

Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

A Letter to the Church @ Ephesus

Revelation 2:1-7

1967 - 2017



Revelation 2:1–7 (AV)

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: 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 Nicolaitans, 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.





Revelation 2:1

- “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

Angel
or
messenger?

Textus Receptus Occurrences — 185x in 12 unique form(s)

ἄγγελοί — 1x	ἄγγελος — 53x
ἄγγελοι — 22x	Ἄγγελος — 2x
ἀγγέλοις — 9x	ἀγγέλου — 15x
ἄγγελόν — 4x	ἀγγέλους — 20x
ἄγγελον — 18x	ἀγγέλω — 9x
ἄγγελός — 1x	ἀγγέλων — 31x

Dictionary Aids

Vine's Expository Dictionary: [View Entry](#)

TDNT Reference: 1:74,12

KJV Translation Count — Total: 186x

The KJV translates Strong's G32 in the following manner: angel (179x), messenger (7x). 

It could be that every local church has a “guardian angel” who oversees and protects that congregation. Even if that is the case, a better interpretation of the “messengers” of **Revelation 1** is that they are the pastors or bishops of the seven churches, symbolized by the lampstands. A pastor is God’s “messenger” to the church in that he is responsible to faithfully preach God’s Word to them. John’s vision shows that each pastor is being held in the Lord’s right hand. And, as we learn in **John 10:28**, no one can snatch them out of Jesus’ hand.



Matthew 11:10

- This is he of whom it is written,
“ ‘Behold, I send my messenger [angellos] before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’

1967 - 2017



1:20 the angels. The word lit. means “messenger.” Although it can mean angel—and does throughout the book—it cannot refer to angels here because angels are never leaders in the church.

Most likely, these messengers are the 7 key elders representing each of those churches (see note on v. 16).

John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible

IMO: This angel represents the men who preached the Word in these churches and would have read this letter to the people of the church.



Here is the order of revelation of Revelation

From: God the Father

To: Jesus Christ the Son

Sent by: His Angel

To: John the Apostle who writes

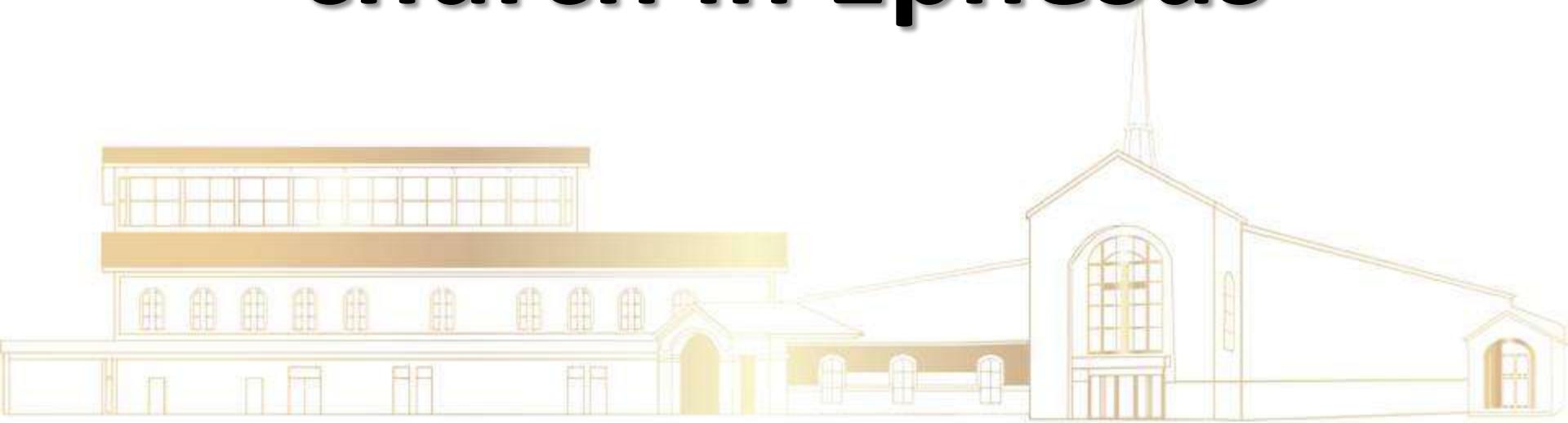
To: 7 Messengers (chief elder/pastor/bishop) of 7 local church

**There is NO good reason to think
the message went back to
angels.**



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**Written to 7 churches;
this is the
church in Ephesus**



Today, Christians in mass are abandoning consistent affiliation with a particular assembly of Christians. Opting instead for weekly home Bible studies, coffee shops groups, Internet ministries, and para-church organizations like Navigators or CRU or nothing at all.

This is a critical mistake in the life of the believer.

Jesus died for His church and directed His apostle John to write to seven local churches.



Let me say it another way:

**If you were NOT part of a church you
would never have received this letter
from Jesus.**

**You would never have heard these words
of commendation, rebuke, and this
amazing apocalyptic letter.**



Churches have particular characteristics which set them apart from anything else on the planet.



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Characteristics of a Church

**#1 Christ Jesus, the one and only
Son, of the only and only living
God, is its Head.**

Christ must be preeminent.

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Characteristics of a Church

**#2 The gospel of the death,
burial and resurrection of Jesus
for the sins of humanity is the
only gospel it preaches.**

1967 - 2017



Galatians 1:8

- But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

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Characteristics of a Church

#3 The church is led by (or seeks to be led by) no less than one man who meets the qualifications of an overseer/elder in the pastoral epistles.

1967 - 2017



- **Messengers (Rev 2-3)**
- **Elders (Acts 20, 1 Tim 4, 1 Per 5)**
- **Pastor (Eph 4:11)**
- **Bishop/Overseer (1 Tim 3/ Tit 1)**
- **Leaders (Heb 13:17)**



Characteristics of a Church

#3A The church is served by deacons or is moving toward having deacons who meet the qualifications outlined in the pastoral epistles.

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Characteristics of a Church

#4 The church derives its purpose and mission from the Great Commission of Jesus.

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Matthew 28:19-20

- Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

1967 - 2017



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Characteristics of a Church

#5 The church practices the two ordinances Christ gave the apostles—namely baptism and the Lord's Supper.

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1 Corinthians 11:24-26

- and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. **Do this in remembrance of me.**”
²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. **Do this**, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”
²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death **until he comes.**

1967 - 2017



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Characteristics of a Church

#6 The church protects the integrity of the Lord's Table with church discipline.

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**Read and study
1 Corinthians 5
and
1 Corinthians 11.**



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Characteristics of a Church

#7 The church consistently assembles on the Lord's Day for preaching, prayer and fellowship.

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Characteristics of a Church

#8 The NT is the church's source document for faith and practice.

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Characteristics of a Church

#9 The church teaches that the salvation Christ secured for all who believe is obtained by grace through faith and faith alone.

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Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)

- For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Romans 1:17 (ESV)

- For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

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Characteristics of a Church

#10 The church joyfully looks to the blessed hope of the return of the resurrected Lord Jesus for His bride.

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The point of these 7 letters is that all churches are NOT equal.

And that if a churches does NOT repent it will cease to be a true church of Jesus Christ.

The messenger will not be held in the hand of Jesus and the lampstand, which symbolically represents being a true church of Jesus, will be removed.





Revelation 2:1b

• ‘The words of him

**The messenger for the church
delivers the words Jesus spoke
through His apostle(s).**

**This is described as the apostle’s
doctrine in Acts 2.**



Revelation 2:1c

- who holds the seven stars in his right hand,**
- who walks among the seven golden lampstands.**

7 and 7 represent all the messengers and all the churches

The point of all this symbolic language is to remind the reader that these are Christ's churches.

**The stars are His messengers (pastors).
The lampstands are the local called out assemblies of saints He redeemed with His own blood.**

Christ holds His messengers in His hands and walks among His churches.





Revelation 1:16, 20

- **In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.**
- **As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.**

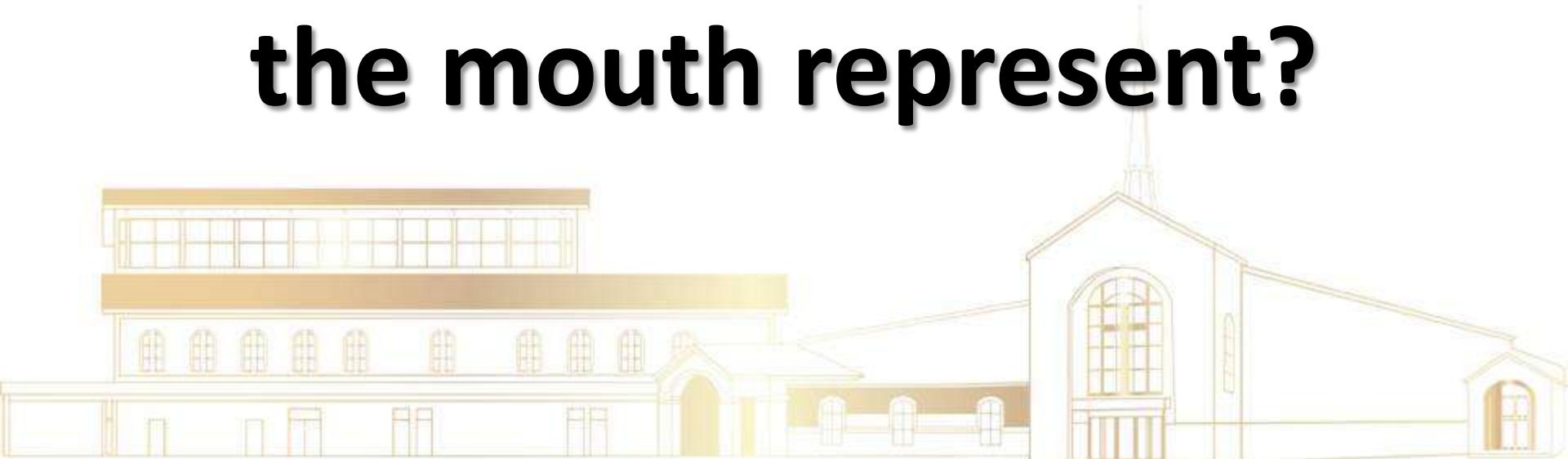
**This language
graphically/symbolically
communicates Christ's
Authority **OVER** His
Church.**



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Notice

**What is in His mouth!
What does this sword in
the mouth represent?**





Revelation 2:2

•“ I know your
works,

He knows...

Christ knows Berean.

What would He say to us?

What would the letter contain?

We must look at each and every letter and analyze it as though it was potentially written to us.

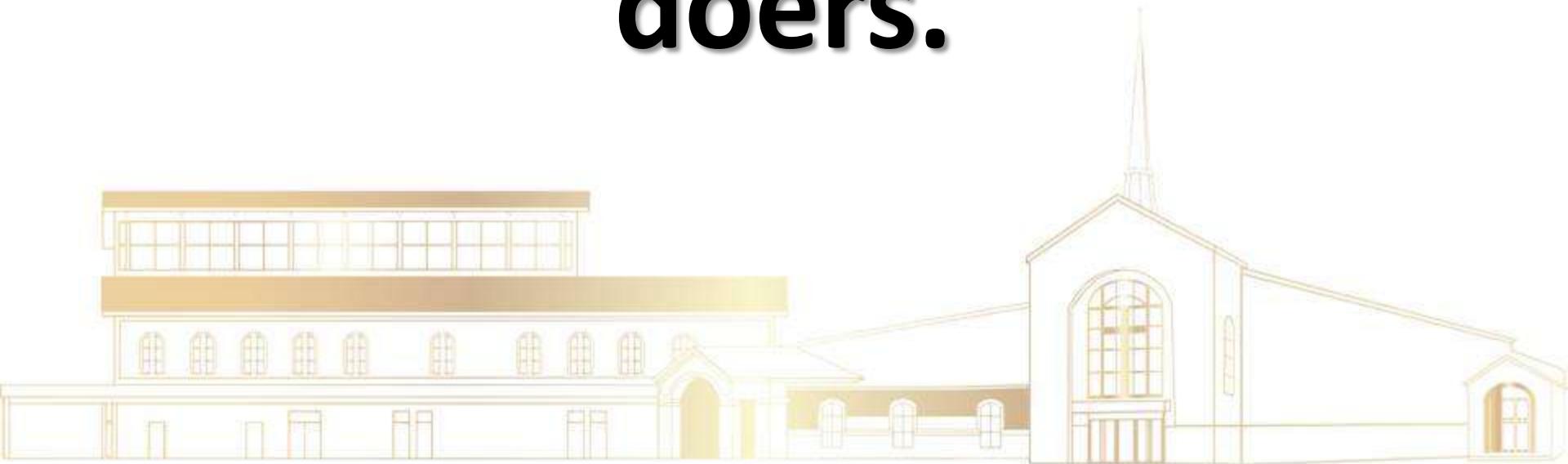
We MUST care about what Christ would think about Berean.



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#1

This is a church full of
doers.



This is:

- **Serving in Awana**
- **Visiting a shut-in at home or a nursing home**
- **Delivering a meal**
- **Babysitting for a family in need**
- **Building a handicap ramp**
- **Paying an electric bill**
- **Putting someone up in a hotel room**
- **Counseling with couple whose marriage is in crisis**
- **Teaching a Sunday school class**
- **Greeting new people in church**
- **Serving in the nursery**



Matthew 16:27

- For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels;
- and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

1967 - 2017



1 Corinthians 3:8

- Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: **and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.**

1967 - 2017



Revelation 22:12

- And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me,
- **to give every man according as his work shall be.**

1967 - 2017





Revelation 2:2

- your toil**
- and your patient endurance,**

Mentioned again in v. 3



Revelation 2:3

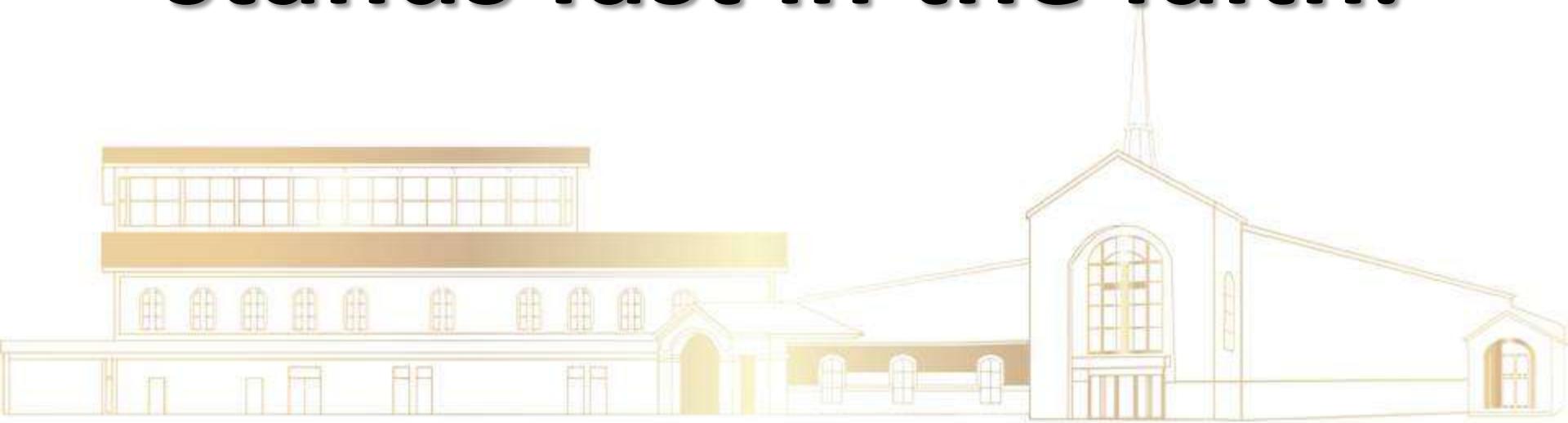
- I know you are enduring patiently

I am also aware that you have persisted steadfastly, endured much for the sake of my name, and have not grown weary.

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#2

This is a church that
stands fast in the faith.



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**It is amazing how much
emphasis the NT places
on
persevering in the faith.**



Colossians 1:22-23

- he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

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#3

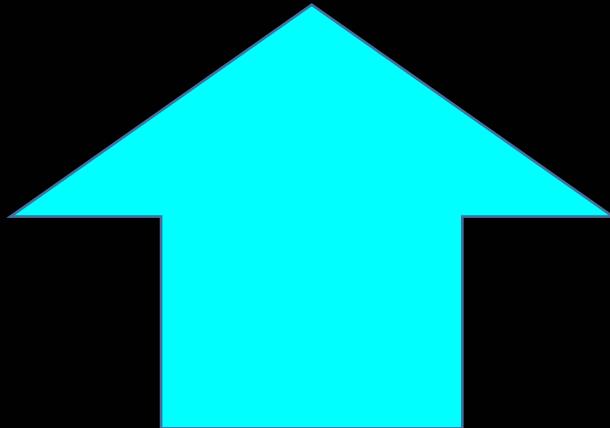
This church has a firm
moral compass.





Revelation 2:2

•and how you cannot bear with those who are evil,



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**Every reference to “evil”
reinforces a belief in moral
absolutes which must come
from a Sovereign or it is not
an absolute.**



That which is evil cannot be inconsistent or arbitrarily applied or relative or it is NOT evil.

The church must take a stand against that which is evil.



1 Thessalonians 5:22

- Abstain from every form of evil.

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- **Racism is evil.**
- **Human trafficking is evil.**
- **Adultery is evil.**
- **Abortion is evil.**
- **Terrorism is evil.**
- **Gender dysphoria propaganda is evil.**
- **Suicide is evil.**
- **Malice is evil.**
- **Idolatry is evil.**
- **Pornography is evil.**
- **Unjust usury (loan sharks) is evil.**
- **Murder is evil.**
- **Homosexuality is evil.**



Isaiah 5:20

- Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

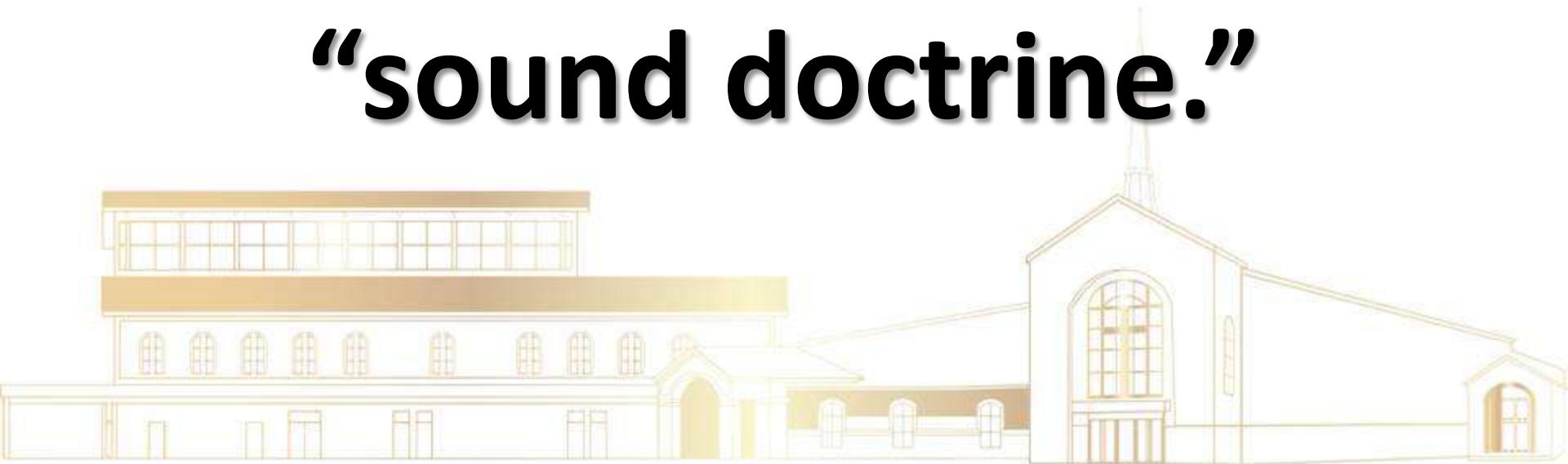
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#4

**The church at Ephesus
stands for
“sound doctrine.”**





Revelation 2:2

- **but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not,**
- **and found them to be false.**

**If anyone claims to be an apostle today
that should be a GIANT red flag.**

**Be extremely careful in allowing anyone
who claims to be an apostle to influence
how you think.**

**NT apostles received their commission from
Jesus.**

**Nothing in NT suggests that the office of apostle
would continue beyond the first generation of
apostles.**



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**To test or examine what
someone teaches or
claims to be true
requires CRITERIA.**





These girls are playing baseball. Look at her hit the ball.



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Sound Doctrine

There is only one God who has always existed and will always exist in 3 persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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Sound Doctrine

The Bible, consisting of 66 particular books, is the Word of God.

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Sound Doctrine

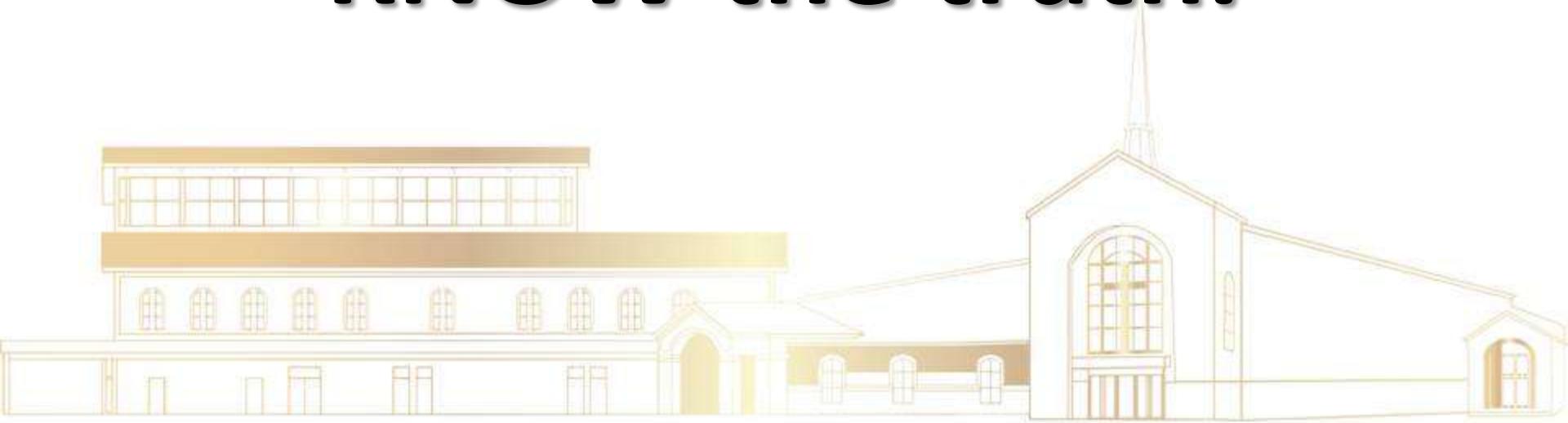
The God of the Bible is the
Ultimate Creator of all things.
Jesus is NOT a created being.

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**In order to examine
false teachers we must
KNOW the truth.**



In VBS

- Jesus the one and only eternal Son of God, second person of the TRI-UNE God
- Supernatural conception; virgin birth
- Sinless life in perfect obedience to the will of His one and only Father
- Substitutionary death & Legitimate burial
- Bodily resurrection
- Post resurrection/pre-ascension ministry
- Ascension
- Mediatorial (Intercessional) ministry
- Second Coming



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I regularly show
You lists so that you
can examine what is
and isn't **RIGHT**.

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- 1. Jesus is the one and only eternal Son of the true and Living God.**
- 2. His conception was supernatural while his birth was as natural as any other birth.**
- 3. He is the God-Man (Fully Divine and Fully Human; perfectly united).**



- 4. He lived a sinless life, perfectly kept the law, and performed signs and miracles beyond what any prophet had ever done validating His claim to be sent from God and to be His Son.**
- 5. He suffered a horrific death on a cross as an innocent man to save from their sin and hell all who would believe the gospel.**

Salvation

Past, Present, and Future.



6. He was buried in a tomb that no man had ever used.

7. On the third day, He physically rose from the dead just as He promised.

8. After 40 days of showing Himself alive, He ascended to heaven.



9. On the right hand of God, He is the one and only mediator between our Holy God and sinful humanity.

10. He is coming again to raise the dead, judge the world, and establish His Kingdom.



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#5

**This church has not collapsed
or compromised under the
pressure of the world in its
convictions for Jesus.**





Revelation 2:3

•and bearing up for
my name's sake,
and you have not
grown weary.

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Now for the Rebuke

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Revelation 2:4

• **But** I have this
against you, that you have
abandoned the love you had
at first.

**What does he
mean by
abandoned the
love you had at
first?**



2:4–5 the love you had at first. One interpretation is that Ephesus had lost its early love for Christ. Another interpretation is that Ephesian believers had lost love for one another and needed to revive the compassionate works you did at first. Many interpreters think both are in view, since love for Christ and love for one another are related (cf. Mark 12:29–31; 1 John 4:20).

The ESV Study Bible



What we love matters to our
Lord and Savior?

If I love something or
someone more than Jesus
than that something or
someone is an idol.





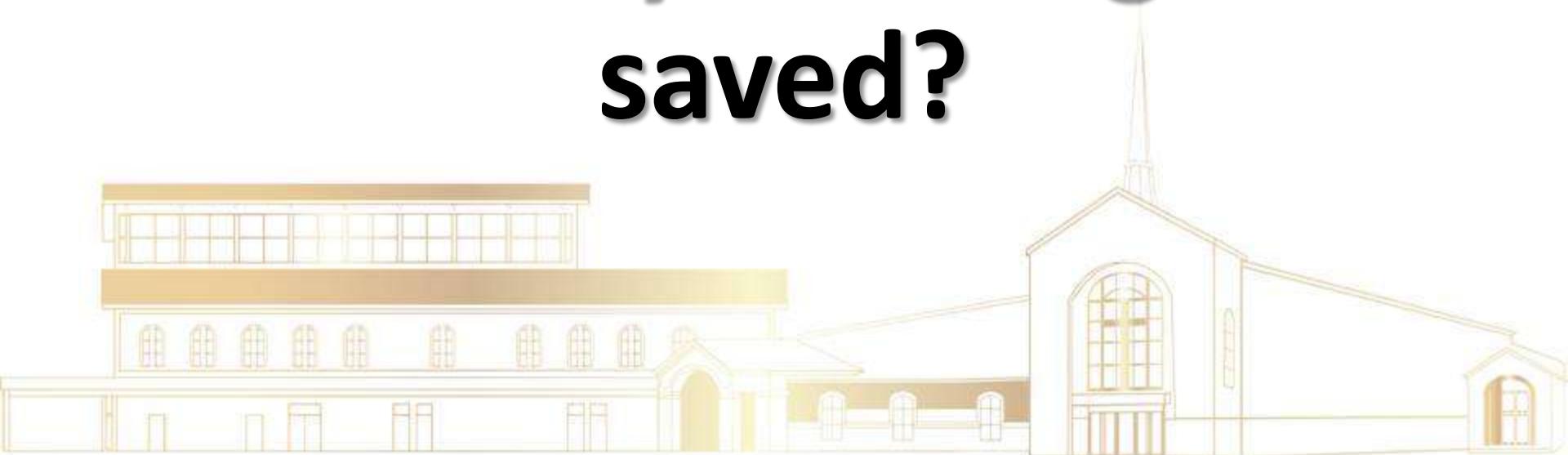
Revelation 2:5

• Remember
therefore from where you
have fallen;

We remember with our minds!

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**Do you remember your
affections for Christ
when you first got
saved?**



Matthew 22:37

- And he said to him,
**“You shall love the Lord
your God with all your
heart and with all your soul
and with all your mind.**

1967 - 2017





Revelation 2:5

•repent, and do
the works you did at first.

•If not, I will come to you and
remove your lampstand from its
place, unless you repent.

Repentance includes a
recognition of wrong-
doing together
with a decision to
move in a different
direction.





Revelation 2:5

•and do the works
you did at first.

What are the
works you
did at first?





Revelation 2:5

• **If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.**



Revelations 2:6

- Yet this you have:
 - you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.



Revelation 2:7

- **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**



Revelation 2:7

• **To the one who conquers
I will grant to eat of the tree of
life, which is in the paradise of
God.'**