

Transcript – Revelation 2 Bible Study - Ephesus

Shabbat shalom, and Shabbat shalom to those who are listening to the Bible study with us this evening. We are in the book of Revelation. And as I said before, what an exciting book to go over as we are living in this time and actually are part of Revelation, what's going on. Revelation is a book about the end time, and we're studying this in real time as we're going along with this.

So we went over, in the first two Bible studies, Revelation chapter 1. It took two studies to do that, and now we are in Chapter 2. And Revelation chapter 2 and Revelation chapter 3, we will be going over the message to the seven congregations ... **the message to the seven congregations** ... to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

So, I did a message a while ago called *A Message from Yahshua to You*; and if you haven't heard the message please go online and listen to it or watch it ... the DVD, whatever you prefer ... but it really is a great message for several reasons. Number one, like we were saying in the Bible study the last time, that these literally are seven cities in Asia Minor, which is modern-day Turkey, and it was a mail route. Now, why did Yahshua pick these seven cities? Who knows? But **there is a message to the end-time congregation in these seven congregations.**

So, they are seven literal congregations, but **the message that's in Revelation is twofold. Number one, it's historical.** So as we go here, we're going to see that these seven congregations are historical eras. I have this in my book *The Gates of Hell Will Not Prevail Against Her*. If you'd like a copy, please write us; we'd be happy to send you one.

But we see that Ephesus congregation goes from around 30 AD to about 70 AD, and it's the apostolic congregation. It's the congregation that started with Yahshua, and it was a 40 long years that that congregation went on. Smyrna, the persecuted congregation, starts somewhere around 67-68 AD. It goes all the way to 313 AD and the ten pogroms that come under the Roman emperors. Then we have Pergamos that goes from around 313 AD to 700 AD. And it's the congregation in the wilderness and what's happening to them. Then we have Thyatira, which is from around 700 AD to about 1350-1380 or so.

And again, because they're overlapping eras sometimes you can pinpoint them to dates by things that happened on those dates; like Pergamos: 313 is when Constantine conquered the Roman Empire and declared Christianity the state religion and the persecution stopped, at least for the half-hearted Christians, so that's why we put that date there.

Sardis goes from about 1360 to 1620, the Sardis era. Then we have the Philadelphia era of the congregation from 1620 when the Pilgrims come over to the new land, to America, to 1900. And from 1900 until present, in the year 2018, we have been in the Laodicean era.

So, the Laodicean era is pretty much what any of us that would be listening to this would know because this is the only time we've lived in. And everybody listening to this has only lived in the Laodicean era. So as we go through this, I will talk a little bit about the historical aspect of the seven congregations. But to be honest, I want to get more into the end-time message. That's really what I want to focus on. Because, like I said, each one of these congregations is a spirit today.

So we have seven congregations; five of the seven Yahshua is telling them that if they do not repent they are going to lose their reward. So it's really, really serious when you think about it; that only the message to Philadelphia and the message to Smyrna, which is the persecuted congregation, is there no rebuke. And Smyrna, again, is a martyrism that's going on even today. It's estimated about every nine minutes a believer is martyred somewhere. I don't know if we'll get to Smyrna today. If we do, we'll go over that a little bit and what's happening in that arena today of that.

But that's really what's important here; that since the overall message is one of repentance, depending on who you are is what you have to repent of. Because the message to Ephesus is very, very different than the message to Pergamos, or Thyatira, to Sardis, and to Laodicea. So, we will go through each one, and the message, and what that means to us.

And like I said, I really have no timeframe to it. At first, I thought it would take two or three Bible studies to get to it. It may still be that. Maybe it'll be four. Who knows? But whatever it is, it is. Like I said, I don't want to make the Bible studies ... I want to keep them at somewhere between 45 minutes to an hour and make natural breaks where we'll stop, and then just continue the next week and pick up.

Because what's great about this is, is wow! That in these Bible studies we can really get in depth; and instead of just going over a subject, like righteousness, or pride, or unity, or whatever, we can really go in here verse by verse and scripture by scripture and really put it together and understand the Bible study in a way that maybe you never did before. So, let's start here in verse 1.

Revelation 2:1 *To the messenger of the congregation of Ephesus ...*

Comment: The messenger. And what did we say in the other Bible study, right? Verse 20 of chapter 1.

Revelation 1:20 *The mystery of the seven stars which you saw on My right, and the seven golden menorahs; the seven stars **are** the messengers of the seven congregations, and the seven menorahs you saw **are** the seven congregations.*

So in the Aramaic, as well as in the Hebrew, the word for messenger is malach. And a malach is a cherub; it's a heavenly being. I do use the word, at times, angel, but I really don't like that name because it's not a Hebrew word. It comes from the Greek angelos, which in English becomes angel. But, really, there aren't angels because the Bible was not written in Greek. It was written in Hebrew and in Aramaic, so.

But, when you say messenger in the Bible, we have messengers that are human beings; we have Yahshua who **is** the Messenger of Yahweh, and He certainly wasn't an angel or cherub. But, most of the time when that word malach is used, it's talking about cherubs. It's talking about heavenly beings that are there. Sometimes I do use, in our translation, just keep the word messenger as it is here.

But these messengers are angelic beings; that each congregation has a special cherub that's over that congregation, and watching that congregation, and helping the congregation to grow. And like I've been talking about the last couple months, we are in a whole new phase here for the end-time remnant of Yahweh; a phase, now, of purification and the baptism of fire that we went over. So here we have these messengers, though, and it's encouraging to know that every congregation has one because each one of these congregations have problems. They have good things, but they also have problems and they have things they have to overcome.

And, of course, the seven congregations are represented by the menorah. There's seven menorahs, which are the congregations. And I said it the last time, we'll really get into it again, that that is the symbol. It's the symbol for ancient Israel, and it's the symbol for the New Testament congregation also. So, He says:

Revelation 2:1 *To the messenger of the congregation of Ephesus: These things says He who holds all things ... Yahshua ... and the seven stars in His right hand, He walking in the midst of the seven golden menorahs:*

So again, *He walks in the midst*. Meaningly, He is the Head of the Congregation. *He walks in the midst*—He is involved in the congregation; He's alive; He's here; we can pray to Him. He hears our prayers, and He's right in the midst of that.

And, *He's holding the seven stars in His right hand*. What does that mean? Because right hand shows the hand of **strength**. Right? So when we're looking at the one of the twelve tribes, Benjamin: Ben-**yamin**. And most of the time that will be translated "son of my strength." But literally it's: ben – son; yamin – right; to the right. Son of my right hand ... hand is understood in that ... but, because the right is always understood as the strong side.

Matter of fact, many, many, many moons ago, they used to think that people who were left-handed were actually cursed, and because of that such ancient tradition that goes back to the beginning of time. Because, Yahshua is the right hand of

Yahweh; He's the strength of Yahweh. And that's why it says in Psalm 110, *Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool of Your feet*; because it represents strength that comes from there. So, we see this now.

Now, let's get into a little bit is who is the Ephesus congregation? Now, what's interesting is that when we're looking at these seven congregations, right, ... And like we said, you have Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea ... there's really, only the Ephesus congregation actually has a whole letter that's written to them, to the congregation in Ephesus.

So, I'm only going to go through a small part tonight of Ephesus, maybe even one or two scriptures at the most. But read the letter to the Ephesians after this, and you'll get an idea of what this message is also to the Ephesus congregation. Because when we look at the other congregations, none of them have a letter that's written to them except a letter that did not make the Canon of the Bible ... the Canon of the Bible.

But there is an ancient letter called *A letter of Paul to the Laodiceans*, to Laodicea; and it's very similar, if you read that letter, to the letter to the Colossians. So, we might go over that a little bit when we're going over Laodicea; maybe, maybe not. We'll see where we're at with that. But if we really want to understand the congregation, with the messages to these congregations, it's helpful when we can go to other parts of the Bible and see it.

What we can do is we can go to Acts 19. Because in Acts 19 Paul is actually starting the congregation at Ephesus. So, let's see how this congregation was when it was getting started. Acts 19, and I'm going to go through verse 1 through 10 ... Acts 19 and verse 1 through 10.

Acts 19:1-6 *And it happened, in the time Apollos was in Corinth, Paul was passing through the higher parts to come to Ephesus. And finding some disciples, he said to them, Believing, did you receive the Holy Spirit? And they said to him, We did not even hear whether there is a Holy Spirit. And he said to them, Then what were you baptized? And they said, To the baptism of John. And Paul said, John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe into One coming after him, that is, into Messiah, Yahshua. And hearing, they were baptized into the name of the Master Yahshua. Paul laying hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in different languages and they prophesied.*

Comment: So, again, we see here that the way you receive the Holy Spirit is by an authorized elder of Yahweh to do the laying on of hands after baptism and repentance of sins, so that they can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:7-10 *And all the men were about twelve. And going into the synagogue, he spoke boldly over three months, having reasoned with them, and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of Elohim. But when some were hardened, and did not obey, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, departing from there, he separated the disciples, and spoke to them daily in the school of a certain Tyrannus. And this happened over two years, so as all those living in Asia heard the Word of YAHWEH, both Jews and Arameans.*

So, this is basically the beginning of this congregation. It is one of the older congregations. Right? In era time, like I said, the Ephesus congregation is the apostolic congregation. So that's ... When we're looking at the point of congregational eras, they are the first. Like I said, they start in 30 AD. They start with Yahshua, when He's first starting the congregation, and going to about the destruction of the temple. But over here, this is the physical congregation to Ephesus that Paul is actually starting here in Acts 19. So, verse 2. He says:

Revelation 2:2 *I know you works, and your labor, and your patience, and that you cannot bear evil ones; and you tried those pretending to be apostles and are not, and found them to be liars.*

So, here, what do we see? We see that this congregation, just like the apostolic era of Ephesus, that the literal congregation is a strong congregation. They're strong in doctrine. They're not being misled by false teachers, and they're pretty strong in being able ... They know the Word because they can test false teachers, and they *tried those pretending to be apostles and are not, and found them to be liars.*

So He says, *I know your works, and your labor*. Right? *I know your works, and your labor*. If we go to Revelation 22:12. Because the whole point when Yahshua returns, what is He returning to? Revelation 22 and verse 12.

Revelation 22:12 *And behold, I am coming soon, and My reward is with Me, to give each according to his work.*

So you know you have this false narrative in Christianity that the Torah has been nailed to the cross, and Jesus and Jesus alone, there's nothing to do, all these things. We've heard it before, right? But, I don't think there's a stronger book in the New Testament for the importance of one's deeds after they become a believer than the book of Revelation, because Revelation is very, very clear. Here it is. It's starting out ... we ... going through chapter 1. And here, right in the beginning of chapter 2, *I know your works, and your labor, and your patience*. Right? Yahshua **knows** their works. He knows their deeds. He knows what they're doing.

And like I said, in Revelation 22:12, what does He say? He's coming back quickly. *I'm coming soon, and My reward is with Me, to give each according to his work*. Right? So, we know that people have to be having deeds. Because if you don't have deeds, you don't have faith. It's that simple. We know from the book of Jacob. So He knows it. He knows that these are people. So, now, it's starting out pretty positive because they're really strong people. They've been able to not be deceived. They've been able to try the different false apostles that are coming in there. John 10 and verse 1 through 5. When I think of Yahshua giving this verse when we think of the Ephesian congregation. John 10, starting in verse 1.

John 10:1-5 *Truly, truly I say to you that he who does not enter into the sheepfold of the flock by the gate but climbs up by another place; he is a thief and a robber. But the one entering through the gate is the **shepherd** of the sheep. The doorkeeper opens to him, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out. And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes in front of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice ... The shepherd always goes in front of the sheep, right? He's going in front of the sheep, **and they're following him because they know his voice** ... But they will not follow a foreigner, never! But they will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.*

And it amazes me, even in just the last year or two, there's been a big uproar in the United States on many people coming to ... and probably not just the last couple of years; it's actually started at least five, six, seven years ago ... people having the wrong name for our heavenly Father Yahweh and His Son Yahshua; people using sometimes Yahuah; we know Jehovah came from many years ago with Jehovah Witnesses; now it's Yehovah, and all of these false, exotic names that come.

And where are people getting them from, right? They're getting them from people that are not followers of Yahshua; that they don't know Yahshua's voice; that some of them are not Sabbath keepers. Right? And they're not even keeping the Sabbath. Others of them keep the Sabbath, but they don't believe in Yahshua. Some of them believe in Yahshua, and they don't believe Yahshua pre-existed or that He existed. So, there's all different kinds of things that are here with people coming up with the fake names.

But here we see that one thing about the Ephesus congregation is they couldn't be tricked; that they know their doctrine. They're taught in the truth, and they know what they're doing here as far as trying false teachers. And sometimes I look and I say, today I see in the Sacred Name Movement, I see the Ephesian congregation. Because in the Sacred Name Movement you see this. You see people that are sound. You see people who know their Bible very well. They know their doctrine very well. They're not too easily to be deceived. Yet, they've been around for a long time.

The Sacred Name Movement started, going all the way back in the 1930s, with Elder C.O. Dodd who was the partner with Andrew Dugger in writing the book *The True History of the True Congregation*. And as we go on here, we'll see that maybe some of the trials that some in the Sacred Name Movement are going through in the days that we're living in here. But at the same rate, it could be anybody from any congregation that could have the spirit of Ephesus because it seems to be a spirit of burnout.

I know Church of God, who I believe is primarily the Sardis congregation—spiritually dead congregation—there are still many Ephesus. Many of the message to Ephesus is to Church of God people that have just burned out, as we'll see here in a minute. So, in this way they're strong, right? And in verse 3:

Revelation 2:3 *And you have patience and have borne burdens on account of My name and you've not wearied.*

So we see that they're strong here in one sense, and they have borne ... they do have patience. Right? And they've *borne burdens on account of His name* ... So that's why, again, could be connected with Sacred Namers ... *and not wearied*. If you go to Acts 20 and verse 17, we see, again, Paul is going to be saying something to the Ephesian elders. Acts 20 and verse 17 ... Acts 20 and verse 17. I'll go all the way down to verse 31. So Acts the 20th chapter, starting in verse 17. And we see:

Acts 20:17 *And sending to Ephesus from Miletus he called for the elders of the congregation.*

Comment: So now, this is going to be a message Paul is going to give to the **leaders** of Ephesus, and it could help us to understand, when we get into the next verses, the problems they're having there. He says:

Acts 20:18-21 *And when you came to him, he said to them: You understand, from the first day on which I set foot in Asia, how I was with you all the time, serving our Master with all humility, and many tears and trials happening to me by the plots of the Jews; as I kept nothing back of what is profitable, so as not to tell you, and to teach you publicly, and from house to house, earnestly testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward Elohim and faith toward our Master, Yahshua Messiah.*

Acts 20:22-25 *And now, behold, being bound by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing the things going to meet me in it, but that the Holy Spirit testifies city by city saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I make account of nothing, nor do I hold my life precious to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Master Yahshua, fully to testify the good news of the grace of Elohim. And now, I know that you will see my face no more, all of you among whom I've travailed and preached the kingdom of YAHWEH.*

Acts 20:26-31 *Because of this I testify to you on this day that I am pure from the blood of all. For I did not keep back from declaring to you all the counsel of Elohim. Then take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit placed you as overseers, to shepherd the congregation of YAHWEH which He purchased through His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and out of you yourselves will rise up men speaking perverted things, in order to draw away the disciples after themselves. Because of this watch, remembering that I did not cease admonishing each one with tears night and day for three years.*

Wow! So here's a really, really heavy message. And like we said, the Ephesian congregation, right, the apostolic congregation, the strong congregation, the congregation that knows the Word, the congregation who is not going to be tricked so easily by false apostles; and yet, at the same rate, Paul right here to the **leaders of the congregation** is telling them that **some among their own leaders** after he leaves are going to rise up, and they're going to ... out of pride, self-righteousness, they're going to try to ... they'll leave the congregation, pulling people away to themselves.

And, wow! I'll tell you something. Being 35 years in the faith, I've seen this many, many times, unfortunately. I've seen it when I was in Church of God. I've seen it even in our congregation to a smaller degree. I've seen it in other Sacred Name congregations. I've seen it where it's so true what happens here; that people start out the right way ... and this is the Ephesian congregation ... because look at the very next verse after He says, *you have patience and borne burdens on account of My name and have not wearied*.

Revelation 2:4 *Nevertheless, I have something against you, because you left your first love.*

Wow! So now, you think about this: people that knew the truth, right? People that were strong in the truth, leaders, elders, people that were actually ordained, and now what are they doing? Because they lost their first love. They lost their focus. They lost their reason that Yahweh called them into the truth. And what happens? They become very worldly. They

become mixed with the world. And before you know it, pride and self-righteousness is letting them ... which they never in a million years would have thought of when they came to the truth ... of actually leaving Yahshua's congregation to start their own congregation.

And, again, my book *The Gates of Hell Will Not Prevail Against Them* ... which is an awesome book. I really encourage anybody listening to this: if you haven't gotten the book, write us; we'll send you a free copy. Because that book clearly shows ... and this is something that affected me when I became a believer 35 years ago. I had never known ... when you look at the Bible, and you read the Bible, you think of this personal relationship with Yahweh and Yahshua; and it definitely is a personal relationship with Yahweh and Yahshua ... but not in a million years would I ever have thought that there was a congregation that Yahshua started in 30 AD that continued right until that time when I came into the truth in the early 1980s.

I would have just never thought that, because where were they? You know you look out there and you see these big churches in the world. You see Catholicism, and you see Protestantism, and even churches like Jehovah's Witnesses, and all these other kind of churches that are there, evangelicals, and Assembly of God, and all that kind of stuff. And in my mind I never thought that Yahshua actually ordained twelve men, who ordained others, who ordained others, who ordained others, and that that ordination was continued right up until that time.

But it is very provable because, in the book, when you look at the history ... and this is what they always believed. The apostles believed it, the ones after them, the Paulicians, the Waldenses; all of them said they believed in a succession of elderhood. And they had actually records and books of names of people to prove this.

And this is where the message to the Ephesians—the message to Ephesus—this is where they went wrong: **they lost their first love**. And like I said, unfortunately, I've seen it in our congregation to a small degree, but I've still seen it. I've seen people that have come to Israel ... and I say when you've come to Mount Zion, where do you go from there? And they may start in the congregation, and maybe they're ordained a deacon, or maybe then they become an elder; and whatever happens, all of a sudden ... they're fine; they're believing in Yahweh's restoration ministry; they understand the doctrine ... and then they leave. And, all of a sudden, you see them six months later, a year later, and they're believing something totally different.

Mostly in Babylon that this has happened, because in other areas the people just are stronger with doctrine. They're just not ... in a lot of the third-world countries where we have congregations, most of our congregations ... they're not double minded that way, going one way and then going another way. And the ironic part about it is for some of the people then they ... I've been doing this, like I said, 35 years. Maybe they joined us 10 years ago or 15 years ago, whenever they joined, and they believed it; and they believed it and served; then they wound up getting ordained after so many years.

But then when they stopped believing it—whatever they start believing, whether in one case it was that Jerusalem is Babylon or something like that—then, all of a sudden, they start attacking me because I don't believe in that heresy ... which I've always ... or maybe it's the rotating moon, right? That if I don't believe that the moon is ... that the Sabbath rotates—not the moon but the Sabbath—rotates every month, then all of the sudden I become the heretic. The newest one now is the flat earth; that people are falling for that one.

But I say the leaders and elders of Yahweh have never fallen for that. And that's why Yahshua said My sheep know My voice, and they would never fall. They would never, ever fall for a false one. Because once you know the voice of Yahshua, you're going to follow the people Yahshua ordained and the ones that Yahshua put in leadership in the congregation. And if somebody leaves that, they're not an elder anymore because they're leaving. They're going on their own. They're starting their own congregation, and they're leaving the very body of Messiah that Yahshua put them in; and it's just not an option. It certainly is not an option.

I've seen many, many things when I was in Church of God. I never, ever, ever once would think of leaving. And the only reason I left was when the church was taken over, and they actually went to Sunday worship; and **they left**. They left Yahweh, and I stayed right on that track of the things that I already knew: there's no eternal hell fire; that the soul is

mortal; that people, the human beings, don't live forever; there's a Judgment Day; the laying on of hands; baptisms; the same things that's in Hebrews the 6th chapter, verse 1 and 2.

But, really, this is the problem with Ephesus. This is ... if you're thinking, is this message to me? This is really what this message is about. It's about people that, really, they came into the truth, they had a good understanding, and they lost their first love. And, I'll tell you something. I don't know how it happens. I guess I do know, but Praise Yahweh it's never happened to me; that I have more love and more zeal for Yahweh now, even 35 years later, than I ever had in my life. Because, as I mature more as a believer, it just becomes more real to me; and as we get closer to that day ... like Paul says, encourage each other with these words ... as we get closer to that day, wow! I can't imagine losing my first love, but I see how it happens to people, particularly in Babylon.

And I'm not saying that this message can't be to others. I saw other people fall away this way in other countries. But like I said, I think most of the time it comes in Babylon, in first world nations like Europe, maybe Australia, some of these places like that. Because what happens is people, little by little, they stop studying their Bible so much. They stop praying in fervency. They stop meditating, right? They stop fasting often. And whatever happens ... it could be that they're working more hours at their job. It could be a family member died. It could be that they even got divorced or something like that. It could be anything, but it's always something physical. It's something physical that will pull the person away. And then, the next thing you know, they lost their first love. They are just not zealous and excited anymore about the truth of Yahweh.

And it's really, really sad to see. Because, you know what it shows you? When that can happen to you, it shows you you never really put Yahweh first in your life. Because when Yahweh is your first love, there really will be no second love. It can never be pulled away. But that's what shows you that if someone can fall into that position, they never really had Yahweh first in their life. If we go to Ephesians 1 ... Let's look at what is this first love. Ephesians 1 and verse 11. Let's go to the book of Ephesians now because this is the actual letter to the congregation in Ephesus. So, let's go here. Let's see what Paul says about this. Because let's see what kind of love the Ephesians had in the beginning, right? Ephesians 1. I'm going to read verse 11 to verse 20. He says:

Ephesians 1:11-14 *By whom we have been chosen as He marked us from the beginning so He wanted to carry out everything according to the good judgment of His will ... Ephesians 1, verse 11. Now I'm in verse 12 ... that we should become the first to trust in Messiah in His honor and glory; in whom, you also have heard the Word of Truth, which is the good news of your salvation, in Him you have believed, so you were sealed with the Holy Spirit that was promised, which is the pledge ... It's the down payment ... of our inheritance, to the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

Ephesians 1:15-17 *Because of this, hearing of your faith in our Master Yahshua Messiah and your love toward all the saints ... Right? **They had hospitality. They had love toward the brethren** ... I also do not cease giving thanks on your behalf, making mention of you in my prayers ... **So, Paul is always thanking Yahweh for the Ephesian congregation and the love that they had toward everyone** ... that the Elohim of our Master Yahshua Messiah, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,*

Ephesians 1:18-20 *the eyes of your mind having been enlightened, for you to know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength which He worked in Messiah in raising Him from the dead; and He seated Him at the right hand in heaven.*

Wow! **So we see that the love that the Ephesians have is an outgoing overflow of their faith in Yahshua and their understanding about His sacrifice for them.** And I always say this ... we went over the gateways to the Kingdom. Tomorrow will be part four gateway: self-discipline. But when I went over the one on repentance, the second gateway to the Kingdom, like I said, if you've never shed tears of repentance, you've never repented. This has to be so **deep** in your heart of what Yahshua did in your life; and then, there has to be a deed that comes from there. *Faith without deeds is dead.*

And there are people that are emotional all the time about it. If you're giving a testimony or talking about it, you'll see them cry; and they'll pull out their tissues and wipe their eyes, but they never have any deeds. And when the time comes to make those really hard decisions in your life—maybe losing a job over the Sabbath, or hard things maybe with unconverted family members, or whatever it is—they won't make those hard decisions. So it's built on emotionalism, but it's not built on real faith. With the Ephesians, it wasn't like that. **The Ephesians had real faith. The Ephesians understood the doctrine.** The Ephesians...

And that's why sometimes when people fall away, and somebody says, "Wow! That person seemed so strong. How could they fall away?" That's the message of Ephesus. Because they lost their first love. And like I said, if you could lose your first love, maybe you never really had it. Because to me, it's hard for me to understand how somebody could have that and how they could let it slip away. And it doesn't come overnight. I can tell you that much. The same way you do not get strong in the faith overnight, it takes years, and years, and years.

And that's why ... Listen to this message tomorrow. It's going to be a really, really powerful message on self-discipline in your life. Because that's the key. **You have to overcome the flesh for the Spirit to work;** and Yahweh is not going to do it for you. He is not going to force your flesh a certain way. And yet, you have Satan the devil as a roaring lion there trying to catch you in the flesh at every time, whether it's food, whether it's emotional things, whether it's mental. And that's why tomorrow's message is extremely important, *The Fourth Gateway*. I wish I could have given it to the Ephesus congregation because maybe this wouldn't have come. But, like He says:

Revelation 2:4 *Nevertheless, I have something against you, because you lost your first love.*

And they lost it by going into the world. They lost it by falling into a mixture, by falling into a spirit of compromise. And we're going to see this in a minute when we start looking at the spirit of the Nicolaitans. But, let's look at Hebrew 10 and verse 32 ... Hebrews 10 and verse 32, because this very well could be the message to the congregation in Ephesus. Hebrews 10 and starting in verse 32. I'll read 32 up until 39. It says:

Hebrews 10:32-33 *Therefore, remember the former days, those in which after you received baptism, you endured with much tribulation; indeed being exposed both to trouble and reproach you became an object of ridicule; and you have become companions of those men who have endured these things.*

Comment: Right? Remember when you first come into truth, and you don't care what people say about you. You don't care how you're mocked because Yahweh's giving you His truth. You don't care if you lose your job. You don't care if you lose your money. You just know, wow! I am so honored that Yahweh gave me this truth, and I am going to stay with that truth no matter what!

Hebrews 10:34-36 *For also you had pity on those in prison; and you accepted the seizure of your possessions with joy, knowing yourselves to have a better and abiding possession in Heaven ... Right? So, you weren't worried about the 401k. You weren't worried about the retirement because you knew I have to do fruit now because my retirement is when Yahweh, when Yahshua returns ... Then do not throw away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of patience, that having done the will of Elohim you may obtain the promise.*

Comment: Right? They need self-discipline. They need patience because they're losing that hope.

Hebrews 10:37-39 *For, the time is very short and He who will come, will come, and will not delay ... We are right at the end of the end here, right ... "But the righteous shall live by faith;" "yet if he draws back," "My soul will not be pleased with him." ... The righteous will live by faith; and faith without deeds is dead. There has to be a deed, or you have no faith ... But, we **do not** belong to those drawing back, which leads to perdition; but to the faith which restores our soul.*

So, wow! Anybody who Yahshua is writing the message to Ephesus to you that has kind of gotten a little bit of self-pity, a little bit of depression, that's allowing the worldly cares to overtake you, and you're losing that first love, this is the time ... **this is the time.** Turn around. Throw some cold water in your face. Realize what Yahweh is giving you. Realize how close

we are to the Kingdom, and realize you have to get that first love back. You have to enthrall yourself. You have to soak yourself with that Bible day in and day out. You have to pray. You have to study. You have to meditate. You have to fast. And everything in your life has to be for one thing: living for Yahweh and the Kingdom of Yahweh.

And all of this, like I said, social media and Facebook and all these things that Satan has used to mind-control people to get them addicted to all these things ... twitter and all this other stuff. And we've only hit the beginning of it. It's going to get much, much worse before it gets better ... you have to come out of it. Your focus has got to be the Kingdom of Yahweh and what Yahweh is doing in this life and coming out of the world. Because the more you are in the world, the more you're going to lose your first love. You're going to get depressed. You're going to get self-pity. You're going to get self-focus, and you're going to lose that first love. So, what does He say?

Revelation 2:5 *Then remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works. And if not, I am coming to you quickly, and will remove your menorah from its place, unless you repent.*

Wow! So now this congregation—the congregation that was the strongest; the congregation that was the apostolic one; the congregation that couldn't be tricked by the false apostles—now Yahshua is telling them: *Remember from where you've fallen*. Right? So, they've dropped away ... Unfortunately, some of the very people who need to hear this message the most will never hear it because they've left the congregation ... but, they've dropped away. They've fallen. And then He says they need to **repent, and do the first works**. And if not, He's coming quickly and will remove the menorah, unless they repent.

So this is really, really serious. This is life or death. They can lose their eternal life. When the menorah is removed, what does that mean? You're not part of Yahshua's congregation anymore. And the fact is if people will so nonchalantly leave Yahshua's congregation and not care, right, not follow His judicial order, then you could see why He would remove the menorah from them. Let's go to Jacob 2:14 through 17 ... Book of Jacob, chapter 2:14 through 17. Because what is He telling them? To repent from where they've fallen away, and do the first works. Chapter 2:14 through 17. He says:

Jacob 2:14-17 *My brother, what is the gain if anyone says he has faith, but does not have deeds? Is the faith able to restore him to life? But if a brother or sister is naked and may be lacking in daily food, and any one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, but does not give them the things the body needs, what gain is it? So also faith, if it does not have deeds, is dead being by itself.*

Wow! So again, in this day and age, we're in a day and age of the ... you know ... everything is an Oprah Winfrey Show, and everything is a talk-show, and people want to give their opinions, right? And any article that's written, there's hundreds, if not thousands, of talk backs and what someone else thinks about it. And this is not the way of Yahweh. The way of Yahweh is not Facebook and Twitter, and talk backs, and everyone just giving their opinion, and doing what's right in their own eyes. That's the book of Judges—the worst book in the Bible as far as what was going on there, where everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes.

No. Yahweh's way is the way of judicial order. And that's why you have to remember from where you've fallen away, and repent, and do the first works. Like I was reading in Hebrews 10, remember when you first came into the truth how zealous you were, and you were willing to give up anything. I mean, I know people that they would come to Israel, they would sacrifice anything to get there because they knew their whole spiritual life was hanging by a thread. And then after coming once or twice, people will say, "Are you going to Israel this year?" And I've heard people say, "Ah, no. I did that before. I've been there."

And I can tell you this much, in almost every case in our congregation where someone's fallen away the first thing they lost was their first love for Israel and Jerusalem. They lost the desire to want to come there anymore. And that's not my city, that's Yahweh city, and especially now with what going on there. Right? The tabernacle of David that's found and with the new Bible code.

And like I said, I can't say too much now before this program airs in April, but once this program airs I could talk about it. But, you're going to be amazed what's going on there and how the Bible Code says that the temple was in the City of David, and so many things that are in that Bible code ... and I got my hands on the matrix to it and I will share with it afterward, but not now. But I'm telling you, if there's ever a time to be excited and want to come to Israel, wow, It's now!

And that is, like I said, the number one main thing that I see people ... the first thing when they're falling away is they lose interest in **Yahweh's place and their inheritance**. Because, like I said, maybe I'm living here now, right? Maybe Yahweh put me here as a he-goat before the flock and I've been doing this ministry here for 20 years, but Israel is the land of the 12 tribes. And Israel is every single true believer's inheritance, and every true believer should want to be here every single year if they could.

Now granted, you can't always get here for different reasons, and Yahweh doesn't always make a way. But, wow! If He makes a way and you could come, and you don't want to be here with all your heart, your mind, your soul, and your strength, look out. You may be in your first step of falling away and the message of Ephesus is to you. So, *remember from where you've fallen, and repent, and do the first works*. Matthew 25 ... And like He says, *if not, I'm coming to you quickly, and will remove the menorah from its place* ... Matthew 25:1 through 13 ... Matthew 25:1 through 13. Because this scripture is a parallel of what? This parallel I'm going to read here about the ten virgins.

Matthew 25:1-5 *Then the kingdom of Heaven shall be compared to ten virgins who taking their lamps, went out to a meeting of the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish. Those being foolish, taking their lamps, did not take oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels and their lamps. But the bridegroom delaying all nodded and slept.*

Comment: And that's what happened. There was a time for ... I can't tell you how many years, but it was several years when the organizations fell apart, and the internet congregation was starting to rise, and the Laodicean was coming to its full, and it seemed like everybody slept. And then, Yahweh started regathering. Yahweh started waking people up. Yahweh started restoring these things.

Matthew 25:6 *And then at midnight, a cry occurred, Behold, the bridegroom coming! Go out to meet him.*

Comment: Right? So, there's a point where you fall asleep, and you're asleep so long you don't even realize you're sleeping and you lose your way, and then nobody can help you. Because as people try to get you back to the truth you just get bitter and you think, the Laodicean, "Hey, I don't need to get back to the truth. I'm rich and increased with goods. I'm in need of nothing." And they don't know they're poor, they're blind, they're miserable, and naked. And then midnight comes, right?

You will hear people saying today, "Where is the promise of His coming? Oh, Elder Don's a false prophet. He's saying Yahshua's coming and He isn't here yet." No, I never made a date for Yahshua's return. I gave a couple of pretty good assumptions when possibly some things could happen. But, you know what? Every day that goes by is one day closer to His Kingdom; and only Yahweh knows the day that Yahshua is returning. And I'm just excited that He's revealed the things that He has to me. But midnight will come; and if you are not preparing, and you're not ready, this is what's going to happen:

Matthew 25:6-8 *... a cry occurred, Behold, the bridegroom comes! Go out to meet him. Then all those virgins were aroused and prepared their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for your lamps are gone out.*

Right? They had no oil left. Their lamps were out. The Laodiceans, the ones who lost their first love, the ones who weren't zealous. And what happened? They want the lamps of the other ones. They want the lamps of the Philadelphians, and they're saying, "No way!"

Matthew 25:8-13 *And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil; our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there be not enough for us and you. But rather, go to those who sell and buy for yourselves. But as they*

were going to buy, the bridegroom came. And those ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. And afterwards, the rest of the virgins also came, saying, Master, Master, open to us. But answering, he said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you. Therefore, be alert, for you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes.

Wow! **Be alert. Be zealous. Be alert. Be ready. Always be ready!** You know, I'd rather always be ready and thinking Yahshua is always coming than think, "Uh, we got 50 years left. He isn't coming this time." No way! You have to be ready there. And that's why He says:

Revelation 2:5-6 *Then remember from where you've fallen ... Back to Revelation 2 and verse 5 ... and do the first works. And if not, I'm coming to you quickly, and will remove your menorah from its place, unless you repent ... The foolish virgins in Matthew 25 lost out on the kingdom. Yahshua shut the door and they did not come in to the wedding feast. Verse 6 ... But you have this ... So now, after He's given them a pretty strong rebuke, He says, But you do have one thing ... that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

What is the work of the Nicolaitans? Well, if you look at the word, it's a very interesting word. Nicolaitans. Nico means conqueror; laitan means deity or people. So, it's the conqueror of the people. And many people through the years, and there could be some truth to this, believe that Nicolaitan—the conqueror of the people—is hierarchical government, like in the Catholic Church. The way the Catholic Church for several thousand years, actually ... or almost several thousand years ... if the people didn't follow, they'd kill them. They'd martyr them. It was this top-down government where you know you either had to toe the line or you were going to get killed.

And that could be part of it. But to be honest with you, studying about the Nicolaitans ... because we're going to see this come up again when we get to Pergamos probably next week ... I do not think that that's the main analogy that Nicolaitans are. What I believe is that the Nicolaitans, actually, besides being that part of the Catholicism, the conqueror of the people, that it's conquering of the people through compromise; and you see this.

When you study, what you'll find out is: who was Nicholas? He was a deacon from Acts the 6th chapter. And where he came from was a very, very pagan area. And that area that he came from was a compromising area. They were believing in Paul's good news and the message of the good news of Yahshua, but they were also believing in many pagan things. And it's this compromise with truth that conquers the people; and that's what you see even today.

And like I said as we get into it with Pergamos, these people didn't ... hated the works of the Nicolaitans, but in Pergamos it was a stumbling block. And they're going to compare it to Balaam. We'll get into that more. I'm not going to get into it too much today, but they compare it to Balaam. And that's exactly what Balaam did. He used compromising spirit with the Israelites to conquer them because he couldn't curse them. Yahweh would not allow him to curse them. The same way that Yahweh will not allow us to be cursed today, but He does allow Satan to tempt us.

And if Satan can use the worldliness around us to tempt us and you succumb to that temptation, you've got nobody to blame but yourself because we know through every temptation Yahweh always gives a way out. But to be honest, sometimes I don't think people want a way out. Like I said, they're loving the sin, and they're continuing the sin, and they really don't want a way out.

So here it is, it's a spirit of compromise that was there; and this was not the problem. I told you that. I said the Ephesus congregation, they were strong in doctrine. They tried the apostles. They knew the Word. So, they weren't really compromisers. But what happened to them is they got conquered by the world; that the cares of the world and the things around them pulled them into depression and pulled them away from their first love. And that's what He's telling them, that they have to repent. **They have to change because they have so much going for them.**

And isn't it the same way today? When you see somebody falling away and you think, wow! Even though sometimes it's very traumatic things: a death of a family member, or a loss of a job, and then they lose their house, or whatever. So there are traumatic things that get people depressed, but there should be **nothing** that would get us down enough that we would lose our faith, that we would leave Yahshua's Congregation, that we would turn back on this awesome, awesome

walk that Yahshua is calling one out of a million people out there. Like I said, for every one of you there's a million people out there that are not being called, a million people out there that are part of this world, that are sucked in to all of this worldliness and social media and all the other things going on. So, we want to take the message to Ephesus really, really serious.

And we want to ... Let's take this Passover and make it ... Make it a goal of yours. Write it down and make this Passover to be more fervent this coming year. We'll be heading into in another month—we're hitting in Adar 2 now—and then we'll be heading into the first month of the year in April. Passover this year is late, at least according to the Roman calendar. It's not really late according to Yahweh's calendar because it's the same thing. It comes after the equinox. It's the first new moon after the equinox, which this year the 14th day of the first month is April 30th. We'll be keeping the Passover on the night of the 29th ... But let's dedicate ourselves to have more zeal and more dedication and just not to fall into the spirit of Ephesus. And verse 7 as we get ready to end here.

Revelation 2:7 *The one who has an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the congregations. To the one overcoming, I will give to him to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Garden.*

Wow! Genesis 2 and verse 9. So, right? Everything behind us is a desert wilderness, before us is the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2 and verse 9.

Genesis 2:9 *And out of the ground YAHWEH Elohim made to spring up every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food. The Tree of Life was also in the middle of the garden; and also the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.*

So that's the world we live in today. That's modern technology. That's the internet. You can find anything good; you can find anything evil. **But, we want to go to the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life that's only good, only Yahweh's ways. We want to be sanctifying our life, coming out of the world completely, being around other believers, strengthening ourselves through other believers.**

And like I said, when we look at Ephesians 1, look at that love that the Ephesus congregation once had. And, wow! Out of everything that they're being rebuked for, after reading Ephesians we would never think it would be for that. But, it's a warning to each of us that it can happen to any of us; and that's why we have to stay strong. You have to stay close to the other believers. You can't be out there on your own. You have to be trying as much as possible when you can to come to the Feast in Israel when Yahweh gives opportunity and to be strengthened by the other believers around you not to fall into the message to Ephesus. So:

Revelation 2:7 ... *I will give to him to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of Elohim.*

And that's what we are looking for. That's what the reward we want. When you think about it, almost 6,000 years ago all of this started and where we are today because Adam and Eve made one wrong mistake, right? They ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil instead of the Tree of Life. And here it is, now, as we're in Revelation. We're living Revelation! Yahweh is saying if you stay close to Me, if you surrender your will to Me, if you stay and keep your first love that you have, if you stay strong in My congregation and you serve each other, then I will give you from the Tree of Life. How wonderful! Wow! How awesome!

So, we will stop there. I don't think every Bible study is going to take this long on each congregation. I don't foresee doing seven Bible studies, but you never know. I'm not hurrying. With sermons I have everything kind of lined out according to time, but here I'm just going along. I have my notes, and we'll see what happens. But what a blessing to be able to study these this way and really, really get these messages, as we got this one. So, Shabbat shalom. Until next week. We will see you at our house on erev Shabbat. Yahweh bless. Shabbat shalom.