

Ephesian Church Age Lesson

Part 1

Introduction and Review:

We have been working for several weeks now studying the Seven Church Ages. Who can tell me the name of the first tape preached by Brother Branham in this series? Right! "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." And the next? "Patmos Vision"

Brother Branham has been teaching us about chapter 1 in the Book of Revelation.

- Once again, who was that scribe who was told to write what he saw? St. John the divine
- Where was he? The Isle of Patmos
- Who did he see? Jesus
- In the midst of the seven...? Golden candlesticks
- What did he have in his hand? Seven stars
- What did the stars represent? The Seven Church Age Messengers

Now we are ready to get into Revelation chapter 2. Let's read Revelation 2:1-2:

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:

Brother Branham will begin to teach us about the First Church Age, Ephesian. Brother Branham goes verse by verse teaching us what these scriptures mean.

- Did you know that a prophet is a divine interpreter of the Word? Only HE can tell us what it means, because it is God speaking through a man to us! God Himself teaching us through HIS prophet!

The Church Ages begin with Paul and will finally end with the Rapture. They represent a timeline where God is dealing with His Gentile Bride. He has called out people from each age to make up His Bride; and she will hear only the Word of her day and will only hear the Voice of God to Her from Her Messenger Angel for he will BE the WORD.

Let's hear Brother Branham tell us about that first messenger. We will listen for his name and the dates of that first Church Age.

*Now, the first church age started about A.D. 53, when Paul established the church in--in Ephesus. On his missionary journey, he established the church at--at Ephesus, the Ephesian church, and was the pastor of it till when he was beheaded in 66, making him about twenty-two years the pastor of the Ephesian church. After his death then we're told that Saint Paul... or Saint John the divine became the pastor of the church and carried it on up into this age, and the church age lapped over to 170. **60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age"**, para 45.*

Listen carefully as Brother Branham describes Ephesus:

*Ephesus means... the very name Ephesus means "let go, relax, **backslidden**." Called by God, "The backslidden church." God--God acknowledged first their works, their labor, and their*

patience. God rebuked their living, leaving their first love, for backsliding, and for no longer bearing Light. Ephesus was not a deceived church, it failed itself by not continuing in perfect love. Summary of Ephesus: Fruits, without love, led to apostasy. The promises: Paradise promised to the overcomer, of the saints of Ephesus in the church age, given to the Tree of Life. 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para 72.

They once really loved the Lord and served Him well. But they got cold and kind of lazy, formal; following rules not serving out of LOVE for HIM.

Refer to Revelation 2:1, "Unto the angel...":

- Who is that angel? Paul
- To the church of? Ephesus
- Who wrote it? John
- "... these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars..." Who is that? Jesus!

In his right hand... What did his right hand represent? Listen carefully:

"Holding in His right hand." Right hand means His "authority and power." Holding in His right hand (under, controlled) the seven messengers to the seven church ages. 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para. 77

Power and Authority are what the "right hand" represents. It does not exactly mean like Christ is setting on God's right hand.

Who walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks? Jesus! What did that signify?

Walking in the midst of these seven golden candlesticks was Jesus Christ, the Almighty God. What is He doing? He didn't say He was walking in one candlestick, He was walking in the midst of all of them. What does that denote? That He is the same God, yesterday, today, and forever, and in every church age to every believer. 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para. 76

Well, what did it "denote?" He is the same God yesterday, today, and forever! He is Hebrews 13:8!

We will look at one more verse today. Let's read Revelation 2:1 again with Brother Branham.

Let's see now, I got the...

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

He found them to be liars. How'd they know that? They wasn't quoting with the Word.

Now, if a man says that "This Bible says in Hebrews 13:8, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever,'" the man said, "Ah, the days of miracles is past," then that man's a liar." 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para. 112-114

So how would you know if an "apostle" or any other man telling you about the Word was a liar? He would not stay with the WORD. Remember, our prophet told us to say what's on the TAPES!

Remember, every Promise in the Bible is YOURS! It's the Word! Stay with the WORD no matter what anyone may say. God needs no interpreter! God Himself taught us today just what these two verses meant through His prophet Brother Branham!

Part 2

Introduction and Review:

Last lesson we talked about the first Church Age, in Ephesus. With Paul as the Messenger. Ephesus means "backslidden". Remember the description of Ephesus, "...they had tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars..." How did they know if an apostle was a "liar"? He did not stay with the Word. What had they done? Left their first love. They once loved the Lord and began to fall away, get cold toward Him, turn away from His Word.

Now, let's get into the rest of the portion of the scriptures dealing with the first church age.

Read Revelation 2:3-7:

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 Nicolaitanes, 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.

Now Brother Braham will continue teaching us about these scriptures. We need a prophet to tell us what the scriptures mean and only a prophet can do that! The Word comes to the Prophet!

What is the NAME? Jesus! That is right! Let's continue on with Brother Branham:

Now, the 3rd verse now. All right, 2nd and 3rd verse. Now the 3rd verse:

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

"For My Name." Did you notice they had patience? Labored for what? His Name. See that Name holding in that church? Now watch it, when we get down through the week, how that fades out and goes into another name. See? "Has had patience, labored, and so forth, and for My Name's sake." He... They labored for His Name, to keep the Name of Jesus Christ above any church, above anything else.

Let it be first in, "Whatever..." the Bible said, "whatever you do in word or in deed, do it all in the Name of Jesus Christ." Is that right? "Whatever you do in word or in deed." 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para. 119-121

They did everything in the name of Jesus! We need to keep the Name of Jesus first in everything we do. If we can't do it in the name of Jesus, we better not do it. Can you wear shorts in Jesus Name? NO! Sister, can you get that new fancy haircut in Jesus name? Absolutely not! Can you read some creepy book to scare you in Jesus Name? No way! Stay away from anything you cannot do in Jesus name. (any other age appropriate examples might be included)

Okay, next verse:

- What did He have against them? They left their first love.

What'd you do? Lost their first love. Oh, you couldn't get them on a corner with a tambourine to clap their hands and praise God. Oh, no! They'd sing some kind of classical something with a bunch of robes around them. See, they lost their first love. That's what's the matter with the first church. See?

They just have to act like the world. They have to dress like the world, look like the world, act like the world. And have their favorite television star, you know, they just can't keep from seeing it. We Love Susie or something another, you know, they just have to see it. They'll stay home from prayer meeting and everything else to see it. If they don't, they give their pastor a good bawling out, to let them out in time till that program comes on so they can get home to see it. The love of the world more than the love of God!" 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para. 130-131

- What was their first love? God
- And what did they leave it for? Love of the world
- We have to be careful because this warning is to us too. Always put God and His Word first! Remember, this letter may have been addressed to this first church age, but it's for each age after, too, including YOU.

Let's look at verses 5 and 6:

- What does it mean to repent? "Turn away" or stop committing the sin. It's when you are really sorry for the sin you have committed. A godly sorrow.
- Whose deeds did they hate? The Nicolaitanes'
- Who also hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes? Jesus

Now what is a Nicolaitane? Well, we will let our prophet tell us.

Now what... Let's break that word down, find out what we got before we go any farther. The word Nicolaitane is kind of a foreign thing to me. I got every Greek lexicon that I could find. Nicolaitane come from the word of nikao, n-i-c-k-o, wait, I believe I wrote it down here, n-i-c-k-o, nikao, which means "to conquer or to overthrow." Nicolaitanes, "overthrow or conquer the laity." What they were trying to do here was trying to take the church where God had pastors, and the Spirit of God moving by gifts in the Church of the living God, and, they were having a doctrine start that they were going to have some priests, and bishops, and popes, and so forth. That, God

said, He hated! He hates it yet today. Nico-laitanes: nikao, "overcome" or, "overthrow the laity." The laity is "the church." How many knows that laity is the church?" 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para. 147

- What does the word Nicolaitane come from? "Nicao" means to overthrow or conquer. "Laos" means laity, and the laity is the church.
- So the Nicolaitanes conquered or overthrew the church; and we know God hated their deeds, and so did the church at Ephesus. Let's listen to find out just what these Nicolaitanes did.

All right, "Overthrow or conquer, or take place of the laity."

In other words, take all of the sacredness, all of the power from the church, and put it over on the priests; "Let the congregation live the way it wants to, but the priest is the holy one." Taking the Holy Ghost away from the people with signs and wonders following them, and take that away and give them a holy priesthood. Taking away the Holy Ghost and swapping it for a priesthood." 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para 147-148

- So what were their deeds? What did they do? Took away signs and wonders and give it to the priesthood. Took away the Holy Ghost from the church.
- Those Nicolaitanes tried to tell the people that the priest only were holy and the laity or the rest of the church could just do whatever they wanted. The Nicolaitanes taught that the church needed to listen to MEN instead of the Holy Ghost. These Nicolaitanes represented the false church. Remember, the true church looked just like the original on the day of Pentecost. How did those in that first church act? What did they believe? (Spoke in tongues, baptized with the Holy Ghost, healed people, gifts of the Holy Ghost...)

You can see in the moon image the dark and light areas. These "moons" represent the Church. Brother Branham teaches us that the Sun and Moon are husband and wife. The Sun represents Jesus and the Moon represents His Bride. She reflects the light of the Sun in His absence. She has none of Her own light. The dark area represents this false church; it was formal, cold, led by men and their teaching. The Light represents the true Holy Ghost-led church that acted and believed just like the original church at Pentecost.

Last verse, verse 7:

Read from Church Age Book:

"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.

Then read the rest of the verse from the Bible.

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

- What will the Lord give to him that overcome? The Tree of Life
- Where is it? In the middle of the paradise of God
- Who wants that Tree? We all do! Listen carefully and the Seventh Angel will teach us exactly who/what this tree is.

So now instead of an Angel out there keeping them away from this Tree, it's out there driving them along to this Tree; the angels of the churches, the seven churches, bringing them back to the Name of Jesus Christ who is the Tree of Life that stands in the Paradise of God. Whew! My! I hope you get that. The Tree of Life standing in the Paradise of God that you may partake of Him and become son and daughter of God and live forever. "He that heareth My Words and believeth on Him that sent Me has Eternal Life, and shall never come into the judgment but passed from death unto Life." 60-1205 "The Ephesian Church Age", para. 230

- Who is that Tree of Life? Jesus
- What is the promise to those who partake of Him? Eternal life, become a son or daughter of God, passed from death unto life.

That promise is not only to those of the Ephesian Church Age but to YOU and any who are given an ear to HEAR what the Spirit saith unto the churches. The promise is to the OVERCOMER. Each person who will overcome the temptations of the age they live in and are led by the Spirit of God, a son/daughter of God, a member of the true Church elected before the foundation of the world.

Remember YOU are the Overcomer; each warning and promise is to you. You are a portion of the Bride he called out to overcome in this last age. This letter is to YOU.