

## The Fall of the First Church, Part 2<sup>1</sup>

Yedidiah – I was really thankful for the opportunity to reach out to those Christians. So many people have come to their own conclusions and are completely deceived. They are darkened in their own understanding. I was thankful that we could be a light to them. There is no hope for this world. It is amazing that He has chosen us to be a light to them. I was thankful we were able to be there and be a light to them. I believe there were a lot of seeds sown and that there will be a response.

Amen. It was so wonderful how you said that. It was what I was going to say tonight. The only hope the world has of salvation is coming into the Holy City. Their hope is coming into the Wife of the Lamb, the Twelve Tribes of Israel. She is forming now into Twelve Tribes, which must happen, or you will never be able to read about Rev 21:9-12. You can just mark that out otherwise, for it will never happen. You can just mark Revelations out if it doesn't form in this age.

Each and every person in the wife of the Lamb has entered through one of those twelve gates, which Isaiah says will never close. They will be open night and day (Isa 62:6-7). So, we have to have a lampstand that is not put out. The Edah is the witness that gives light to people's darkness. It has to be a true witness in every place. The lampstand can be taken out of its place, as it was in Rev 2:4-5. It was taken out of the locality of Ephesus. It was the first church where the love declined and the lampstand was removed, but they went on in their formality. They kept on going, but the Holy Spirit no longer indwelt them. After that, not one of their converts received the Holy Spirit. Rev 18:2 describes their religion as a prison of unclean spirits.

Paul labored in Acts 20:31, to warn them:

*“Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”*

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<sup>1</sup> For Part 1, see “The Fall of the First Church” [1995.04.09-T01, 26 pages] and “The Anatomy of the Fall of the First Church” [1995.09.22-T01, 15 pages]. There are other teachings dealing with this as well, like “Demise” [1995.05.15-T01, 10 pages].

He admonished each one with tears. He was in Ephesus for three years. He was telling them what was going to happen in verses 28-30. He called from Miletus and all the elders of the church in Ephesus met with him. They weren't divided up. At that time there was a lampstand there that was shining pretty brightly.

**Those who stray from the way of love seek a following after themselves.**

You will see that in Acts 20:17-30 when he met with them. He had warned them night and day with admonitions and warnings that the lampstand would be removed if these things happened. They were to be on guard:

*“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”(Acts 20:28-31)*

Here he was, predicting that from even among the elders who were right there before him, men would arise seeking a following to themselves. When that happens, the decline comes in because it causes factions in the Body. He was talking to elders, men like our Master spoke about in Jn 7:18 — leaders or elders or sent ones. He said some would be seeking their own glory, and some would be seeking the glory of our Master. There are two kinds of people always present in the Body. Some aspire to be leaders from a good conscience. Others aspire to be leaders because they are seeking to bring glory to themselves. In Ephesus it became prevalent to the extent that they left their first love, although outwardly they held onto certain things that made them look good — “forms of godliness” (2 Tim 3:5).

He warned them of the hidden things, the creeping evil, that has to be discerned in their lives. When was Revelations written, or read to the churches? Probably at the turn of the century. When did Paul write the letter to the Ephesians? Maybe thirty or

forty years earlier. You can see the downfall. They had left their first love and the lampstand was removed. Obviously, they did have a first love to begin with. They didn't keep the fire going. Instead, something came in. Even though they didn't leave and start a new church, they drew away a following to themselves.

In 1 and 2 Timothy you can see exactly what went on to make the decline in the first and second century. You can see where Timothy was when he received the letter from Paul. He was writing to Timothy and addressing the Community in Ephesus. We can see that the love would be the light, the witness for all men to see. They would have been able to see something very distinctive – if they maintained the first love they had.

### **In Every Place (not everywhere)**

You can see in Rev 2:4-5 that it says in “every place” (as in the NAS) and in 1 Tim 2:8 it says “every place” (and not “everywhere” as in the NKJ).<sup>2</sup>

Don't think it says “everywhere” for that is a mistranslation, but it is “every place.” Our Master would remove the lampstand and it would no longer be the Edah, the witness of the truth, for everything after that would be done in another spirit than love. There was no love anymore. It was no longer that we love what our Master loves and *that* is why we would go to the Grateful Dead shows. The love of His Father was a compelling force behind everything our Master did.

You can see the word *place* there in Rev 2:5. In Ephesus the elders were once together and identified in Messiah. They had their first love for Messiah and each other. They had that for a time, for it says, “you have left your first love” (verse 4).

The first church fell by these men quenching that love by certain ways that they were. They didn't communicate that love. They were more in the natural realm, not promoting love, not continuing to keep the fire going. Men from without and even from

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<sup>2</sup> *Place* in both verses is #5117, *topos* (root of the modern word *topology*). #5517 is apparently a primary word; a spot, i.e. location (as a position, home, tract, etc.);

among your own selves will come into the Edah, Paul told the elders, and cause your love to grow cold. For a time they had that wonderful love for one another, but then something else came in.

2 Cor 11:4 – After a while another Yahshua was being proclaimed, another gospel was being preached by another spirit that didn't save you. Roman Catholicism took over and the bishopric system came in. As 2 Cor 11:15 says, Satan's servants arose and masqueraded as ministers of righteousness. They were not of the Holy Spirit but of Satan. They were putting everyone into prisons as Rev 18:2 says.

Acts 20:28-30; Eph 4:12 — They quit functioning properly together to bring about Eph 4:13. They could no longer re-adjust people for the works of service as they were supposed to. (We have not yet come into this.) Verse 13 has to come about, as the Holy Spirit said through Paul, and verse 16, of course. This takes love. When love goes, everything else goes: kindness, goodness, patience, everything, even self-control. As you can see, Paul was writing them, and he lived together with them in their communities as he traveled. He would live together with them in their communities.

*“From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Sovereign with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews.” (Acts 20:17-19)*

They went from house to house, sometimes having qahals, and sometimes having other meetings. It was pretty obvious that he spent time together with them, and not in a hotel room somewhere. It says “among you” which means “together with you.”

He knew their first love, which the elders of Ephesus once had, was waning. Paul had spent three years with them. He knew Satan's servants would quench that love. They ended up being used by Satan because they were seeking their own glory. They quenched the love of God by introducing new things, new doctrines. They didn't abide in the anointing, as we taught the other day about 1 Jn 2:27. Therefore, 1 Jn 2:28 was

unreachable for most. They lost that confidence and went on in their own strength. They didn't know they would see Him face to face anymore. There was no longer any expectation of that.

*“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.” (1 Jn 2:28)*

Most of the people in Ephesus would have shame at His coming because they left their first love. They had become like the Christian Church today. The lampstand was taken out of the way. Paul had warned them night and day, with tears, not to teach strange doctrines.

*“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia — remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” (1 Tim 1:3)*

There he is writing to Timothy in Ephesus to instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines. It was starting to happen already. The lampstand would be removed within thirty years or so. False teachings were coming in. They were going ahead of Paul. 2 Tim 2:18 is still speaking about Ephesus in warning those who have “strayed concerning the truth.” They were already turning aside to myths.

*“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.” (1 Tim 4:3-4)*

*“From which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk.” (1 Tim 1:6)*

*“Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.” (1 Tim 1:19)*

*“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” (1 Tim 4:1)*

*“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Tim 6:10)*

*“By professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.” (1 Tim 6:21)*

We can see that gangrene was setting in among certain households. Myths, doctrines, and genealogies were distracting the saints. That is actually where Gnosticism came in. It is just head knowledge that causes disputes.

*“Nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.” (1 Tim 1:4)*

*“But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.” (1 Tim 4:7)*

They had quarrels about words, as Yowceph brought up.

*“Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.” (2 Tim 2:14)*

There it is. They were wrangling about words, quarreling.

*“But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.” (2 Tim 2:23)*

*“He is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions.” (1 Tim 6:4)*

They just have to chatter with someone. These are the brothers and sisters who just have to engage in meaningless chatter (2 Tim 2:16), controversies as we read a while ago, and knowledge:

*“Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.” (1 Tim 6:20)*

Empty chatter is something we could fall into. Who would we be chattering with? The saints here, the brothers and sisters?

*“From which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk.” (1 Tim 1:6; see also 2 Tim 2:16)*

Another translation says “fruitless discussion.” These are the things that started creeping into the community. Obviously Timothy had written him and he was writing back or he had heard what was happening in the church in Ephesus. He was writing to Timothy about the church in Ephesus.

*“But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.” (2 Tim 2:23)*

There were all these things coming in like Jewish traditions.

*“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” (1 Tim 2:1-2)*

He is telling them what to pray for in the minchot. And verse 8 says:

*“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” (1 Tim 2:8)*

Obviously, the women were getting out of order. And you can see in 1 Tim 3:1-13 that the elders were to have all the qualifications of the overseers. They were putting overseers in the Edah in Ephesus that didn't have these qualifications. Men must first be put to the test, Paul said. These leaders came in over the wall, maybe, or through the gate, I don't know, but they fell into Satan's sin of elevating themselves. They weren't content with just being who they were. All we want to be is who we are. If we humble ourselves, He will raise us up in due time (1 Pet 5:6). He can't raise anyone up who doesn't humble himself.

The presence of the Spirit is everything, because after He departed everything became a false representation of the truth. Something that would happen in time was that the elders would be forbidden to marry. So, they became the priests. It happened in Ephesus. The Catholic Church was coming in with its priests, bishops, and monks. The Ephesians left their first love because of the things that were permeating the Body. This is what Paul wrote to Timothy about, the things that were happening in Ephesus.

Of course, they will never happen to us, right? No, it will happen over and over again if we don't learn from their examples. But we have this document and we have to learn from the examples of the Old Covenant and New Covenant Scriptures, including the epistles to the churches, so that we won't fall in the same way they did. They were written down as examples for us upon whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Cor 10:11-12).

Understanding these things is essential for the foundation of this tribe. If we are going to have a foundation we have to have tested stones. You just can't have a stone that is going to crack under the pressure twenty or thirty years from now. We have to be critically tested, as we spoke of the other day. We have to be critically tested to weed out the false.

In 1 Tim 6:2-5 they were differing with Paul and the things he was trying to teach. In 2 Tim 4:3-4 — Everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes because they acknowledged no king. You can read about it in the Bible. Pretty soon denominations came forth. False teachers, which were apart from the anointing, formed an early form of Gnosticism. 1 John was written to combat Gnosticism.

### **Christianity is Discreditable**

The exposé of Christianity is 1 Jn 3:7-8. It is the exposure of something discreditable. We must not be able to be discredited. They tried to discredit our Master Yahshua and the first church. They can't discredit the truth, but if these things creep in, they can hang our Master up to public shame. Christianity is a religion that is discreditable, but the truth can't be discredited. Whoever is, or does, Mt 24:14 and Isa 49:6 will not be discredited. They will not be discreditable. Those who persecute truth do it for Satan. They try to cast doubt upon it so that people will disbelieve the truth and believe the lie (2 Ths 2:9-12).

The only thing that can be discredited is something that isn't the truth. If we are the truth, and remain the truth, we are not able to be discredited. Our Master was the truth. No matter how much they said He was a charlatan or a bamboozler or everything else, He was not discredited.

Aharon – We have been saved, but now we are handling something precious to our Father. It could be me that these things come in through by my fruitless talk and doing things in the natural. Love must be preeminent. I don't ever want to forget that the sign of that happening is that love



wanes. I don't want to ever let any time at all go by that I see these things that I don't check myself to see if I am responsible for it.

Shemiyah – In 1 Tim 1:4-5 Paul makes it clear what the goal of their instruction was: love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. That is the goal of the instruction of any elder or teacher. They want to see that love in the sheep. Those that are seeking our Father's glory have as their purpose and aim to build up others. Those that are seeking their own glory have as their purpose to raise themselves up and draw a following after themselves. The scary thing about it is that those things work in me. They work in all of us. Any time that we quit denying ourselves, we can quickly become a destroyer in the Body. We can create the lobster effect.

I want that critical testing to take place because I want to be saved from those things. The only way we can be saved from those things is by seeing and repenting of them when they do come up. We have to put them under our feet. Our enemies are those things that come to us to live this life seeking something for ourselves. I want those things to be exposed for what they are. I don't want to be afraid of that or afraid of the testing, for all these things work to purify us. The ultimate purpose is that our Master would get what He deserves. He deserves a pure Bride. If we don't hear these things, we will just go off. I am thankful for the anointing that our Father continually gives us so that we don't go off the right track.

Natan – I saw that love is what is attacked by the evil one. When love goes everything goes: peace, joy, and patience. I want to maintain my love for our Master.

You can see that every day that we live. If we are not patient with our brothers, what went first? Love. We can fake a little bit of love, peace, but not patience. It shows us where we are. It doesn't take long.

It is required of the sons of God that we would bring back what the Holy Spirit has said to us. That is why we have the morning and evening gatherings so people can hear and understand things. People are waiting on the very thing you have to share. Not sharing is not loving. We have to love enough to open up what is in our hearts. Others require it and if we don't give it, they won't have it. Not loving is hating, like not disciplining is hating your child.

Just remember faith comes by hearing, and that by the Word of God. Here we are in these times of having a trillion Bibles and printing presses. All they had was what was spoken to them by one another. That was all they could trust in. They spoke because they loved one another. If it is faith that we are receiving when we are reading, the rest of us will hear about it. You will shout it from the rooftops and then someone else will really hear it and then we all will. We've seen it happen right here.

Our Father can only speak to us if we all speak, which is just how He spoke to us tonight.<sup>3</sup> If we don't speak now, what are we going to do in the millennium? Will we enter in then if we don't speak what our Father speaks? That will be outstanding in the last days, the way His people speak what He speaks. Faith comes by hearing.

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<sup>3</sup> More people shared than are recorded in these notes.