

Revelation 2:1-7

Return to Your First Love

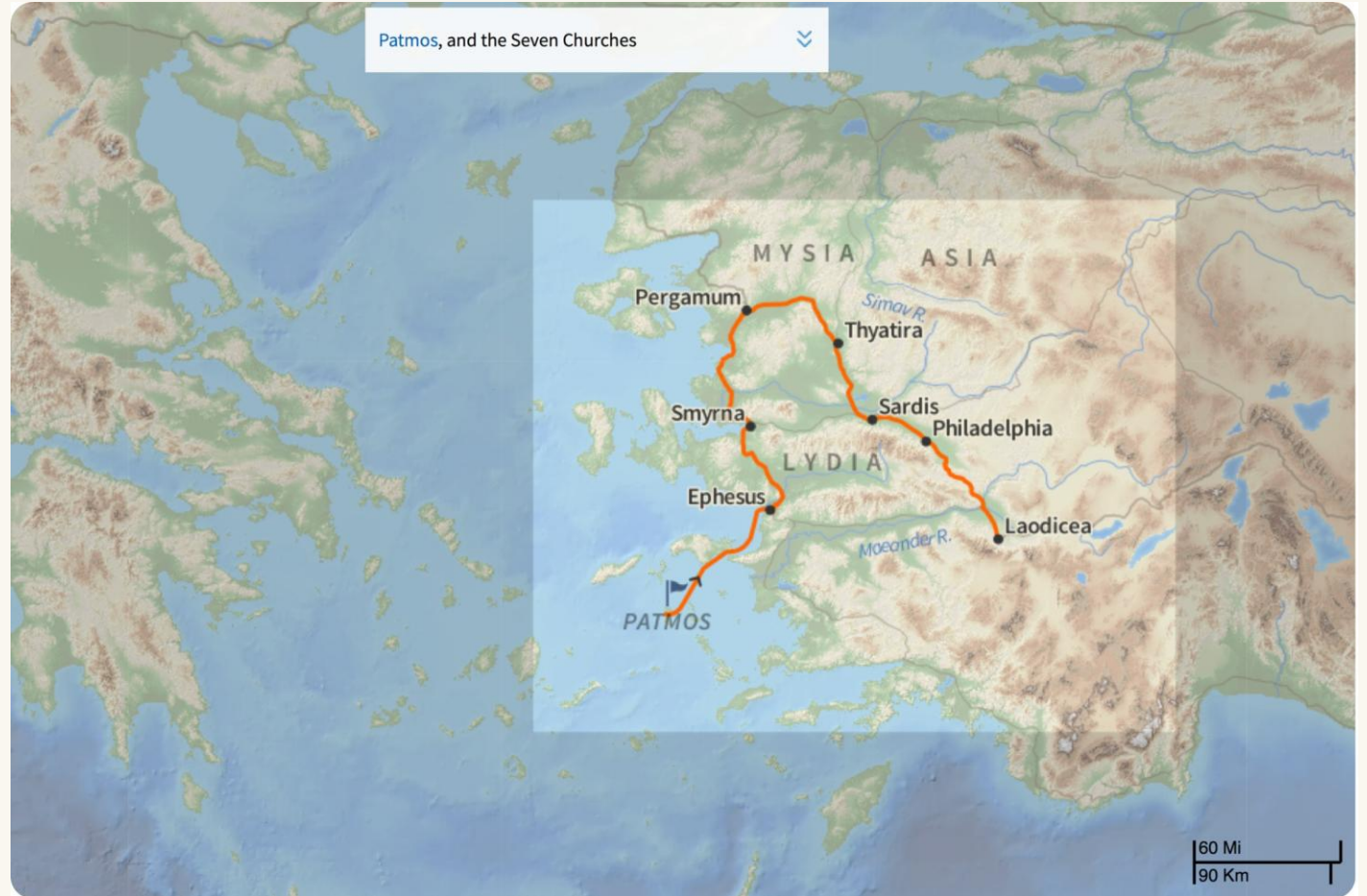
Christ's message to Ephesus



Seven Real Churches on a Roman Road

Historical Churches

- Around 90 AD
- A horseshoe route along a great Roman road through the wealthiest part of Asia Minor
- Each letter read and preached by the minister, then shared with nearby churches
- What the Spirit says to all the churches reaches us today, facing the same challenges



Summary of Christ's Letter to Ephesus



Christ's strength

He holds the 7 stars and walks among you



Commendation

I know your deeds and perseverance



Condemnation

You have forsaken your first love



Warning

Repent and do the things you first did



Promise

You will eat of the tree of life in Paradise



Summary

Return

Ephesus: A Metropolis of Artemis

- About 600,000 people, closest church to John on Patmos
- Temple of Artemis (Diana): 425 by 220 feet, 120 columns, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world
- A refuge for criminals, with immorality treated as sacred (Acts 19)



Temple of Diana

In the Midst of the City, God Planted His Church



Houses of the Asiarchs

Possibly the most important New Testament church outside Jerusalem. Wealthy Asiarch houses on the hill, where Ichthus fish symbols of the church were found (Acts 19:31)



A Church that was Loved Much

- Paul worked here over three years; Priscilla, Aquila and Timothy served here
- Paul's first seminary in Tyrannus Hall, in the library (Acts 19:9-10)
- John taught here: “Little children, love one another”

They were forsaking this love - from Christ



Library in Ephesus

Four Truths That Call Us Back



Care



Complaint



Counsel



Warning

1. The Care of Christ (v. 1)



He holds

The seven stars in His right hand: He watches over the pastor



He walks

Among the golden lampstands: He shepherds the church



He prunes

The bad, so the church grows stronger

Our lack of love comes from forgetting His unfailing love for us.

2. The Complaint of Christ (vv.2-4)

i. The Good (2-3)



Diligent

Labor to the point of sweat



Discerning

Would not tolerate evil or the Nicolaitans



Persevering

Endured for His name without growing weary

Do not lose heart in doing good.

Galatians 6:9

ii. The Bad (v.4)

You Have Left Your First Love

Christ speaks truth in love, with praise before and after the criticism.



Truth without affection

Right doctrine, a dry heart



Working for God instead of with Him

Martha's busyness (Luke 10:41-42)



Cut the engine from the train and it coasts, then stops.

Why This Is Serious

- 1 Jesus Himself is making the complaint.

- 2 Jesus discovered it; Ephesus never noticed.

- 3 He ranks love for Him above all their duties.

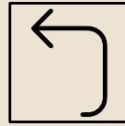


3. The Counsel of Christ (v. 5)



Remember

Keep recounting the cross and where you have fallen from



Repent

Change your thinking, as in Psalm 51



Repeat

Do the deeds you did at first, by the Spirit's grace

Rekindling Our Love in Practice



Spend time worshipping the Lord



Maximize time with godly people



Repent from the pride of busyness



Set an appointment with God

4. The Call to Obey Christ (5-7)

i. The Warning (v.5b)

“I will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent”

Not destruction, but loss of impact and testimony

Ephesus is in ruins today and has no church.





ii. The Promise (v.7)

The Tree of Life

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

To him who overcomes

Eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God

Eternal life, a garden restored in the new heavens and earth
Rev. 22:2, 14

Sustained by God

“By this the love of God
was manifested in us,
that God has sent
His only begotten Son
into the world
so that we might live through Him.”

1 John 4:9