

The First Letter

Ephesos

The Assembly That Left Its First Love

Hazon (Revelation) 2:1–7

“To the messenger of the assembly of Ephesos write, ‘He who is holding the seven stars in His right hand, who is walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, says this:

“I know your works, and your labour, and your endurance, and that you are not able to bear evil ones, and have tried those who say they are emissaries and are not, and have found them false; and you have been bearing up and have endurance, and have laboured for My Name’s sake and have not become weary. “But I hold this against you, that you have left your first love. “So remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I shall come to you speedily and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

“Yet this you have, that you hate the works of the Nikolaites, which I also hate.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes I shall give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of Elohim.” (Hazon 2:1–7, TS2009)

1- Name of Assembly

Hazon (Revelation) 2:1a

“To the messenger of the assembly of Ephesos write, ‘He who is holding the seven stars in His right hand,

Let’s take a walk back in time, to the great city of **Ephesos**. This wasn’t some tiny village on the map. No, this was a powerful, wealthy city, sitting on the western shores of Asia Minor. A city of influence, full of trade, politics, and religion. At its heart stood the temple of Artemis, called Diana by the Romans, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Now, imagine preaching the Good News of Yeshua in a city like that.

That’s exactly what Sha’ul (Paul) did. He poured his life into Ephesos, staying there for three years. He taught boldly, performed miracles, and stood face-to-face with opposition. And oh, how the crowd pushed back! We read in *Ma’asei (Acts) 19:23–31* that a riot broke out, because the truth Sha’ul was preaching threatened the idol-makers’ business. That’s how you know truth is shaking the ground.

Later on, Sha’ul handed over the leadership to Timothy, his spiritual son. And even one of the letters in the B’rit Hadashah (New Testament), what we call the New Testament, was written to this very Assembly. That’s how important it was.

And then there’s Yochanan (John). He had a deep connection with Ephesos. After his exile on the island of Patmos, he came back to this city. Tradition tells us that he spent his final days there and even wrote the last chapters of the Book of Revelation from that very place.

But this letter in Hazon (Revelation) doesn't just tell us about Ephesos, the city. It speaks to a **spiritual condition** that still affects many today.

Yeshua starts with comfort:

"I know your works... your labour... your endurance."

He sees how hard they've been working. They've stayed strong in their faith. They've tested false teachers and stood for truth. They've been faithful, even when it was hard. And He honours that.

But then comes the heartbreak:

"But I hold this against you, that you have left your first love."

They were still doing the work, but something had changed. Their passion had faded. That fiery love they had at the beginning... was no longer burning. Maybe they got too busy with "ministry." Perhaps they were so focused on being right that they forgot to be loving. Whatever the reason, Yeshua calls them to repent and return. He says:

"Remember from where you have fallen. Repent. Do the first works."

And then comes the warning, gentle but serious:

"If you don't... I will come and remove your lampstand."

In other words, **you'll lose your light**. You'll still look like a congregation. You'll still have meetings and teachings, but without love, the Presence of YHWH won't be there. That lampstand will be taken away.

But Yeshua doesn't end there. He gives hope:

"Yet this you have, you hate the works of the Nikolaites, which I also hate."

These "Nikolaites" were corrupting the faith, teaching compromise with the world. And Yeshua says, *"Good, you're still standing against that."*

Finally, He closes with a promise:

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes, I shall give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of Elohim."

This is powerful. It points us back to *B'reshith (Genesis) 2-3*, to the Garden. To the Tree of Life that humanity was cut off from because of sin. And here Yeshua says, *"If you return to your first love... if you overcome... I'll restore that Tree to you."*

It's not just about being right. It's about being in love, with Yeshua, with the truth, and with people. The Assembly in Ephesos had the doctrine, but had lost the heart.

So, here's the real question for us today:

Have we left our first love? Are we still doing the work, but without the fire?

If so, Yeshua is calling us back. Back to the beginning. Back to intimacy. Back to walking in love.

2- Character Description of Yeshua

Hazon (Revelation) 2:1b

"Who is walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, says this..."

Yeshua doesn't speak from a distance. He doesn't sit far off, watching us from the heavens. No, He walks right in the middle of His Assemblies.

This is the same image we saw back in *Hazon 1:13*, where it says:

"And in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Adam, dressed in a robe down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band."

And again, in verse 16:

"And in His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His face was as the sun shining in its strength."

He's not standing outside the House. He is in the middle of it, inspecting the lampstands. He's among the people. He sees everything. He knows what's happening in every heart, in every Assembly, even when no one else does.

And there's more to this picture.

Yeshua is the **Yarek**, that central shaft of the **Menorah**. In the ancient Temple, the Menorah wasn't just a decoration. It had a holy design. The central branch supported all the other six branches. The light came from it. The oil flowed through it. It was the backbone of the whole lamp.

That's who Yeshua is. He is the centre. He holds the Body of Believers together. He supports us. He sustains us. And He is the Light that shines in and through us.

Just like the Menorah, we, the Assemblies, are like the branches. But without the centre, without the Yarek, we can't stand. We can't shine. We have no oil. We'd simply be hollow arms.

So, when Yeshua speaks as "the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands," He's reminding us: *I'm still here. I haven't left you. But I'm watching. I'm holding you up. And I'm calling you back to Myself.*

That's the heart of the message to Ephesos, and to every Assembly since.

3- Recognition – Yeshua Sees Their Strength

Hazon (Revelation) 2:2-3

“I know your works, and your labour, and your endurance, and that you are not able to bear evil ones, and have tried those who say they are emissaries and are not, and have found them false; and you have been bearing up and have endurance, and have laboured for My Name’s sake and have not become weary.”

Yeshua begins with powerful words: *“I know.”* He sees it all; nothing is hidden from His eyes. The Assembly in Ephesos had been through a lot. They faced pressure on every side, attacks from pagan Romans, rejection from Orthodox Jews, ridicule, division, persecution. But they didn’t back down. They stood firm.

They worked hard. They endured. They laboured. They served with effort and didn’t grow tired. Not because it was easy, but because they loved His Name.

And there’s something else He praises them for: their **discernment**. They didn’t open their doors to just anyone. They tested those who claimed to be emissaries, messengers, teachers, and exposed the false ones. That’s no small thing. They protected the flock.

This was a wise Assembly. They stayed *set apart*. They held tightly to the Torah and held fast to their belief in Yeshua. They understood the times. They could smell false teaching from far off. And when someone brought a doctrine that didn’t line up with the truth, they didn’t tolerate it.

They knew how to deal with sin among leadership, too. As Sha’ul wrote to Timothy:

1 Timothy 5:19–20 (TS2009)

“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Reprove those who are sinning, in the presence of all, so that the rest also might fear.”

They didn’t sweep things under the rug. They didn’t gossip. They acted with truth and wisdom. If there was sin, they dealt with it openly, but always with justice, and in the fear of Elohim. At the same time, they were careful not to cross the line into judging hearts. They remembered Yeshua’s words in:

Mattithyahu (Matthew) 7:1 (TS2009)

“Do not judge, lest you be judged.”

They weren’t perfect, but they were sincere. They knew that judging actions was different from judging motives. They corrected sin but left the heart in Elohim’s hands.

Yeshua honoured all of this. He saw their strength. Their endurance. Their faithfulness to sound doctrine. Their hard work for His Name. And He let them know, *“I see you. I know.”*

4- Shortfalls – You Have Left Your First Love ***Hazon (Revelation)2:4***

“But I hold this against you, that you have left your first love.”

These words are heavy. Yeshua has just praised them for their hard work, their endurance, their discernment...

But then He says, *“I have this against you...” “You’ve left your first love.”*

This Assembly had fallen short in the one area that matters most, **love**. Not love in a general sense, but that *first* love, that deep, consuming love for Elohim that stirs the heart and keeps the flame burning. The same love described in the first and greatest commandment.

Mattithyahu (Matthew) 22:37

“And יהושע said to him, ‘You shall love יהוה your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your being, and with all your mind.’”

Yeshua was quoting Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 6:5, and in doing so, He was reminding us that everything begins with love for YHWH. The Torah itself flows from this love. But somewhere along the way, the Assembly in Ephesos lost that heart connection.

They were still doing the work. Still fighting false teachings. Still gathering. But their passion had cooled. The love that once burned in their hearts was now just a flicker.

Yeshua Himself tied love and obedience together when He said:

Yohanan (John) 14:15

“If you love Me, you shall guard My commands.”

So, what happens when love fades? Even if the commandments are still being kept outwardly, the life behind them, the joy, the intimacy, the Spirit, starts to slip away.

Now, there’s another layer here that’s worth mentioning. The phrase *“first love”* comes from the Greek words *protos agape*, and some believe it may also point to something communal, a love feast. In the early days, believers would gather at the end of Shabbat, on the first day of the week, to break bread together. Some call it the Covenant Meal. Others know it as Communion.

Ma`asei (Acts) 20:7 gives us a glimpse into this:

“And on the first day of the week, the taught ones having come together to break bread...”

This breaking of bread wasn’t just tradition; it was a living expression of love, fellowship, and covenant. It reminded them of what Yeshua had done. It reminded them that they were one Body.

So maybe they weren’t just losing their personal love for YHWH but also stepping away from that loving community life. Some even believe this “first love” might include the way they observed **Shabbat**, not just in action, but in spirit.

Maybe they were still gathering. Maybe they were still meeting. But the joy of Shabbat, the love, the peace, the unity, was fading.

Whatever the exact meaning, one thing is clear: **They left what mattered most.** And Yeshua saw it. And He grieved it. Because love is the root, without it, the tree dries up.

5- Corrective Action – Remember, Repent, and Return ***Hazon (Revelation) 2:5-6***

“So, remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I shall come to you speedily and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet this you have, that you hate the works of the Nikolaites, which I also hate.”

Yeshua doesn't leave them in their failure. He gives them a clear, direct path to restoration. Three words, **remember**, **repent**, and **return**.

First, *“remember from where you have fallen.”* Go back in your mind and heart to that place where the love was strong. When the Torah wasn't a burden, it was a joy. When prayer was alive. When gathering wasn't a duty, it was a delight. Yeshua calls them to remember those early days of walking closely with Him.

Second, *“repent.”* This isn't just about feeling bad. It means turning around. Changing direction. Getting back on the right path. Leaving compromise behind and returning to the truth.

Third, *do the first works.* That means returning to the foundation, the Torah life, the love of YHWH, the pursuit of holiness, and keeping His commands with joy and humility. Love and obedience always go hand in hand.

Then comes the warning:

If they don't repent, Yeshua says He will come and **remove their lampstand**.

The lampstand represents light, the presence of the Ruach HaQodesh (Set-Apart Spirit), the testimony of the Assembly. And here's an important note: some translations use the word *“candlestick”*, but that's not accurate. In Greek, the word is *luchnia*, which refers to a **lampstand**, not a wax candle. In those days, they used oil lamps, not candles. And oil in Scripture always points to the **Ruach**.

So, if the lampstand is removed, the oil is gone. The light fades. The Assembly might still exist outwardly, but inwardly, the Spirit is no longer there. That's a serious warning.

And yet, Yeshua adds a word of encouragement:

Hazon (Revelation) 2:6

“Yet this you have, that you hate the works of the Nikolaites, which I also hate.”

Even with their faults, they hadn't fallen completely. They still had discernment. They still stood against the Nicolaitans, those corrupt leaders who crept into the Assembly with doctrines that twisted the truth.

History tells us that the **Nikolaites** were followers of a man named **Nicolas**, possibly the same one mentioned in Acts 6:5. Over time, he became the root of a heretical movement. His

teachings brought compromise. He encouraged immoral practices; some say he even allowed men to share his own wife. He justified polygamy, sensuality, and claimed authority to twist Scripture. He promoted the eating of food offered to idols, which we know was clearly forbidden:

Numbers 25

Numbers 31:15–16

Acts 15:29

1 Corinthians 10:27–29

These teachings led the Assembly into sin because they no longer feared Elohim. But the believers in Ephesos, for all their flaws, still hated these deeds. And Yeshua says clearly: *“I hate them too.”*

That tells us something. Yeshua is full of love, mercy, and compassion, but He is also holy. There are things He **hates**, especially when His people are led astray by power-hungry, flesh-driven teachers.

So, what’s the solution?

It’s simple, but powerful:

Remember.

Repent.

Return to the foundation, to the Torah, to obedience, to love.

That’s the way back to Yeshua. That’s the way to restore what was lost. That’s the way to rekindle the flame.

The lamp doesn’t have to go out. The Assembly doesn’t have to fall. But they must choose to turn back, to humble themselves, to walk in truth, and to love YHWH with all their heart, soul, and strength.

6- The Challenge – Do You Have Ears to Hear?

Hazon (Revelation) 2:7a

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

This phrase appears again and again in Revelation. It’s not poetic fluff. It’s a **personal call**, from the lips of Yeshua, right to the heart of each one of us.

“He who has an ear...” That means not just ears on your head, but ears that are **open, listening, willing** to receive what the Ruach is saying.

This message wasn’t just for the Assembly in Ephesos back then, it’s for each and every believer today. Yes, it was spoken to the seven assemblies, but it was written down for **us**. For you. For me. For every generation. Because Yeshua’s voice doesn’t fade. It still echoes through the words of Scripture. And the Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit) is still speaking.

The question is: are we listening?

Hazon (Revelation) 18:4 gives us a clear warning:

“Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.”

The Ruach is calling the **Lost Sheep of the House of Israel**, those scattered among the nations, those trapped in compromise, those stuck in the systems of Babylon. He’s calling them, calling **us**, to come out. To return. To hear.

That’s the challenge:

Will we keep doing religion... or will we return to the **ways of YHWH**?

Will we stay asleep in comfort... or wake up to the truth of Torah and Messiah?

Yeshua doesn’t force anyone. But He knocks. He speaks. And He waits for those who have ears to hear.

This is your moment to ask:

Is the Spirit speaking to me?

Am I being called back to my first love?

What is the Ruach saying to *my* Assembly... and to *my* heart?

7- The Reward – A Taste of Eternity

Hazon (Revelation) 2:7b

“To him who overcomes I shall give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of Elohim.”

What a powerful promise.

Yeshua doesn’t just correct and challenge, He ends with **hope**. He points to something greater than what we see now. Something eternal.

“To him who overcomes...” This word, *overcomes*, comes up again and again in Revelation. It’s not just about surviving trials. It’s about **staying faithful**. It’s about clinging to Yeshua when the world pulls at you. It’s about choosing obedience when it’s costly, holding on to truth when lies are louder, and loving YHWH more than anything else.

1 Yohanan (1 John) 5:5 explains it perfectly:

“Who is the one who overcomes the world but he who believes that יהושע is the Son of Elohim?”

So, the one who overcomes is the one who trusts in Yeshua, not just with their mouth, but with their life.

And what is the reward?

Yeshua says, *“I will give to eat from the tree of life.”*

This takes us all the way back to *B'reshith (Genesis) 2:9*, where the Tree of Life stood in the middle of the Garden of Eden. Because of sin, mankind was cut off from it. The way to the Tree was blocked. But now, through Yeshua, the way is opened again.

And in the final chapter of Revelation, we see that Tree again:

Hazon (Revelation) 22:2

"...on either side of the river was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month..."

This Tree grows in the midst of the **Paradise of Elohim**, the restored, eternal Garden. A place of pure life. No more death. No more sin. No more separation.

To eat from this Tree means to live for Revelation in the presence of YHWH. It means restored communion. It means entering back into what was lost, walking with Elohim in the cool of the day, just as it was in the beginning.

This is the reward for those who hold on. For those who return to their first love. For those who overcome.

So the question for us is not just, *"Am I part of an Assembly?"* but...

"Am I overcoming?"

"Am I walking faithfully with Yeshua?"

"Do I still long to eat from that Tree?"

Because that's what He's offering, eternal life, everlasting love, and perfect peace... in the Paradise of Elohim.

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