

## Further Commendation (v.7)

### **VERSE 6 'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which**

**I also hate** (ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔχεις, ὅτι μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν ἃ καὶ γὼ μισῶ. [*conj de yet + demon.pro.acc.nt.s. touto this + pres.act.ind.2.s. echo have + conj hoti that + pres.act.ind.2s.s miseo hate + art.w/noun acc.nt.p. ergon work + art.w/noun gen.m.p. Nicolaitans + rel.pro.acc.nt.p. ho which + enclitic kago I also + pres.act.ind.1s. miseo hate*]).

### **ANALYSIS: VERSE 6**

1. Following the serious rebuke for failure, with its dire threat, Christ returns to commendation.
2. When the Lord critiques churches or individuals He is just as quick to point out the bad as He is the good.
3. Too often people tend to focus on the bad at the expense of the good, thus failing to keep a balanced perspective.
4. While maintaining theological orthodoxy the Ephesians lost their way by failing to pursue the text of Scripture with their earlier vigor.
5. This was also accompanied by a general malaise in their approach to application.
6. It seems that the primary culprit in this corporate behavior was the pastor-teacher.
7. It was his responsibility to teach book by book and verse by verse.
8. The spiritual leader of a local church must have faith that everything in Scripture is indeed profitable.
9. His responsibility is to break new ground instead of being content to teach those subjects and books that are familiar.
10. This failure impacts on the believers who, while remaining orthodox, are not challenge by doctrine as presented in less popular books of the canon.
11. The early Ephesians, and for some time afterward, possessed a high level of zeal for the realm of truth.
12. Their enthusiasm had waned and the way back was to shake off the lethargy and press on with the verse by verse study of BD.
13. Christ commends them for hating “the deeds of the Nicolaitans.”
14. This sect is rather enigmatic.
15. There is a strand of historical tradition that suggests this sect was founded by Nicolas of Alexandria, one of the original seven deacons (Acts 6:5).
16. But the church father Polycarp seems to deny this.
17. He was a disciple of the apostle John.
18. His dates are 30 to 107AD.
19. He was much engaged in combating the Gnostic sects during his ministry.
20. These sects arose during the second half of the first century AD.
21. In one of his letters he writes, “Flee also the Nicolaitanes, falsely so-called, who are lovers of pleasure and given to calumnious speeches.”
22. The implication is that the Nicolaitans assumed a counterfeit identity, using the name of Nicolas of Antioch.
23. The church father Irenaeus (c. 120 AD) condemned them, indicating that they were to be traced to one Simon Magus (Acts 8:9ff.) and one Meander.
24. Other writers condemned them as well including, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Victorinus, Hippolytus and Eusebius, writing centuries later, identifying them as Gnostics.

25. This sect seems to have introduced a false system of hierarchy into the Christian community.
26. They advocated a false distinction between the so-called clergy and the laity (rank and file believers).
27. This distinction is especially prominent in the Roman Catholic system, as well as the Greek and Russian orthodox traditions.
28. This eventually evolved into a pseudo priesthood that contradicts the universal royal priesthood of the NT.
29. Along with this pseudo hierarchy, they compromised with paganism in order to gain converts.
30. Gnosticism places a superior value on esoteric wisdom as over against the clear affirmations of Scripture.
31. The Gnostic philosophy embraced both extravagance (liberalism) and asceticism (legalism).
32. Today we see these extremes in the RCC (sponsors societies of extreme self-denial alongside great pomp and wealth).
33. This approach was so top-down that the average Christian was discouraged from questioning any of their teachings.
34. All of the aforementioned, including ecumenism, elitism, etc., had its embryonic roots in sects like the Nicolaitans arising in the apostolic era.
35. The NT teaching of the Christ and the apostles directs leaders and their disciples not to emulate these pretensions (Matt.23:8-10; Lk.22:24-27; 1Jn.2:27).
36. The Ephesian church is commended for resisting this sect and their pernicious practices.
37. Their hate was Christ's hate.
38. This sect is also mentioned in connection with the church at Pergamum, as this leaven had established itself among some of its members (Rev.2:15).

#### Concluding Exhortation (v.7)

**VERSE 7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches** (ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. [*art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.nt.s. ous ear + aor.act.imper.3s. akouo hear + indef.pro.acc.nt.s. tis what + art.w/noun nom.nt.s. pneuma spirit + pres.act.ind.3s. lego say + art.w/noun dat.f.p. ekklesia church*]).

**To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God** (τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ. [*art.w/pres.act.part.dat.m.s. nikao win, be victorious; "to him who overcomes" + fut.act.ind.1s. didomi give + pro.dat.m.s autos him + aor.act.infin. esthio eat + prep ek from + art.w/noun gen.nt.s. zulon tree + art.w/noun gen.f.s. zoe life + rel.pro.nom.nt.s. ho which + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi "is" + prep en + art.w/noun loc.m.s. paradeisos park, paradise (old Persian word for a garden/park)]).\**

**ANALYSIS: VERSE 7**

1. This letter ends with a general exhortation and promise to those that overcome.
2. This is the norm for all the seven letters.
3. The general exhortation is the same for all seven congregations: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
4. The exhortation applies equally to all churches over the course of the CA.
5. However, the exhortation is addressed to the individual believer-priest as the verbs in this verse are all singulars (“He who has an ear, let him hear...”
6. The individual positive believer can only account for himself.
7. Jesus employed this saying in His public teaching (Matt.11:15; 13:9, 43//Mk.4:9,23 (parable of the sower); Lk.8:8; 14:35).
8. The only difference, was, that in the Gospels, He said, “ears,” instead of “ear,” as He does in Revelation 2 and 3.
9. The expression also occurs in Rev.13:9 in connection with those who are faced with taking the mark of the Beast.
10. The expression in Rev.2:7 (and 2:11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22) placed the onus upon each believer to engage the hearing process in the function of GAP, since it is “the Spirit” who does the speaking or revealing of divine viewpoint.
11. Hearing is our most important sense.
12. Again, the exhortation is directed to each believer assembling in a local church.
13. The local church is the classroom of Christianity.
14. God the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher operating through the teacher (man with the gift) and each student (disciple) within the designated assembly (lampstand).
15. Nothing positive happens until the student(s) comprehends the information (e.g., letters to the 7 churches).
16. All local churches of all time are to be exposed to the information found in these seven letters.
17. “What the Spirit says to the churches” first comes from the Father through the Son to the human author of Scripture; to the authorized teacher of each local assembly to the individual believe under face-to-face teaching.
18. God the Holy Spirit is the interface between deity and humans.
19. In this case he interfaced with Christ to John to the messenger at Ephesus and finally to the believers of that church.
20. Those who bypass the qualified pastor-teacher in this chain will not achieve accuracy and completeness of understanding.
21. The only way the churches past and present could have had this information is the ministry of the Spirit towards John as he penned these things.
22. When negative volition is exposed to divine viewpoint there is no comprehension (cf. Matt. 13:13-18; Jn.8:47).
23. Only positive volition has the palate for the truth (Jn. 7:17 “If anyone wants to do His will [i.e., genuine +V], he will know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak from Myself.”).
24. Maintaining the emphasis on the individual believer, the speaker grants a conditional blessing.
25. The lone condition is to “overcome.”
26. The verb *νικᾶω* occurs 28x in the NT, and is usually translated “overcome.”
27. This word has the connotation of prevailing over an opponent.

28. The theological significance of this word in the present context has been taken to mean: (1) those that have not lost their salvation; (2) those who persevere to the end prove their salvation; (3) a fact of life for all believers based on 1Jn. 5:4,5; (4) those among believers that fulfill Ph2 sanctification and attain special eternal reward.
29. Views 1 and 2 can be eliminated from consideration as they contradict the doctrines of eternal security and SG3 respectively.
30. It is impossible for anyone who has been born again to perish with unbelievers (cf. Jn.3:16, 39; 6:40; 10:28-29; Eph.2:8, et al).
31. The 2<sup>nd</sup> view contradicts the teaching that certain believers are regarded as spiritual casualties and lose reward but not eternal life at the judgment seat of Christ (e.g., the jeopardy the incestuous Corinthian had place himself under; 1Cor.3:15 says, "If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved; yet so as through fire.").
32. The 3<sup>rd</sup> is the true view as all who are born again are overcomers.
33. View three is clearly seen in 1Jn.4,5.
34. View four is not in view here.
35. View three relates to positional sanctification while view four relates to experiential sanctification.
36. The question is, "Which view applies to Rev.2:7?"
37. This is determined by answering the question: "Who has access to the fruit of the tree of life?"
38. Do all believers or only some?
39. The overcomer here is the all those who makes the salvation adjustment (1Jn. 5:4,5).
40. No believer will be denied access to the tree(s) of life.
41. Is this Ph3 blessing associated with Ph1 sanctification or is it a part of our SG3 blessings (or both)?
42. The fruit of the original tree of life in the Garden of Eden was not off limits to the man and the woman.
43. Only the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was off limits to them.
44. All other trees were provided for their visual and culinary enjoyment (cf. Gen.2:16,17; cp. v.9).
45. Man's original sin was to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thus failing this volitional test (Gen.3:1ff.).
46. Adam (and Eve) was created without a sin nature but with free will.
47. Adam and Eve were created physically and mentally mature but there were spiritual babies requiring doctrine to attain to maturity.
48. This challenge was before them under conditions of perfect environment.
49. God Himself provided them with face-to-face teaching every evening (Gen.3:8).
50. In the planning verse of Gen.1:26, God's purpose was to "make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."
51. The verb of planning is *ashah*.
52. In the execution verse of Gen.1:26, God created the man and the woman in His own image.
53. The verb here is *bara* meaning to create something out of nothing.
54. Since man's body is not created in the image of God, since God does not possess a body, this must related to the soul, or the 'real you.'
55. It was the soul with its immortality, volition, etc. that was made in the image of the trinity.
56. The execution verse says nothing about God's "likeness" (*demuth*).

57. It is the proposal of this study that the “image” aspect (Heb. *tselem*) is to be distinguished from the “likeness” aspect (*demuth*), and further, that the *demuth* aspect is related specifically to the maturity adjustment.
58. Remember, Adam and Eve were not required to make the salvation or rebound adjustments in the Garden before the fall as they were sinless.
59. Spiritually, they were babies.
60. Even Jesus was required to make the maturity adjustment, not possessing a sin nature and not being born spiritually dead He did not have to make the salvation or rebound adjustments.
61. The *demuth* aspect came through intake and application of BD.
62. In fact, all men are created in God’s image (Jam.3:9; 1Cor.11:7), and it is God’s will that all men attain to the image of Christ (i.e., maturity adjustment; cf. 1Tim.2:5).
63. After the Fall Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden and an angelic sentry was placed at the entrance to the Garden to prevent mortal and sinful man from gaining access to the Tree of Life (Gen.3:22-24).
64. Otherwise they would have negated the ageing gene but still in possession of the sin nature gene.
65. The forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil changed the DNA of Adam and Eve and has been passed down to all humanity (Jesus being the exception due to the virgin birth).
66. Outside the Garden things changed radically, but one thing remained the same— the priority of making the maturity adjustment.
67. To get there man had to make two more adjustments: the salvation adjustment (cf. Gen.3:15 cp. 3:21) and rebound adjustments.
68. There are two more references to “likeness” in Genesis (5:1, 3).
69. Gen.5:1 is a title (superscript) to the book of roster antediluvian super grace heroes from Adam to Noah.
70. Each one of these men made the maturity adjustment at his own pace.
71. Adam’s maturity adjustment is mentioned in 5:1 and 5:3.
72. In the Garden he was created in the image of God and 130 years afterward he sired Seth (2<sup>nd</sup> patriarch).
73. Seth became like his father in both “image” and likeness” (Gen.5:3).
74. He was in the image of his father at birth and was in the likeness of his father Adam when he reached his 105<sup>th</sup> birthday (Gen.5:6), and so for all the men to follow (nine total).
75. By the way, the one is created (image) and the other (demuth) is manufactured (out of BD).
76. That is, these are the respective verbs for the execution phase (*bara* and *ashah* in Genesis), while *ashah* is for the planning phase (Gen.1:26).
77. It is presumed that had the man and the woman not sinned and had gone on to maturity that they would have celebrated that fact by eating of the tree that they showed no interest in during their brief stint in the Garden.
78. Eating of that tree would have resulted in immortality, hence the prohibition to its access (Gen.3:24).
79. Believers who are brought from this earth to the new earth will eat of its fruit and have their aging gene negated (Rev. 22:2).
80. The tea made from these trees will negate the sin nature acquired when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit.

81. Had it not been for that tree, the Garden of Eden would not have been off limits to posterity.
82. In the book of Proverbs “the tree of life” terminology is associated with the hearing and doing of BD (Prov.3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4).
83. When Paradise is regained in the eternal city of Rev.22, there will be a tree of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit perpetually (Rev.22:2,14,19).
84. Actually there will be many trees running down the two banks of the river (of life) that flows from the eternal city.
85. The tree will be of benefit to those who are guests to the eternal city.
86. The Ephesian saints are promised access to the tree of life because of their overcomer status
87. Eating of the tree will not be to attain to immortality as those who live in the city already possess eternal life based on their faith in Christ in time.
88. But it will for those brought over from earth 1 to the new earth.
89. They come over with an ageing gene and a sin nature gene overcome by the fruit of the tree of life and by the leaves eliminating these two DNA issues.
90. Note that we will “eat” food in Phase 3.
91. This will be the most delightful fruit you could ever imagine.
92. It will be especially blessed to those who like Adam made the maturity adjustment (Col.1:15; cp. 3:10; 2Cor.3:18; 1Cor.15:49; Rom.8:29).