 *“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”* It is a wonderful thing to remember what God has done for us. Such is the nature of testimonies and a great extent of the Bible - 1 Corinthians 10:11 *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”* You see what is history but (break it into two words) HIS STORY?

**Therefore** – This word means: “for that reason; consequently, because of that.” Some of you out there may be wondering why does it feel like I'm sitting in English class at times? Allow me to state thus: While it is true I bring up some meanings of Greek or Hebrew words from time to time, I do so one to reinforce to any who may have doubts that what you have in your King James Bible English is what is in the “Greek” or “Hebrew” also, I try to learn the way and manner in which that word was used in Biblical times. Some of the words have interesting ideas connected with them and it is those thoughts I try to bring out for you, but this is never done to do like so many preachers and/or teachers do, by that I mean I will NEVER ATTEMPT TO CORRECT THE KING JAMES BIBLE, RATHER I WILL LET IT CORRECT ME! Why do so many study and learn the words and quote them from Shakespeare instead of producing a new modern version? BECAUSE IT WOULDN'T THEN BE SHAKESPEARE WOULD IT? But yet they look at the Bible and do to it what they wouldn't do to ole “Bill” from Stratford-Upon-Avon!! I tell you the Truth, Church, a lot of preachers would do themselves a great service if they majored in English (and understood word meanings in 1611) and minored in Greek and/or Hebrew. Sorry for the rabbit trail. There's no extra charge for that! So what “reason” does “therefore” refer back to? What is the “that” therefore is looking to? It is in verse 4 “thou hast left thy first love” it is alluded to in the next point.

**from whence** – Note the wording. “from whence” denotes a place or position. This is referring back to the “first love” that priority or rank that the love of God had in the Church's life. So we see the train of thought culminating in the next point.

**thou art fallen**, - Again we notice Christ is calling the Church a singular entity here. I cannot say it enough, I find that remarkable. See it is one thing for us to be a part of the Body of Christ or the Church once we get saved (1 Corinthians 12:12 and 27) but we see here these that are a part of the **local** New Testament Church or that portion of the Body of Christ they are referred to as one unit.

He goes on to state that they have fallen. “Fallen” here does NOT refer to a loss of salvation. Remember their priority or ranking of their love of Christ has fallen. Hence this is the meaning here. They did not “fall from grace” as some Calvinists, Reform theologians teach from Galatians 5:4 “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” As a matter of fact, J. Vernon McGee sums this up well when he says: *“If you have been saved by trusting Christ, then go down to the low level of living by the Law, you have fallen from grace. This is what “falling from grace” actually means. I can remember as a student in a denominational seminary hearing one theologian say, “Falling from grace is the doctrine which the Methodists believe and the Presbyterians practice.” However, falling from grace does not mean falling into some open sin or careless conduct, and by so doing forfeiting your salvation so that you have to be saved all over again. It has no reference to that at all.*”

**and repent,** – Now that they have remembered where they once were in regards to their love (it being in the first rank) now they need to do something about it. Christ tells the Church they must repent. Now the Greek word is METANOEO (G3340) this word is comprised of two thoughts “mushed” together: META which means: “to change” and NOEO which refers to: “the mind or the thinking within the mind.” Thus the literal meaning is: “To Change the Thoughts of the Mind.” Also if one looks at this in the Greek language one will find that it is labeled in this way, that it is in the Aorist Active Imperative. Aorist implies “in a point of time” Active means here “you need to do something, and that is change your mind/thoughts” and the Imperative indicates: It's an order!

Theologically, when this word or one of its offshoots is used in the Bible, it involves regret or sorrow, accompanied by a true change of heart (spiritual portion of the mind) towards God. Notice 2 Corinthians 7:10 *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”* I have told people that repent means not only to change your mind, but to change your mind so that your actions are changed. Too many preachers ONLY emphasize 1 John 1:9 *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* But to merely confess without repentance turns those words of confession into a mere mantra. People today must be careful not to make confession into a mere “guilt-pleaser” - when one may have such an attitude as follows: “Now I've got God off my back” on the contrary, if there is no repentance then such confession in my understanding is meaningless and worthless!

Now repentance is not merely for the believer as in the case of the Ephesian Church here. Repentance is a part of the salvation message. Notice Luke 13:2-5 *“And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* Recall the Apostle Paul's preaching in Acts 20:21 *“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

I would like to point out something that David Coud wrote in October of 2014: *“...there are two equal and opposite errors into which we can fall on the experience of conversion. One is what is known as 'Sandemanianism' — named after Robert Sandeman, 1718-1771, the Scottish minister who first publicly propounded this doctrine — which involves the idea that a person merely needs to give verbal assent to the propositions contained in the Gospel in order to be saved, without any evidence of a heart change or regeneration. The other is what we can call 'Preparationism' — whereby a person is persuaded of the need to enter into a massively over-prolonged (or even indefinite) period of intense preparation for conversion, during which he must go through the most oppressive heart-searching rigours, without which he cannot be saved. We must always be sure that our evangelism does not encourage either “easy-believism” or its opposite: bondage-*

*making preparationism. They lie at contrary ends of the spectrum, but both are deadly, conversion-stifling errors."*

When the Holy Ghost saves a person there will be "fruit that follows" the believer for recall Ephesians 2:8-10 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

Now I want to add here one more point. Some critics of the Bible point out that God repents and thus this indicates He must have "done something wrong!" They point to passages like the following:

Genesis 6:6 *"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."* or Exodus 32:14 *"And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."* or Judges 2:18 *"And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them."*

Then the critics aren't finished they sometimes move on to Malachi 3:6 *"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."* and Hebrews 13:8 *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."* Then the critic levels the accusation that since God "changed" His mind, He isn't God, because God doesn't change.

What absurdity!! What does not change is God's Character. He's always the same. But when Scripture says He repents it does not mean that He has done something wrong – rather it is Him acting in regards to man's action or inaction. Thus what this shows is His Grace, Mercy, Righteousness or Judgment.

**and do the first works;** - Again we find the command here in the word "DO!" But do what? THE FIRST WORKS. The word first is the same Greek word used back in verse 4 in the phrase "first love." so this is the ranking of their former works. It thus then must be linked with that first love. Hence these "first works" must be their works that they performed in obeying His Commandments for that is how Christ said that we "love" Him in John 14:15.

**or else** – Here is the flip side of the coin so to speak. Christ is about to outline the consequences IF they do NOT repent. You know I am so glad God is long-suffering towards us. Recall 2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

**I will come** – Christ promises them a "visit." You know this is not referring to His second coming or the rapture, it's a Disciplinary action towards them. Of all the times I have seen my Daddy in my life, the times I did not like to see him was when I KNEW I was about to be disciplined. My Daddy disciplined me in love, when I crossed the line I got my whooping, spanking, washing the mouth out, grounding or whatever else I deserved. You know God does the same He disciplines or chastens His children. See Deuteronomy 8:5 *"Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee."* I think one of the best things that can happen to our youth (besides them being in Church) is for their Mama and Daddys to be parents again and discipline them when they get out of line! You know when a lot of parents stand before the Lord they will give an account of the times when they should've disciplined their children but did not. I believe I would fear a visit from the Lord rather than the DSS!!

**unto thee** – Notice that!! God ain't going to discipline the drunks in the ditch or the whores at

the whorehouse or the backsliders at home – why? Look at 1 Peter 4:17 “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”

**quickly**, - Here we see Christ designates a timeframe as this word means what it says: “of short duration, speedily, soon, shortly.” So the understanding is that we must act quickly or else we will while away or sin away the “day of grace.”

**and will** – This is an emphatic promise of Christ. So many only focus upon the “good” promises of the Lord. Here we see another promise. Christ is telling the Church of Ephesus that this is not a might or maybe it is conclusive!! IT WILL HAPPEN “except thou repent.”

**remove** – What will occur? A removal. What will be removed? See the next point.

**thy candlestick** – It is the Candlestick or the Church that is removed. Not the saved being lost “again.” No! Again this removal of the candlestick speaks of God removing the Church. I also want you to notice it is noted in the “possessive” as in “thy” Church. The Church is the Lord's but since we belong to the local New Testament Church it is – as seen here – ours. Now, some say how can the removal of a church happen? What God removes is His Authority, Blessing, Anointing upon that place so that it becomes the First Baptist Church of Ichabod! No doubt that this happened for today mosques stand in those cities where these ancient Churches one were.

Some preachers stand and swear upon Matthew 16:18 and say Hell will never conquer the church! Lets note Matthew 16:18 again: “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” Now allow me to appeal to the Greek and show you again how we know that the “IT” referred to is the ROCK and NOT the Church. In the Greek language, the word “IT” along with all other Greek words, have word endings. Depending on the gender of the word and the way it is used one can quickly see what IT refers to because you must match the word endings. Thus, Rock = **PETROS**, Church = **Ekklesia**, and It = **Autos**. Thus, “IT” and “ROCK” have the same “-OS” (which is the masculine) ending. We see again how “It” refers back to the ROCK and NOT the Church.

So we note, if the gates of Hell could not prevail against the Church why are these 7 churches no more? Because “Ichabod” (see 1 Samuel 4:21) was written over them and God's glory departed. Remember that if the Devil has his “ministers” (2 Corinthians 11:15) and they have an NIV (isn't that the Not Inspired Version?) or some other book they claim is the “Bible?” Would it not make sense that they have “churches” to expound their heresies, false doctrines and lies? Those churches (like many today) succumbed to the world, the flesh and the devil BUT Jesus is the ROCK and HIM the GATES OF HELL NEVER CONQUERED!!!

**out of his place**, - Here many theologians state the word “place” referred to their position among the other churches, but I think the basic meaning is seen here and no attempt should be made to “over spiritualize” the meaning here. Barnes noted in his commentary the following: “The meaning is, that the church gave light in Ephesus; and that what he would do in regard to that place would be like removing a lamp, and leaving a place in darkness. The expression is equivalent to saying that the church there would cease to exist. The proper idea of the passage is, that the church would be wholly extinct; and it is observable that this is a judgment more distinctly disclosed in reference to this church than to any other of the seven churches. There is not the least evidence that the church at Ephesus did repent, and the threatening has been most signally fulfilled. Long since the church has become utterly extinct, and for ages there was not a single professing Christian there. Every memorial of there having been a church there has departed, and there are nowhere, not even in Nineveh, Babylon, or Tyre, more affecting demonstrations of the

fulfillment of ancient prophecy than in the present state of the ruins of Ephesus. A remark of Mr. Gibbon (Decline and Fall, 4. 260) will show with what exactness the prediction in regard to this church has been accomplished.

He is speaking of the conquests of the Turks [Muslims]. "In the loss of Ephesus the Christians deplored the fall of [and] the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelation; the desolation is complete; and the temple of Diana, or the Church...will equally elude the search of the curious traveler." Thus, the city, with the splendid temple of Diana, and the church that existed there in the time of John, has disappeared, and nothing remains but unsightly ruins...consist[ing] of shattered walls, and remains of columns and temples. Along the slope of the mountain, and over the plain, are scattered fragments of masonry and detached ruins, but no thing can now be fixed on as the great temple of Diana...but there is nothing that marks the site of a church in the time of John; there is nothing to indicate even that such a church then existed there.

About a mile and a half from the principal ruins of Ephesus there is indeed now a small village called Asalook, a Turkish word, which is associated with the same idea as Ephesus, meaning, The City of the Moon." It is sad because in symbolism the Moon represents the Church. As the Sun represents the S-O-N symbolically, this pictures the relationship between the two well. As the Moon reflects the light of the Sun into a darkened world, so too are we Christians to reflect the Light of Christ into this sin cursed and darkened world. So to have a Muslim city named "The City of the Moon" is an ironic sad reminder that this once ranked as one of the "best" churches and that all of this judgment could have been avoided and the congregation could have possibly still have been there if they had heeded the last point:

**except thou repent.** - In Hebrew when the Speaker or Writer wishes to "underline" or "emphasize" a point it is repeated. Since all the New Testament writers and/or speakers were Hebrew this culture is carried over under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It seems Christ is putting this point in "flashing lights" and overly stressing this notion of the local Church (notice "THOU") repenting of leaving their first love.

Now Christ is not done with His "expectations" for next time we will observe a "kudos" within this exhortation and commandment. Thanks for listening and until next time God Bless you!