

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REMOVAL OF THE LAMPSTAND

- **How, someone may ask, could a church as perfect as that of Ephesus possibly fail to love Christ or God appropriately?** But to ask the question is almost to answer it. What is in view in the church of Ephesus is a question of **motivation** and **priority**. Certainly, one can do all the right things and yet do them for an inadequate or ignoble reason ... Perhaps Ephesus had succeeded well in many areas, but the maintenance of that success had become more important than the motivation for service—namely, the love for Christ. [Patterson, P. (2012). Revelation. (E. R. Clendenen, Ed.) (Vol. 39, pp. 85–86). Nashville, TN: B&H.]
- If they refuse to repent, then the Lord himself will come and remove the lampstand from its place ... In the midst of what seemed to be such a successful evangelistic and missionary foray into the most prestigious city of that part of Asia Minor, **the congregation has been threatened with removal because of improper motivation** ... Neither history nor appropriate activity is sufficient to demand the continued blessings of God; rather, the only motivation must be love for Christ. [Ibid]
- However, if they fail to respond to Jesus' repeated call to repentance, the Lord will take drastic measures. ... Jesus will remove the lampstand from its place, which means that as a congregation they will experience a complete spiritual blackout. A church ceases to be a church when it no longer serves its Master with genuine love and dedication. There is hard evidence that nominal Christianity dies a natural death within a generation or two and consequently disappears completely from the scene. The members may still come together, but they meet for social and not spiritual purposes. [Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). Exposition of the Book of Revelation (Vol. 20, p. 116). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.]



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- **The removal of the lampstand from its place can signify nothing less than the end of Christ's recognition of the church as a church of his.** It will become as devoid of Christ as the temple of Jerusalem became empty of God prior to its destruction (cf. Ezekiel 11:22–23; Matthew 23:38). So grave is the sin of lovelessness in a Christian church. [Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1994). Revelation. New Bible commentary: 21st century edition (4th ed., p. 1428). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.]
- The letter to Ephesus comes from the One who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands ... The two participles are instructive: Christ holds the angels (they are in his **control**) and walks among the lampstands (he is **present** in their midst and **aware** of their activities). In the context of the seven letters his presence is better interpreted in terms of inspection and resulting knowledge ... [Mounce, R. H. (1997). The Book of Revelation (pp. 67–68). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]
 - If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. This particular warning has created no end of trouble for later believers, who for the most part perceive the punishment to far exceed the crime. But that says more about us than it does about the author of the Johannine literature, since he perceived the whole of the Christian faith to be a matter of experiencing God's love for us through Christ and then returning that love to him by loving others. **From his perspective, to fail at this point is to fail exceedingly—if not altogether—which is why for him the “punishment” is precisely in keeping with the “crime.”** [Fee, G. D. (2011). Revelation (p. 27). Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.]