

**YESTERDAY**  
**REV. 2:1-7 / 4-18-18 / WED**

**INTRODUCTION**

- A. "Yesterday" is a song by the English rock band the Beatles.
- B. Yesterday could be the theme song for the first of the seven churches Jesus addressed in the book of Revelations.
1. Let's remember Rev. 1:19 and the fact it provides us with an outline of the entire book.
    - a. **"What you have seen"** refers to John's vision of Christ in chapter 1.
    - b. **"What is now"** refers to the seven messages to the seven churches in chapters 2-3.
    - c. **"What will take place"** refers to the events in chapters 4-22.
  2. The seven churches are listed in 1:11.
- C. These messages can be understood in three different ways.
1. Practically these messages both challenge and encouraged the seven churches in the first century.
  2. Prophetically these churches represent different stages of church history over the last 2,000 plus years.
  3. Personally these messages speak to every church and to every Christian.
- D. It's important to know about each of these cities and churches that Christ addresses in these letters. What should we know about Ephesus?
1. It was an important city commercially.
  2. It was also an important city politically.
  3. It was also an important city religiously.
  4. It was a wicked city.
  5. It was a city visited by several Christian leaders.
  6. Little is left of Ephesus today but ruins.
- E. Even though the church at Ephesus lived in a wicked environment Jesus assured them he was with them—2:1.

1. Each of the seven letters are addressed to the angel or pastor of the church.
2. Each letter also begins with a personalized description of Christ meant just for them.
3. In Ephesus' case Christ is described as holding the seven stars or pastors and standing among the seven lampstands or seven churches.

#### I. **FIRST JESUS NOTED THEIR REPUTATION.**

- A. He commends their service—2:2—**“I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance...”**
- B. He commends their separation—2:2—**“I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people...”**
- C. He commends their standards—2:2. **“that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 2:6—“6 but you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**
  1. The word “Nicolaitans” means “to conquer the people.”
  2. Some think it refers to an immoral sect lead by a man named Nicolas. He may be the deacon mentioned in Acts 6:5, who is thought to have defected from traditional Christianity in favor of immorality.
  3. Clement of Alexandria said of this cult... “they abandon themselves to pleasure like goats, leading a life of self-indulgence.”
  4. The problems of the church apparently came with “within” rather than “without”.
  5. Some think they may became the Gnostics who plagued the church during the second century.
- D. He commends their steadfastness—3—**“You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.”**

#### II. **SECOND, AFTER NOTING THEIR REPUTATION, JESUS REMARKED ON THEIR RELAPSE.**

- A. Jesus was disappointed—4—**“Yet I hold this against you...”**
- B. Jesus offered his diagnosis—4—**“...: You have forsaken the love you had at first...”**
  1. This may refer to their love for him—Luke 10:27.

##### **Luke 10:27**

**He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ .....**

2. This may refer to their love for each other—John 13:35.

3. This may refer to loving the lost.

4. This could be all of the above.

**III. THIRD, AFTER COMMENDING AND CONDEMNING THEM, JESUS SUGGESTS A REMEDY.**

- A. The first step is to remember—5—**“Consider how far you have fallen!...”** And KJV—**“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen..”**
- B. The second step is to repent—5—**“Repent....”**
- C. The third step is to repeat—5—**“do the things you did at first....”**
- D. The fourth step is a warning of what will happen if they don’t follow the remedy he just gave them---5—**“If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”**

**IV. FOURTH, JESUS PROMISED THEM A REWARD.**

- A. First, there is the promise of being overcomers—7—**“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious....”**
- B. Second, there is the promise of eternal life—7—**“I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”**