

Mike Hogue
Aug 30, 2026

Our Returning King

A Love Letter to a Distracted Fiancée
Revelation 2:1-7



¹⁹Therefore write the things which
you have seen, **and the things which
are**, and the things which will take
place after these things.

Revelation 1:19 (NASB 2020)

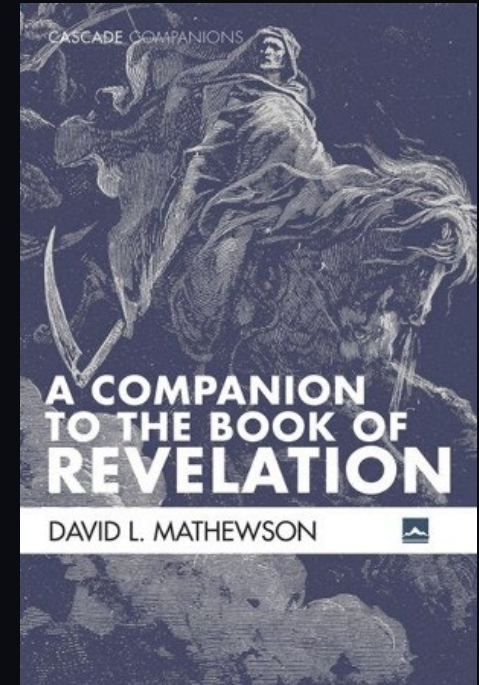
¹After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you **what must take place after these things.**”

Revelation 4:1 (NASB 2020)

²⁰*As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*



Although John addresses seven actual churches in historical Asia, the number seven has symbolic significance, indicating the entire, complete or universal church of Jesus Christ.



THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES COMPARED WITH CHURCH HISTORY

ASCENSION
DESCENT OF HOLY SPIRIT

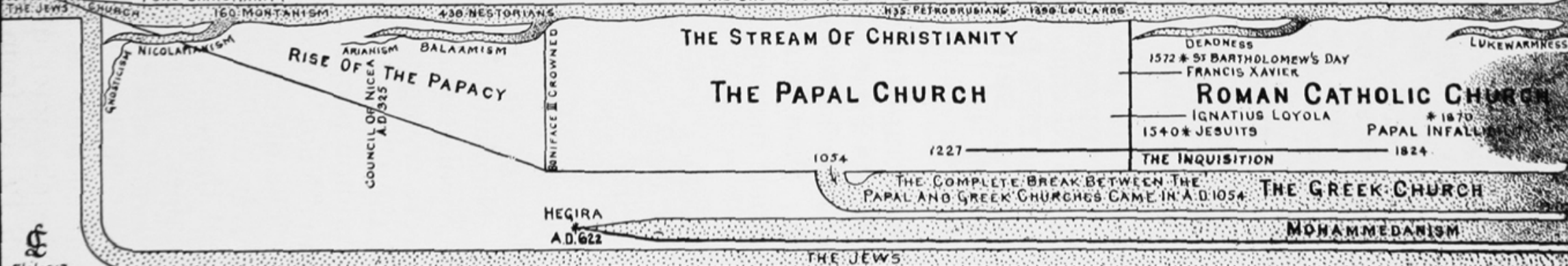
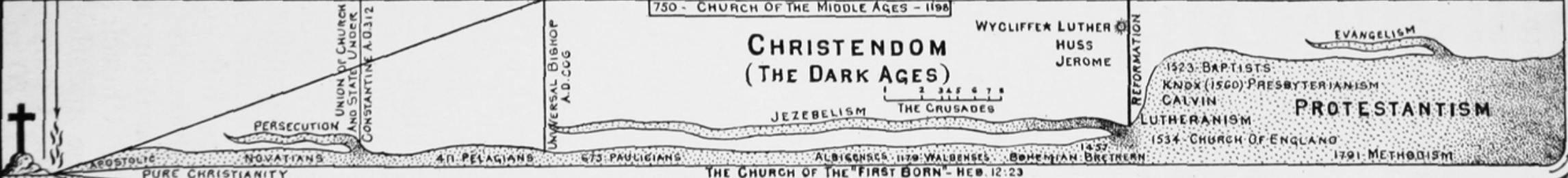


RAPTURE
OF
THE CHURCH
1 THESS. 4:16-17

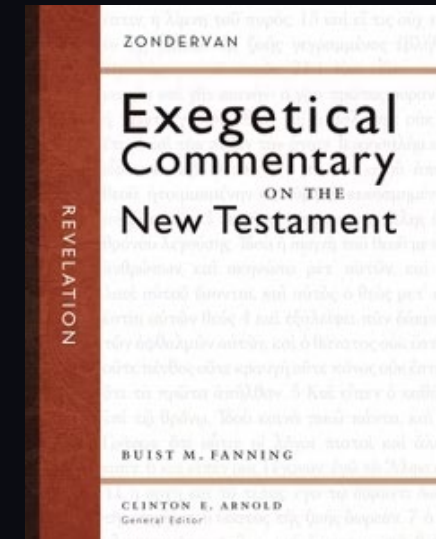


★ 1 EPHESUS PERIOD REV. 2:1-7 BACKSLIDDEN CH.	★ 2 SMYRNA PERIOD REV. 2:8-11 PERSECUTED CH.	★ 3 PERGAMOS PERIOD REV. 2:12-17 LICENTIOUS CHURCH	★ 4 THE THYATIRA PERIOD REV. 2:18-20 A LAX CHURCH	★ 5 SARDIS PERIOD REV. 3:1-6 A DEAD CHURCH	★ 6 PHILADELPHIA PERIOD REV. 3:7-13 A FAVORED CHURCH	★ 7 LAODICEA PERIOD REV. 3:14-22 LUKEWARM CH.
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ANCIENT HISTORY					MEDIAEVAL HISTORY					MODERN HISTORY											
	PERIOD I APOSTOLIC AGE	PERIOD II FROM APOSTOLIC AGE TO CONSTANTINE		PERIOD III FROM CONSTANTINE TO BONIFACE VIII	PERIOD IV FROM BONIFACE VIII TO GREGORY VII (HILDEBRAND) THE GROWTH OF THE PAPACY			PERIOD V GREGORY VII - BONIFACE VIII FULL SWAY OF PAPACY	PERIOD VI BONIFACE VIII - REFORMATION DECLINE OF PAPACY		PERIOD VII REFORMATION TO PEACE WESTPHALIA	PERIOD VIII FROM PEACE OF WESTPHALIA TO THE PRESENT TIME									
A.D. 30		100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	?



John is commanded to address each of the churches individually, and he begins with the church at Ephesus (2:1–7). There is no indication that the messages were sent separately to each church prior to their being gathered together in these chapters. In fact, they are explicitly intended to be read as a unit **and to speak in a wider way to all of the churches together** as well as reflecting, as we will see, the particular character of the individual churches and Christ's concern for each one. While the messages apply to churches across the ages, they are not written to portray the course of church history during



Rev 2:7 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev 2:11 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev 2:17 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

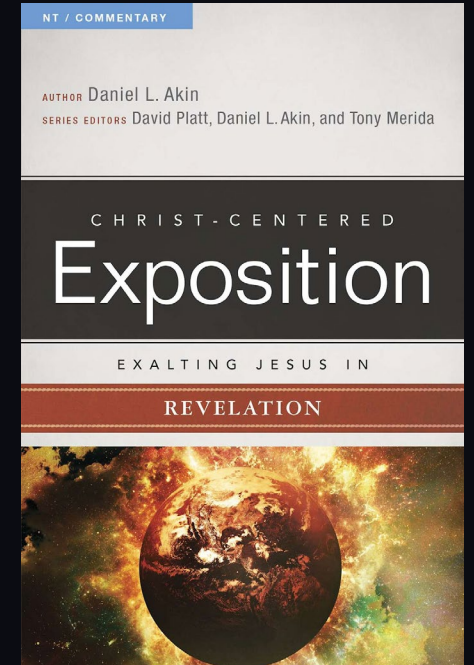
Rev 2:29 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev 3:6 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

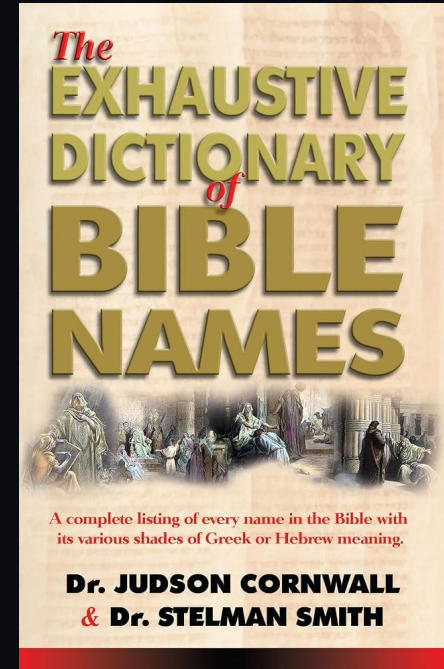
Rev 3:13 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the

All seven churches follow a distinct and similar pattern:

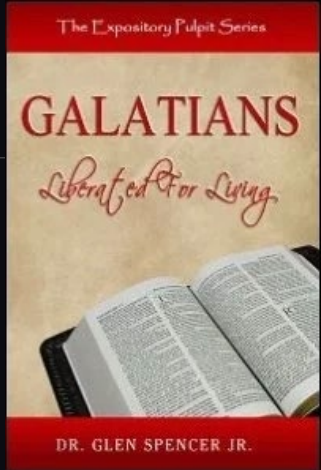
- a. A **characteristic** of *Christ drawn from Revelation 1 (and other texts)*
- b. A word of **commendation** and *praise if appropriate*
- c. **Criticism** for their sins
- d. A word of **correction** and warning
- e. A **challenge** and promise drawn from



Ephesus (ef'-e-sus) = **Desirable;**
beloved. A giving away; to relax;
permitted; loosening. (A city on the
western coast of Asia Minor noted for
the worship of the goddess Diana.)
Full purposed; a throwing at.



Love is a choice—you will personally decide whether or not you will love the Lord. The Church of Ephesus serves an example here. The word Ephesus means desired. Ephesus was a desirable Church. The early churches were the beginning of an eternal plan and purpose. The Church of Ephesus was started by the Apostle Paul. It had begun with great fire and was marked by its missionary and evangelistic zeal, as well as its uncompromising stand for the truth. The Church of





TEMPLE OF DOMITIAN Remains of the temple in Ephesus.

³⁵After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, “Men of Ephesus, what person is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the *image* which fell down from the sky?

³¹FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE
HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER AND BE
JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO
SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. ³²This

mystery is great; but I am speaking
with reference to Christ and the
church.

⁴But I have *this* against you, that **you**
have left your first love.

Revelation 2:4 (NASB 2020)

Mike Hogue
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Our Returning King

A Love Letter to a Distracted Fiancée
Revelation 2:1-7



Revelation 2:1-7

A Love Letter to a Distracted Fiancée

1. The Lord is your Protector (2:1)
2. Your labor is still pleasing (2:2-3,6)
3. The Lord wants your passion (2:4)
4. Your witness is in peril (2:5)
5. Your reward is restored Paradise (2:7)

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1. The Lord is your Protector (2:1)

A. In His palm (2:1a)

B. He's on patrol (2:1b)

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A. In His palm (2:1a)

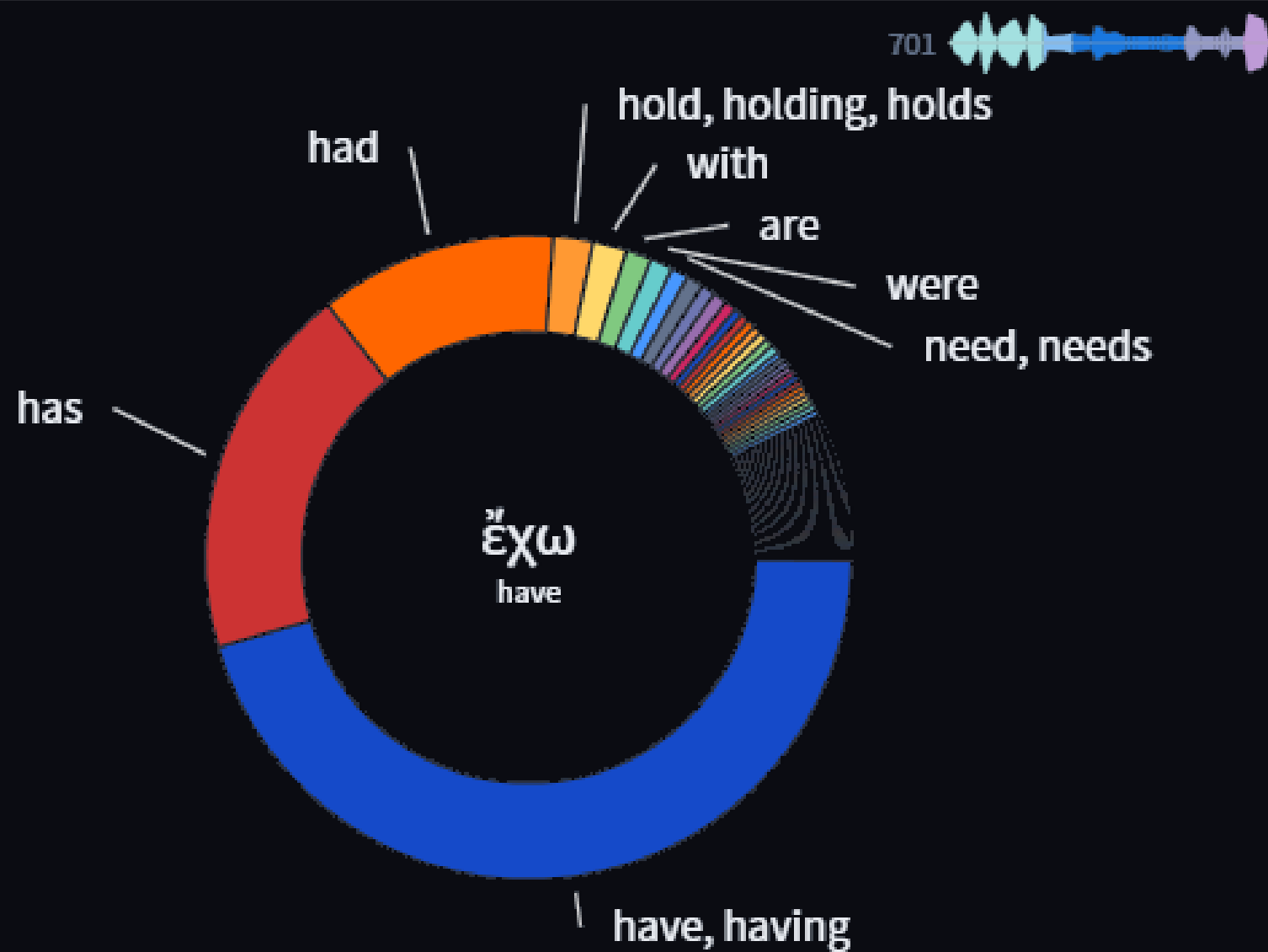
B. He's on patrol (2:1b)

¹“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:

Revelation 2:1 (NASB 2020)

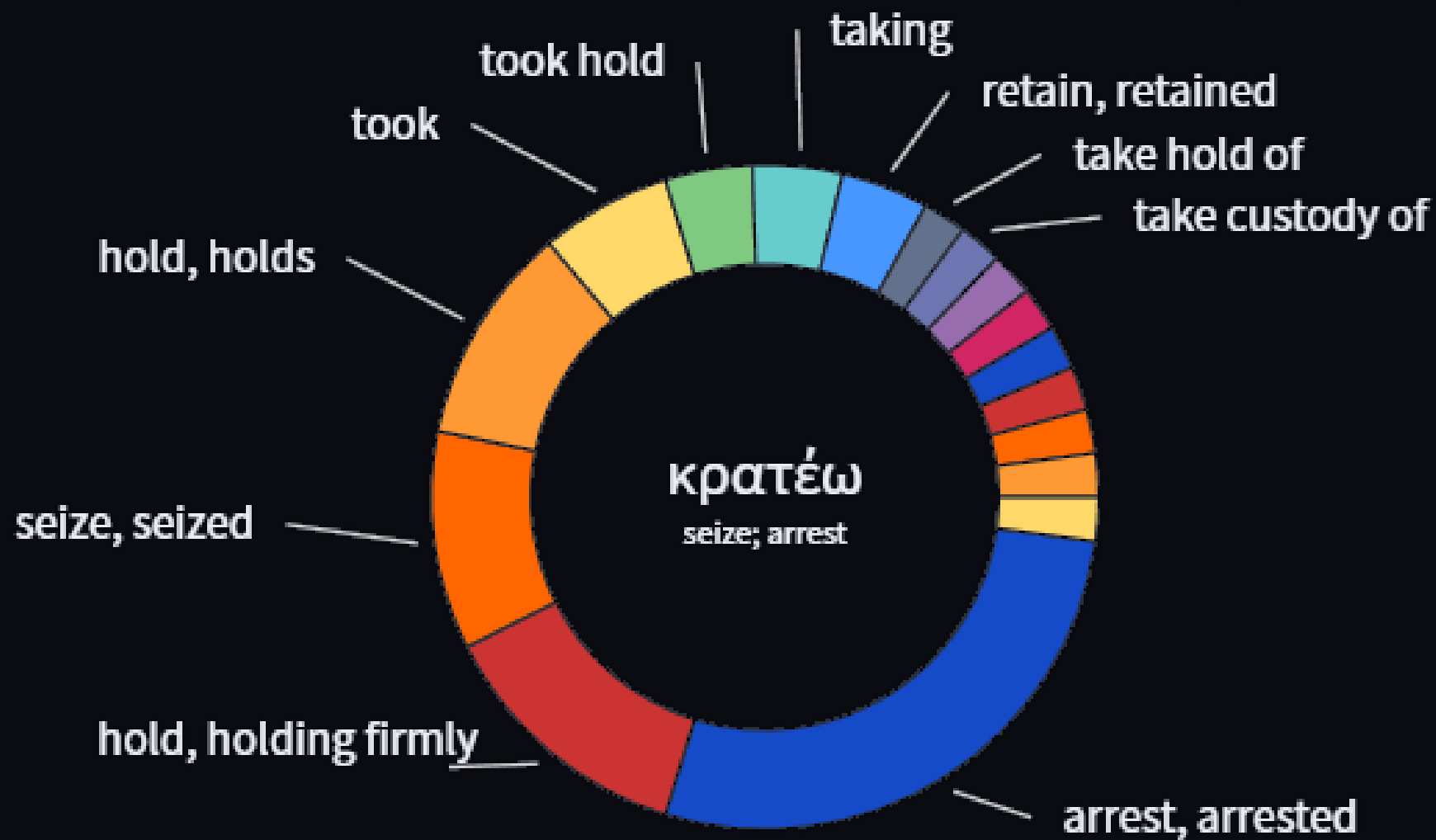
¹⁶In His right hand He **held** seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

Revelation 1:16 (NASB 2020)



¹“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:

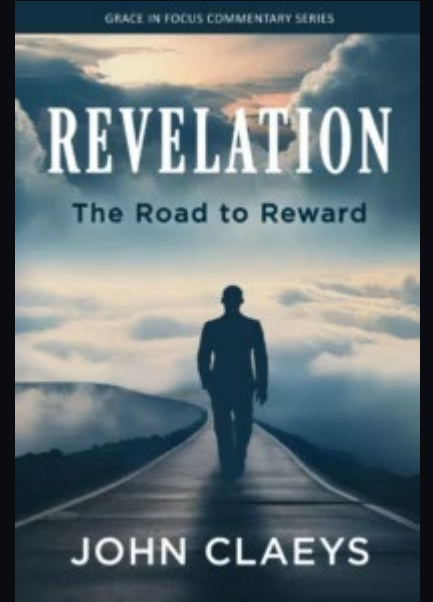
Revelation 2:1 (NASB 2020)



²⁷My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand

...Therefore, the message
of Revelation is:

*Believers who faithfully
endure will experience
glorious, eternal
reward.*



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¹“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:

Revelation 2:1 (NASB 2020)

⁸Now they heard the sound of the LORD God **walking** in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:8 (NASB 2020)

⁹So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. ¹⁰And you will eat the old supply, and clear out the old because of the new. ¹¹Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. ¹²**I will also walk among you and be your God**, and you shall be My people. ¹³I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that *you* would not be their slaves, and I

¹⁶Or what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL AMONG THEM **AND WALK AMONG THEM**; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

²⁸for in Him we live and move and
exist, as even some of your own
poets have said, 'For we also are His
descendants.'

Acts 17:28 (NASB 2020)

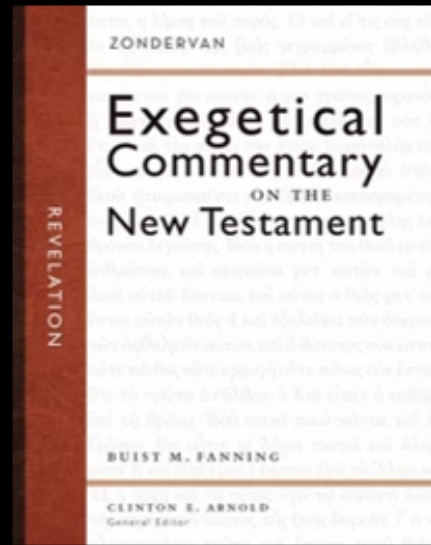
⁸Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert.

Your adversary, **the devil, prowls
around like a roaring lion**, seeking
someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8 (NASB 2020)

⁵*Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER ABANDON YOU,” ⁶so that we confidently say, “THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?”

John previously saw Christ in the midst of the lampstands (1:13), but here Christ declares that he “walks” (περιπατῶν) in their midst, a picture of active engagement with his churches in their everyday experience of life. He knows intimately their hard circumstances (cf. vv. 2–3, 6) and their successes, as well as their failings, and is vigilant to guard their fidelity.



A Love Letter to a Distracted Fiancée

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2. Your labor is still pleasing (2:2-3,6)
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2. Your labor is still pleasing (2:2-3,6)

A. Your deeds (2:2)

B. Your dedication (2:3)

C. Your doctrine (2:2, 6)

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A. Your deeds (2:2)

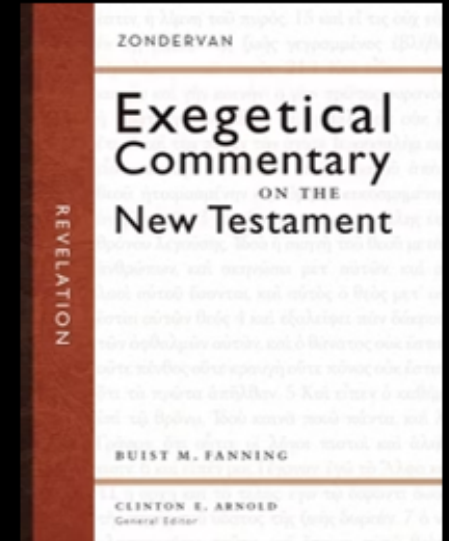
B. Your dedication (2:3)

C. Your doctrine (2:2, 6)

²‘I know your deeds and your labor
and perseverance, and that you
cannot tolerate evil people, and you
have put those who call themselves
apostles to the test, and they are not,
and you found them *to be* false;

Revelation 2:2 (NASB 2020)

The Ephesian Christians have worked hard and long for the sake of their faith. The word “labor” (κόπος and the related verb κοπιάω) is often used in the New Testament for Christian service that requires the utmost a person can give—heartfelt and rewarding effort, but expended often in difficult circumstances



²We always give thanks to God for all of you, making mention *of you* in our prayers; ³constantly keeping in mind your **work** of faith and **labor** of love and perseverance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

2. Your labor is still pleasing (2:2-3,6)

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C. Your doctrine (2:2, 6)

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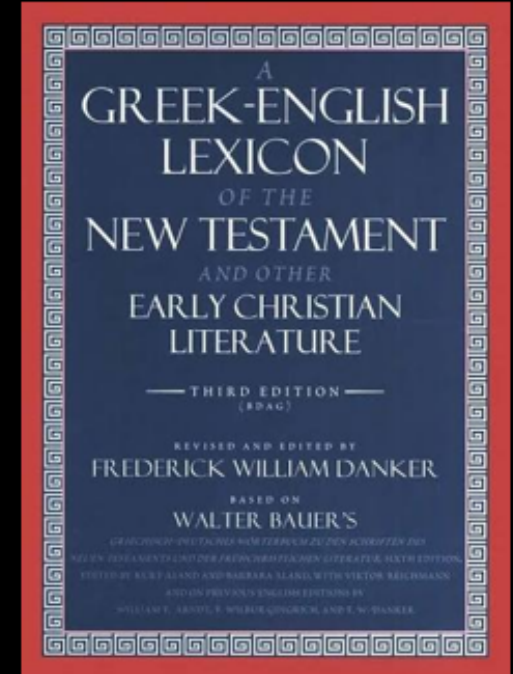
C. Your doctrine (2:2, 6)

³and you have perseverance and
have endured on account of My
name, and have not become weary.

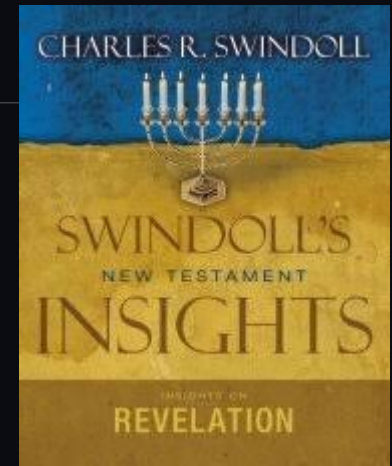
Revelation 2:3 (NASB 2020)

ὑπομονή (*hypomonē*)

- ① the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, *patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance*
- ② the act or state of patient waiting for someone or someth., *expectation*



Christ also commended them for their patient endurance through trials (2:2–3). The Greek term hypomonē, used already in 1:9, implies endurance under extreme hardship, in the face of life-threatening challenges or against seemingly impossible odds. The Ephesian Christians faced special challenges. Because they refused to bow the knee to the goddess Diana or the images of the emperor, they found themselves maligned, slandered, boycotted, and abused. Not unlike Jewish merchants in Berlin in the 1930s, Christians in Ephesus would have been the objects of physical



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²‘I know your deeds and your labor and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people, and you have put those who call themselves apostles to the test, and they are not, and you found them *to be false*;

Revelation 2:2 (NAB 2000)

Acts 20:28-32

²⁸Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

²⁹I know that after my departure
savage wolves will come in among
you, not sparing the flock;

³⁰and from among your own selves
men will arise, speaking perverse
things to draw away the disciples
after them.

³¹Therefore, be on the alert,
remembering that night and day for a
period of three years I did not cease
to admonish each one with tears.

³²And now I entrust you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 20:28–32 (NASB 2020)

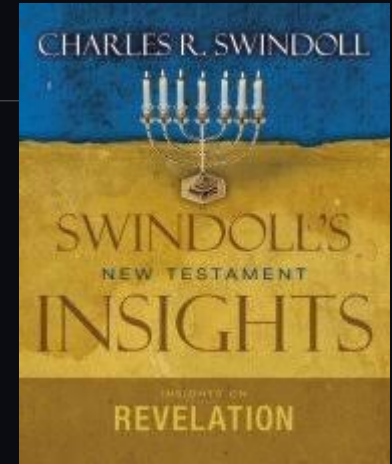
¹⁶They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. ¹But *as for* you, proclaim the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.

³If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a sick craving for controversial questions and disputes about words, from which come envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction between people of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who

⁶But you have this, that **you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

Revelation 2:6 (NASB 2020)

The sect of the Nicolaitans is mentioned as active in Ephesus and Pergamum only in 2:6 and 2:15. Their practices apparently related to participation in idolatry and sexual immorality, perhaps combining their worship of God with pagan temple worship. Nothing certain is known about them except that early Christians of the second and third centuries mentioned the Nicolaitans as a sect that some speculated were errant followers of Nicolas of Antioch, mentioned in Acts 6:5.17 Another possibility is that “Nicolaitans” is itself a code name for those who like to “lord it over” others (cf. 2 Cor. 1:24: 3 John 9: 10) combining two



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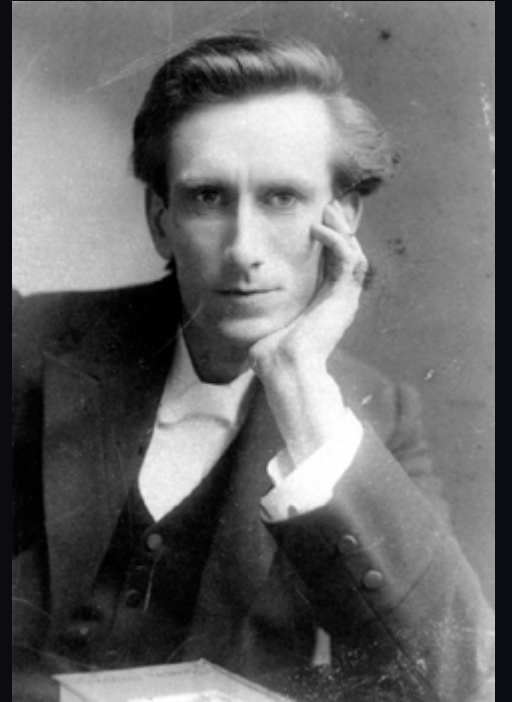
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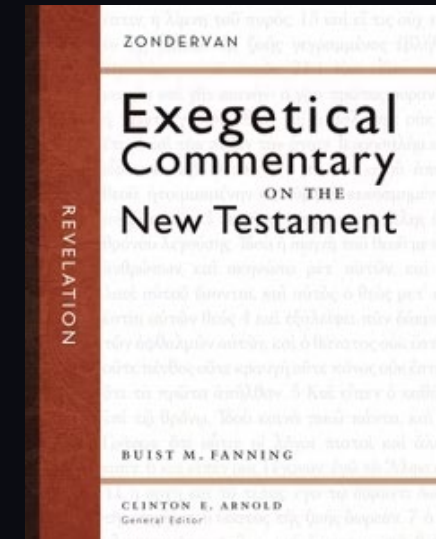
Revelation 2:4 (NASB 2020)

Beware of anything that competes with loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of devotion to Jesus is service for him.



—Oswald Chambers, *Leadership*, Vol. 4,

Christ's intimate knowledge of them includes the profoundly troubling charge—actually a sharp rebuke—that they no longer exercise the cardinal Christian virtue of love for God and for people...The offense is that their persevering toil and vigilance against false teaching for the sake of Christ has become all “hands and head” with no heart. It is a veneer of busy outward activity without the inward motivation of sincere love in response to God's great love for them in Christ and without the grace and love toward others that is needed. They have “abandoned” (CSB, ESV, RSV) or “forsaken” (NIV)



³⁷And He said to him, “ ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’

³⁸This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’

⁴⁰Upon these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.”

²³Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make *Our* dwelling with him.

John 14:23 (NASB 2020)

⁸Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* Law. ⁹For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the* Law.

¹If I speak with the tongues of mankind and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have *the gift of prophecy* and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

³And if I give away all my possessions *to charity*, and if I surrender my body so that I may glory, but do not have love, it does me no good.

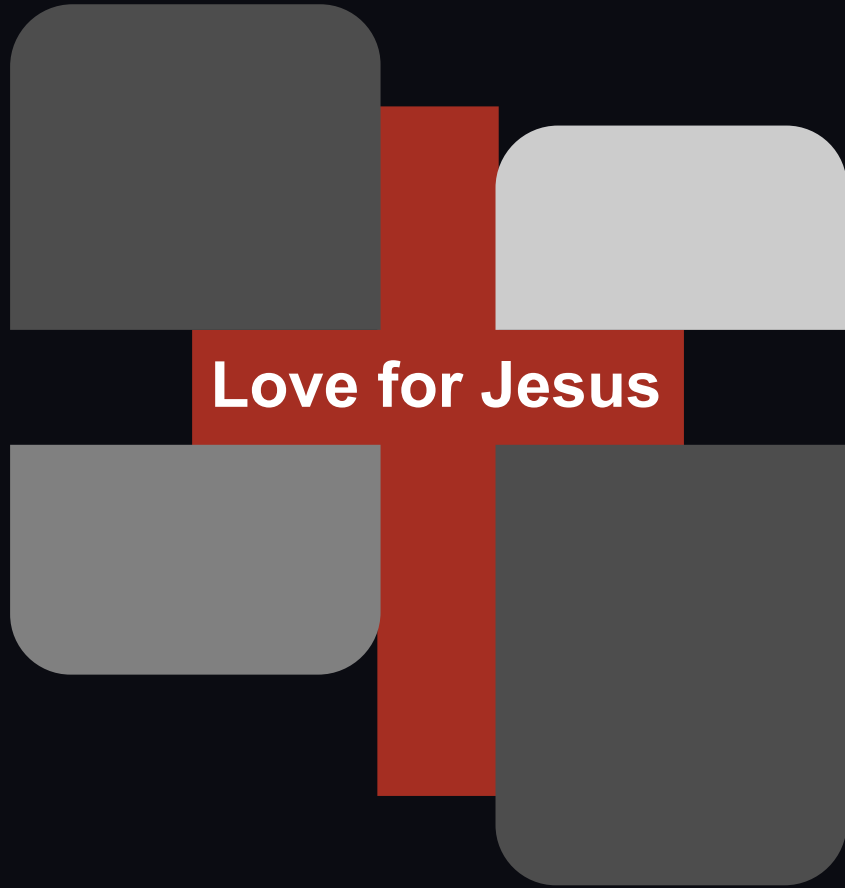
¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us,
having concluded this, that one died
for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵and He
died for all, so that those who live
would no longer live for themselves,
but for Him who died and rose on
their behalf.



FAITH
BIBLE CHURCH

Love for Jesus

Inviting everyone
to grow together in
our love for Jesus



Inviting everyone
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4. Your witness is in peril (2:5)

A. The result (2:5)

B. The remedy (2:5)

4. Your witness is in peril (2:5)

A. The result (2:5)

B. The remedy (2:5)

⁵Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

³⁴I am giving you a new commandment,
that you love one another; **just as I have
loved you, that you also love one another.**

³⁵**By this all *people* will know that you are
My disciples: if you have love for one
another.”**

John 13:34–35 (NASB 2020)

⁵and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE PUNISHED BY HIM; ⁶FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE PUNISHES EVERY SON WHOM HE ACCEPTS.”

The second crown is called the crown of rejoicing in 1 Thessalonians 2:19: For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his coming?

This crown is given to those who win souls for Yeshua the Messiah. It is a crown available to all those who do the work of evangelism and the fruit of their labors is



4. Your witness is in peril (2:5)

A. The result (2:5)

B. The remedy (2:5)

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⁵Therefore, **remember** from where you have fallen, and **repent**, and **do** the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

2 Peter 1:5-9

⁵Now for this very reason also,
applying all diligence, in your faith
supply moral excellence, and in *your*
moral excellence, knowledge,

⁶and in *your* knowledge, self-control,
and in *your* self-control,
perseverance, and in *your*
perseverance, godliness,

⁷and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

⁸For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they do not make you useless nor unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹For the one who lacks these
qualities is blind *or* short-sighted,
having forgotten *his* purification from
his former sins.

2 Peter 1:5–9 (NASB 2020)

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⁷The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To the one who overcomes**, I will grant to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.'

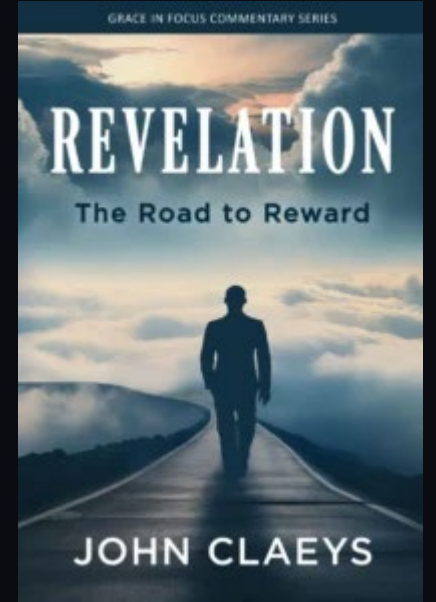
Revelation 2:7 (NASB 2020)

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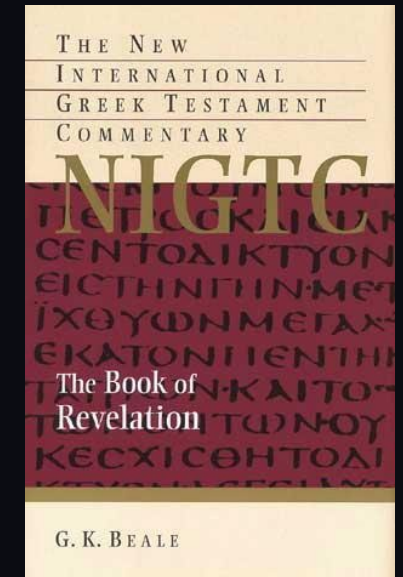
*Believers who faithfully
endure will experience
glorious, eternal
reward.*



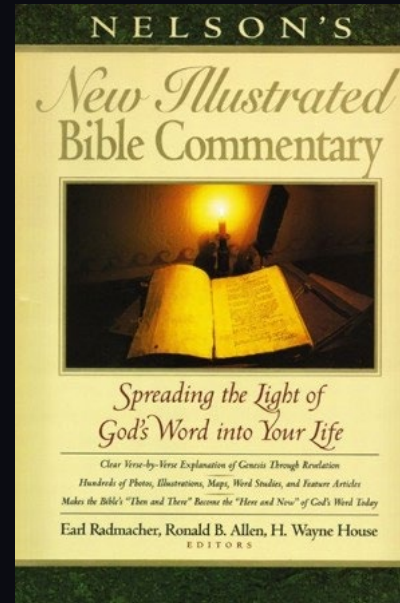
²²Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out with his hand, and take *fruit* also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—²³therefore the LORD God sent him out of the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴So **He drove the man out**; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword

¹And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ²in the middle of its street. On either side of the river *was* the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations

And in Genesis 2–3 the image of the “tree of life” together with the “paradise of God” symbolizes the life-giving presence of God, from which Adam and Eve are separated when they are cast out of the garden paradise. Revelation speaks of the consummated restoration of this divine presence among humanity in the future (22:2–4), which has already



Eating of the tree of life is a promise of special intimacy with the Lord, a promise of renewing the fellowship lost before the Fall (22:14; Gen. 2:9; 3:22, 24; Prov. 11:30). The privileged access once denied Adam (Gen. 3:24) will be enjoyed by the overcomer



³And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

John 17:3 (NASB 2020)

A Love Letter to a Distracted Fiancée

1. The Lord is your Protector (2:1)
2. Your labor is still pleasing (2:2-3,6)
3. The Lord wants your passion (2:4)
4. Your witness is in peril (2:5)
5. Your reward is restored Paradise (2:7)

Application

Application

Don't forget the groom while planning for the wedding! Remember, repent, and return to letting love for Him lead everything you do for Him.