



FAITH PRINCETON SUNDAY SCHOOL

REVELATION 2:1-7 - Ephesus

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2026

2026 Faith Sunday School Plan

Date	SS Scripture	SS Lesson
1/4/2026		PRAYER
1/11/2026	REVELATION INTRO	ALL CLASSES ASSEMBLY
1/18/2026	REVELATION INTRO	ALL CLASSES ASSEMBLY
1/25/2026	SNOW DATE	
2/1/2026	REVELATION INTRO	ALL CLASSES ASSEMBLY
2/8/2026	Revelation 1.	Revealing Jesus
2/15/2026	Revelation 2:1-7	Ephesus. Lost First Love
2/22/2026	Revelation 2:8-11	Smyrna. Faithful in Persecution
3/1/2026	Revelation 2:12-17.	Pergamum. Repent from False Teachings
3/8/2026	Revelation 2:18-29.	Thyatira. Don't Tolerate Jezebel
3/15/2026	Revelation 3:1-6.	Sardis. Live up to your Reputation
3/22/2026	Revelation 3:7-13.	Philadelphia. Open Door
3/29/2026	Revelation 3:14-22.	Lukewarm. Closed Door.
4/5/2026	Revelation 4.	Scenes from the Throne
4/12/2026	Revelation 5.	Hear a Lion, See a Lamb
4/19/2026	Revelation 6:1-8.	The Six Seals: Four Horsemen
4/26/2026	Revelation 6:9-17.	The Six Seals: Martyrs and Darkness
5/3/2026	Revelation 7:1-8.	The Seal of the Servants
5/10/2026	Revelation 7:9-17.	Multitudes and Martyrs
5/17/2026	Revelation 8.	Seventh Seal - Silence, Smoke & 4 Trumpets
5/24/2026	Revelation 9:1-12.	Fifth Trumpet. Army of Locusts.
5/31/2026	Revelation 9:13-21.	Sixth Trumpet. Four Angels Released.
6/7/2026	Revelation 10.	Mighty Angel and Small Scroll
6/14/2026	Revelation 11:1-14.	Two Witnesses (second woe)
6/21/2026	Revelation 11:15-19.	Trumpet 7. Worship in Heaven. Wrath has Come.
6/28/2026	Revelation 12.	The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon
7/5/2026	Revelation 13:1-10.	The Two Beasts.
7/12/2026	Revelation 13:11-18.	The Two Beasts. (cont)
7/19/2026	Revelation 14:1-13.	The Lamb, the 144,000 & 3 Angels
7/26/2026	Revelation 14:14-20.	Reaping the Harvest of the Earth
8/2/2026	Revelation 15.	Worship before the Bowl Judgments
8/9/2026	Revelation 16.	Seven Bowls of God's Wrath
8/16/2026	Revelation 17.	Woman and Scarlet Beast (Babylon & nations)
8/23/2026	Revelation 18.	Fall of Babylon
8/30/2026	Revelation 19:1-10.	Hallelujah Chorus
9/6/2026	Revelation 19:11-21.	The Word of God Strikes Down the Enemies
9/13/2026	Revelation 20:1-6.	The Millennial Reign of Christ.
9/20/2026	Revelation 20:7-15.	Final Judgment
9/27/2026	Revelation 21:1-8.	Making Everything New
10/4/2026	Revelation 21:9-27.	The New Jerusalem
10/11/2026	Revelation 22.	River and Trees of Life. Maranatha.
10/18/2026	REVELATION	FINAL THOUGHTS - ALL CLASSES ASSEMBLY
10/25/2026		

DEAR FAMILY OF FAITH,

JUST A REMINDER...

Since we got snowed out on January 25th, here is the updated schedule of our Sunday School plan for studying Revelation. We will slide everything back o Sunday. The lesson material printed with the February 1st date will be used for the February 8th class covering Revelation 1.

This material will be used for the February 15th class as we begin looking at the letters to the seven churches of Revelation. The first church is Ephesus, and it would be a good preparation to read through Paul's letter to the same church in our NT book of Ephesians. Paul urged them to continue to grow in their faith and their love for each other. In Ephesians 1:18-19 Paul prayed *"that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what is the wealth of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of His strength."*

Apparently, the Ephesians didn't keep the eyes of their hearts enlightened, because the message that Jesus gives them in Revelation 2 is that they had *lost their first love*. This is a timeless warning for the church and all Christians of all time: "Have you lost your first love for Jesus?" If so, then remember how far you have fallen, repent of your apostasy, and redo the things you did at first when you were growing closer to Jesus... Still good instruction for us over 2,000 years later.

REVELATION 2

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

“TO the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

- 2 ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false;
- 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary.
- 4 ‘But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.
- 5 ‘Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.
- 6 ‘Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- 7 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’

Enduring Word Commentary: Revelation 2:1-7 Letter to Ephesus David Guzik

REVELATION 2 – JESUS’ LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES

The letters to the seven churches share a similar structure. They each feature:

- An address to a particular congregation.
- An introduction of Jesus.
- A statement regarding the condition of the church.
- A verdict from Jesus regarding the condition of the church.
- A command from Jesus to the church.
- A general exhortation to all Christians.
- A promise of reward.

We can see the state of each of these seven churches – and the state of our own walk with Jesus – by looking at what Jesus has to say to each church in each section.

Jesus’ letter to the church at Ephesus

1(1a) The character of the city of Ephesus

“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

a. **To the angel:** As discussed under [Revelation 1:20](#), this **angel** may be the pastor of the church at Ephesus, or an angel looking in on the workings of the church at Ephesus. In some way, this **angel** represents this church; but the letter isn’t written just to the representative, but to the whole church.

i. “I consider what is spoken to this angel as spoken to the whole Church; and that it is not *his* particular state that is described, but the states of the *people* in general under his care.” (Clarke)

b. **Ephesus:** This was a famous city in the ancient world, with an equally famous church. Paul ministered in Ephesus for three years ([Acts 19:1](#), [Acts 19:10](#), [Acts 20:31](#)). Aquila and Priscilla, with Apollos served there ([Acts 18:24-28](#)). Paul’s close associate Timothy ([1 Timothy 1:3](#)) worked in Ephesus. According to strong and consistent historic tradition, the Apostle John also ministered there.

i. “Surely it was a place of great privilege, of great preaching.” (Robertson)

c. **Ephesus:** This great city was also world-famous as a religious, cultural, and economic center of the region. Ephesus had the notable temple of Diana, a fertility goddess worshipped with immoral sex. This tremendous temple to

Diana in Ephesus was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was supported by 127 pillars, each pillar 60 feet tall, and it was adorned with great sculptures.

i. “The Temple of Artemis was also a major treasury and bank of the ancient world, where merchants, kings, and even cities made deposits, and where their money could be kept safe under the protection of deity.” (Longenecker in his commentary on Acts)

ii. “Ephesus was a stronghold of Satan. Here many evil things both superstitious and satanic were practised. Books containing formula for sorcery and other ungodly and forbidden arts were plentiful in that city.” (Gaebelien in his commentary on Acts)

2(1b) Jesus describes Himself to the church at Ephesus

“These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

a. **He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:** These images were taken from John’s vision of Jesus in [Revelation 1](#). They emphasize the authority of Jesus in the Church (He **holds the seven stars**) and His immediate presence in the Church (He **walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands**). This introduction stresses that Jesus is central to the church, and should be recognized as central to the church.

b. **Holds:** This is the ancient Greek word *kratein*, and is an emphatic and complete word. Jesus has these churches, and **holds** them securely. The churches belong to Jesus, not to the leaders of the churches or to the people of the churches. *He holds* them.

3(2-3) What Jesus knows about the Christians of Ephesus

“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.”

a. **I know your works:** Jesus looked at His church, and He knew its condition. It was no mystery to Him. There may be sin or corruption hidden in a congregation, but it isn’t hidden to Jesus. He would say the same thing to us today, both as individuals and as a congregation: **I know your works.**

i. “There are also working Christians who do not approach to laboring; yet a lifetime of such work as theirs would not

David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: Revelation 2 (cont.)*

exhaust a butterfly. Now, when a man works for Christ he should work with all his might.” (Spurgeon)

b. Your works, your labor, your patience: Jesus knew what this church did *right*. They worked hard for the Lord and they had godly endurance. **Patience** is the great ancient Greek word *hupomone*, which means “steadfast endurance.” In this sense, the church in Ephesus was rock-solid.

c. You cannot bear those who are evil: The Ephesian church pursued doctrinal purity. Paul warned the Ephesians in [Acts 20:29-31](#): *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.* From this commendation of Jesus, we know that the Ephesians took Paul’s warning seriously.

i. The church today, like the Ephesian church then, must vigorously test those who claim to be messengers from God – especially **those who say they are apostles**, because deceivers will speak well of themselves. The greater the evil, the more deceptive its cloak.

ii. “This was grand of them: it showed a backbone of truth. I wish some of the churches of this age had a little of this holy decision about them; for nowadays, if a man be clever; he may preach the vilest lie that was ever vomited from the mouth of hell, and it will go down with some.” (Spurgeon)

d. You have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary: Also, the Ephesian church *continued* doing these things without becoming **weary**. They showed a godly perseverance that we should imitate. By all outward appearances, this was a solid church that worked hard, had great outreach, and protected the integrity of the gospel.

4:2(4) What Jesus has *against* the church at Ephesus?

Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love?

a. **Nevertheless I have this against you:** Jesus used a sobering word – **nevertheless**, which means “despite all that.” Jesus took into full account *all the good* in the Ephesian church, yet *despite all that*, He had something **against** them.

i. **Nevertheless** means that all the *good* in the Ephesian church did not cancel out the *bad* Jesus is about to describe.

b. **You have left your first love:** Despite all the good in the Ephesian church, there is something seriously wrong. They **have left** – not *lost* – their **first love**. They once had

a **love** that they don’t have anymore. This can be described as “a definite and sad departure.” (Robertson)

i. The distinction between *leaving* and *losing* is important. Something can be lost quite by accident, but *leaving* is a deliberate act, though it may not happen suddenly. As well, when we *lose* something we don’t know where to find it; but when we *leave* something, we know where to find it

ii. Though they had **left** their **first love**, *everything looked great on the outside*. If you would have attended a service of the church at Ephesus, you might have thought, “This is a happening church. They are doing so much, and they really guard the truth.” At the same time, you might have had a vague, uneasy feeling – yet it would probably be hard to pin down. It wasn’t hard for Jesus to see the problem, even though everything probably looked wonderful on the outside.

iii. The problem was serious. Without love, all is vain. No wonder Jesus said, “**Nevertheless I have this against you.**” “A church has no reason for being a church when she has no love within her heart, or when that love grows cold. Lose love, lose all.” (Spurgeon)

c. **Left your first love:** What **love** did they leave? As Christians, we are told to love God *and* to love one another. Did they leave their love for God? Did they leave their love for one another? Probably *both* are in mind, because the two loves go together. You can’t say you love God and not love His family, and you can’t really love His family without loving Him first.

i. The Ephesian church was a *working* church. Sometimes a focus on *working* for Jesus will eclipse a love relationship with Him. We can put *what we do* for Jesus before *who we are* in Him. We can leave Jesus in the temple, just as the parents of Jesus did ([Luke 2:45-46](#)).

ii. The Ephesian church was a *doctrinally pure* church. Sometimes a focus on *doctrinal purity* will make a congregation cold, suspicious, and intolerant of diversity. “When love dies orthodox doctrine becomes a corpse, a powerless formalism. Adhesion to the truth sours into bigotry when the sweetness and light of love to Jesus depart.” (Spurgeon)

d. **First love:** There is a definite, sure difference in their relationship with Jesus. Things aren’t as they used to be. It isn’t that we expect that we should have the exact same excitement we had when everything was brand new in the Christian life, but the newness should transition into a depth that makes the **first love** even stronger.

i. A couple that has been married for a long time doesn’t always have the same thrill of excitement they had when they first dated. That is to be expected, and is fine – if that

David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: Revelation 2 (cont.)*

excitement has matured into a *depth* of love that makes it even *better* than the **first love**.

ii. There is nothing *wrong* with that initial excitement, or wanting it to remain or be restored. “When we were in our first love, what would we do for Christ; now how little will we do. Some of the actions which we performed when we were young Christians, but just converted, when we look back upon them, seem to have been wild and like idle tales.” (Spurgeon)

5:2(5-6) What Jesus wants the church at Ephesus to do?

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent? But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate?

a. **Remember therefore from where you have fallen:** The first step in restoration for the Ephesian church is for them to **remember**. They need to **remember from where you have fallen**. This means remembering *where they used to be in their love for the Lord and for one another*.

i. When the Prodigal Son was in the pigpen, the first step in restoration was remembering what life was like back in his father’s home ([Luke 15:17-19](#)). This is always the first step in getting back to where we should be with the Lord.

b. **Repent:** This is *not* a command to feel sorry, or really to *feel* anything. It means to change your direction, to go a different way. It is an “urgent appeal for instant change of attitude and conduct, before it is too late.” (Robertson)

c. **Do the first works:** This means that they must go back to the basics, to the very first things they did when you first fell in love with Jesus. These are the things that we never grow beyond.

i. What are **the first works**?

- Remember how you used to spend time in His Word?
- Remember how you used to pray?
- Remember the joy in getting together with other Christians?
- Remember how excited you were about telling others about Jesus?

ii. We might say that Satan does a masterful job in creating a sense of general dissatisfaction with these **first works**. Christians will run after almost every new, strange method or program for growth and stability. Our shortened attention spans make us easily bored with the truest excitement. Sometimes we will do almost anything *except* **the first works**.

d. **Or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place:** Jesus gave them a stern warning. **Unless they repent**, He will remove *their light* and *His presence*. When their **lampstand** was removed, they could continue as an organization, but no longer as a true church of Jesus Christ. It would be the church of *Ichabod*, where the glory had departed ([1 Samuel 4:21](#)).

i. Apparently, at least in the short term, the Ephesians heeded this warning. In the early second century (not too long after John wrote), Ignatius praised the love and the doctrinal purity of the Ephesians. “You, who are of the most holy Church of the Ephesians, which is so famous and celebrated throughout the world... you, being full of the Holy Spirit, do nothing according to the flesh, but all things according to the Spirit. You are complete in Christ Jesus.” (*Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians*, Chapter 8. From the *Ante Nicene Fathers Volume 1*, page 52)

ii. From what Ignatius wrote, it seems that the Ephesians returned to their *first love* without compromising doctrinal purity. That isn’t always an easy balance to keep, but the Ephesians apparently kept it, at least for a time.

e. **But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate:** Jesus – probably so the Ephesians would not be overly discouraged – gave this church another compliment. They were complimented because they hated **the deeds of the Nicolaitans** – but who were the **Nicolaitans** and what were their **deeds**? The *doctrine of the Nicolaitans* is also condemned in [Revelation 2:15](#), and in that passage it is related to immorality and idolatry.

i. Irenaeus (writing in the late second century) described what he knew of the Nicolaitans: “The Nicolaitanes are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrifice to idols.” (*Against Heresies*, book 1, chapter 26. From the *Ante Nicene Fathers Volume 1*, page 352)

ii. Hippolytus, a student of Irenaeus (writing in the early third century) associated the Nicolaitans with the Gnostics: “There are, however, among the Gnostics diversities of opinion... But Nicolaus has been a cause of the wide-spread combination of these wicked men. [He] departed from correct doctrine, and was in the habit of inculcating indifference of both life and food.” (*Refutation of all Heresies*, book 7, chapter 24; ANF volume 5, page 115)

iii. Others have emphasized the root meanings of the words that make up the name **Nicolaitans**. *Nikao-laos* means

David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: Revelation 2 (cont.)*

literally “to conquer the people.” Based on this, some point to presumptuous claims of apostolic authority and to the heart that sets up hierarchies and separates the “clergy” from the “laity.” Perhaps the **Nicolaitans** fulfilled all these aspects, being both an idolatrous immorality and a presumptuous, hierarchical, “hidden mysteries” system typical of Gnosticism.

iv. The **Nicolaitans**, like all deceivers that come from the body of Christ, claimed “not that they were destroying Christianity, but that they were presenting an improved and modernized version of it.” (Barclay)

f. **Which I also hate:** These are powerful words, in that they came from our Savior who is so rich in love. Whoever exactly the Nicolaitans were, and whatever exactly they did and taught, we learn something from Jesus’ opinion of them. We learn that the God of love hates sin, and wants His people to also hate sin.

6:7a) A general exhortation to all who will hear

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”

a. **He who has an ear:** This qualifies everyone – or at least everyone who will *listen*. This letter was not only written to the church at Ephesus in the Apostle John’s day. It is written to us, and to all Christians throughout the centuries.

b. **Let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches:** Each one of these seven letters apply to all churches. We must hear what the Spirit says **to the churches** – not just to *one church*. These letters – each of them – were meant to speak to *you*, if you will only have an **ear to hear what the Spirit says**.

i. “There were not seven books written, but one book in which these seven epistles were, out of which each church, or the church in it several periods, might learn what concerned it.” (Poole)

ii. “The churches of the land are sprinkled all over with bald-headed old sinners whose hair has been worn off by the constant friction of countless sermons that have been aimed at them and glanced off and hit the man in the pew behind.” (H.W. Beecher)

7:7b) The promise of a reward

To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God”

a. **To him who overcomes:** Jesus made this promise to **him who overcomes** – but what does this overcomer overcome? We usually think of overcoming in dramatic terms of overcoming sin and in spiritual warfare, but here Jesus

seems to speak of overcoming their coldness of heart and lack of love marked by leaving their first love.

b. **I will give to eat from the tree of life:** The promise for these overcomers was a return to Eden, a restoration, and eternal life. This was meant first in the eternal sense of making it to heaven, which was no small promise to a church threatened with the removal of Jesus’ presence. It is also meant in the sense of seeing the effects of the curse rolled back in our own lives through walking in Jesus’ redeeming love.

c. **In the midst of the Paradise of God:** Originally, the word **Paradise** meant “a garden of delight.” Eventually, it came to mean “the place where God lives.” Where God is, that is **Paradise!**