

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION, Chapters 2 & 3

	Christ	Commendation	Rebuke	Exhortation	Alternative	Promise	Historical View
Ephesus (2:1-7)	Holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks in the midst of the seven candlesticks (1:20).	Works, labor, patience, cannot bear those who are evil, judged the false apostles, hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans.	Left their first love.	Remember, repent, do the first works.	I will come quickly and remove the candlestick out of his place (1:20)	Will eat of the Tree of Life.	The Church of the first century.
Smyrna (2:8-11)	First and the Last, Who was dead and is alive.	Works, tribulation, poverty.	—	Fear not, be faithful unto death.	—	Will receive the Crown of Life, Will not be hurt of the second death.	The persecuted church of the second and third centuries.
Pergamos (2:12-17)	Has the sharp sword with two edges (Heb. 4:12)	Works, Hold fast Jesus' name, have not denied the faith.	Hold the doctrine of Balaam. Hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.	Repent	I will come quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.	Will eat of the hidden manna, and receive a white stone with a new name written within it.	The Church from about 312 (Constantine) to about 500 A.D.
Thyatira (2:18-29)	Eyes like flame of fire, feet like fine brass.	Works, charity, service, faith, growth in works.	Tolerated false prophet, Jezebel, to teach immorality and idolatry.	Repent, hold fast to that which you already have until I come.	Great tribulation, children will be killed.	Will give power over the nations, will receive the Morning Star.	The Church of the Dark Ages till the 16 th century.
Sardis (3:1-6)	Has seven spirits and seven stars.	Works, a name (reputation) of being alive...	...but are dead.	Be watchful, strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die. Remember how you have received and heard, hold fast, repent.	I will come on you as a thief.	Will be clothed in white raiment. Name will not be blotted out of the Book of Life. Jesus will confess his name before the Father.	The Church of the Renaissance and the Reformation.
Philadelphia (3:7-13)	True has the key of David.	Works, has kept Jesus' word and not denied His Name. Has kept the word of His patience	—	Hold fast that which you have...	...That no man take thy crown.	Be kept from the hour of temptation. Be made a pillar in the temple of God in the New Jerusalem. Jesus' new name will be written on him.	The Church of the revival of the 19 th century.
Laodicea (3:14-22)	The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning (originating source) of the creation of God	—	Lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. Wretched and miserable, and poor, and naked.	Buy from Jesus refined gold white clothes, and eye salve. Be zealous and repent.	I will spue you out of my mouth.	Fellowship with Christ – I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me.	The end-times lukewarm church.

Comments: All churches begin with a description of Jesus. All but the church of Laodicea receive some sort of commendation. All receive a rebuke of some kind and are told to repent except for Smyrna and Philadelphia. All are offered gracious options if they obey the exhortations.

COMING SOON...

Revelation Bible Study – Session 2 Chapters 2-3, 4-5

Review Outline of Revelation:

In this book of the Bible, the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, He Himself gives us the clearest picture of:

Part 1: John's Calling - Ch 1 – *WHO HE IS*, giving us many descriptions of His power and majesty

Part 2: 7 Letters to Churches - Ch 2-3 – *WHAT HE WANTS* in the end-time church

Part 3: Jesus takes the scroll – Ch 4-5 – *HIS HEAVENLY COMMISSION* and resources

Part 4: Jesus' Battle Plan – Ch 6-19 – *HOW HE'LL PREPARE* the nations for His coming glory,
and **Ch 20-22** – *OUR ETERNAL INHERITANCE* on earth with Him

LETTERS TO 7 CHURCHES – Chapters 2-3

Written to the '*angel*' of the church = apostolic leader over each congregation. The word is '*angelos*' in Greek, and refers to an angelic or human messenger (translated '*messenger*' when referring to John the Baptist in Mt 11:10 and Mk 1:2.)

- A. **The book of Revelation is an eschatological book of Acts, revealing the acts of the Spirit through the end-time apostles and prophets, and the praying church under Jesus' authority.** These 7 prophetic letters instructs us on how to partner with Him in preparation for His second coming. Jesus knows best how to prepare His own bride.
- B. **These letters show us the kind of church that Jesus is building and what His agenda is,** defining love and spiritual maturity in His terms. These qualities are necessary for the Church, under Jesus' leadership, to order to pray to release God's judgment against the Antichrist kingdom, just as Moses released 10 plagues on Egypt.
- C. **These letters may be applied** individually, corporately, historically, and eschatologically. The primary purpose for our discussion is to prepare the end-time church for the events seen in Rev.6-19...when there will be the most believers in history living on earth at the most difficult time in history.
- D. **See CHART of 7 Churches: Each of the 7 churches receives:**
 1. **Revelation of Jesus** (specific aspects of His majesty seen in Rev.1 that He deems are most needed in each church's individual situation)
 2. **Affirmation** (what they do well, given before correction/rebuke); exceptions: Sardis and Laodicea
 3. **Rebuke** (what they must not do. His correction is *not* rejection); Sternest rebukes were for: passivity, immorality, and idolatry (enabled by false teachings on grace that did not require repentance). Exceptions: Philadelphia and Smyrna did not receive a rebuke.
 4. **Exhortation** (what they must turn and do now)
 5. **Warning** (what will happen if they don't repent or comply)
 6. **Promise for overcomers** (incentive for diligent faithfulness to Jesus). Most are for the millennial kingdom. Insight into these 22 rewards in ch.2-3 equips us to stand under pressure. (2:7, 10, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21)
- E. **"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" Rev.2:7** This is the exhortation most repeated by Jesus during His earthly ministry (8x in gospels, and 8x in Rev.). This signals extreme importance to Jesus, asking us to pay careful attention, to not be content with surface understanding, asking the Holy Spirit to give us more revelation. Each time He spoke of an eternal reward, He warned us to have ears to hear. These letters, and these rewards, are of critical importance.
- F. **Eternal Rewards: (Eye has not seen, nor ear heard...the things which God has prepared...1 Cor.2:9)**
To eat from the tree of life in the midst of Paradise (2:7); to receive the crown of life (2:10); to not be hurt by the second death (2:11); to eat hidden manna (2:17); to receive a white stone (2:17); to receive a new name written on the stone (2:17); to have power over the nations (2:26); to receive the morning star (2:28); to receive white garments (3:5); to receive a name that is not blotted from the Book of Life (3:5); for Jesus to confess one's name before the Father and angels (3:5); for one's persecutors to worship before their feet (3:9); for one's persecutors to know that Jesus loves

them (3:9); to be made a pillar in God's temple (3:12); to have God's name, the New Jerusalem's name, and Jesus' new name written on them (3:12); to receive gold to make one rich (3:18); to receive white garments (3:18); to have anointed eyes to see more (3:18); to eat with Jesus (3:20); and to sit on His throne. (3:21).

G. The Call to Overcome – an overcomer in this context is one who matures in the specific areas of faithfulness that Jesus emphasized in his or her life. For Ephesus, overcoming meant returning to their first love. For Smyrna, it was being faithful in persecution, even unto death. For Pergamos and Thyatira – resisting immorality and idolatry, for Sardis – being watchful (developing a prayer life) and to hold fast, for Philadelphia – to persevere in mature obedience for the rest of their lives, and for Laodicea – resisting luke-warmness.

Overcoming does not mean attaining perfection, but rather constantly reaching for victory with all our strength. The Lord is tender and merciful in His evaluation of our lives. As unbelievers, we overcome unbelief on the day we become born again. Our reward is the free and unmerited gift of salvation, based only on Jesus' worthiness. As believers, we overcome unfaithfulness only after we endure in obedience until the end. Our rewards are heavenly ones, which are an important part of our eternal destiny, and given to us according to our works (1 Cor.3:12-15). Many will shine more brightly than others for all of eternity (Dan.12:3).

THE BEAUTY REALM OF GOD – Chapter 4

A. Revelation 4 gives us the greatest revelation of the God's beauty in scripture. What God put around Himself expresses His attributes and beauty. After the Father's beauty is revealed (Ch.4), then His plan for Jesus comes into light (Ch.5).

B. Rev.4:2-7 outlines 4 categories of God's beauty, each with 3 themes:

1. The beauty of **God's Person**: jasper, sardius, emerald: how He looks, feels and acts (4:3)
2. The beauty of **God's Partners**: the church enthroned, robed and crowned (4:4)
3. The beauty of **God's Power**: manifestations in lightnings, thunderings, voices (4:5a)
4. The beauty of **God's Presence** (fire): on lamps, seraphim, and the sea (4:5b-7, 15:2) – Is. 11:2

C. Rev. 4:8-10 - the governmental leaders of heaven's glory (boast with loving delight) in God. Their foundational hymn (Holy, holy holy, Lord God Almighty...) forever magnifies God's holiness. (Note; there are 14 hymns in the book of Revelation). To be holy means "to be totally separated". God is separated from everything sinful, i.e. He is pure. Also, He is separated from everything created (or common), thus He is transcendent or infinitely superior to all that exists.

JESUS IS WORTHY (We trust His leadership)– Chapter 5

D. Rev. 5 gives us insight into the Father's plan to exalt Jesus as a human king over all the earth. The Father promised to exalt Jesus because of His faithfulness in His humanity. (Phil.2:8-10)

E. God gave dominion (authority) of the earth to Adam as a representative of the human race as an eternal stewardship. (Gen.1:28, Ps.115:16). By sinning, Adam forfeited his authority to Satan (Gen.3, Lk.4:5-6). Jesus, as the last Adam, won back the rights to dominion over the earth. His humanity and sinlessness qualifies Him.

F. As Jesus is commissioned, He takes **the scroll** from the Father's hand, which represents the **title deed** of the earth and the **action plan** (Rev.6-19) necessary to prepare the church as a mature Bride who partners with Jesus to bring in the harvest and judge the Antichrist's empire as a key part of His plan to rid the earth of evil.

G. The Father gives the title deed of the earth to Jesus as a human King, the only Man found worthy (deserving and capable) to govern the earth. He accepts responsibility to cleanse and to rule, to take over all the nations.

H. To “open the seals” means to release the judgments in the Book of Revelation (Ch.6-19), to cleanse the planet from evil, restructuring all the governments of the earth (20:4-6). Jesus is the only Man with the wisdom, love, humility and power to open the seals in a way that produces righteousness and love across the entire earth. He has the fierceness and fearlessness of a lion (vs.5), and tenderness and humility of a lamb (vs.6).

I. After Jesus takes the scroll, the 4 living creatures (angelic) and 24 elders (human) agree with the Father that

Jesus is worthy, singing a new song. (Rev.5:8-10)

1. Jesus is *worth it* (Phil.3:8)
2. Jesus is *capable* to drive evil off the earth and reorganize all the governments.
3. Jesus *deserves it*: Father will give the leadership of the earth to Jesus as He gave it to Adam. Jesus has proven He makes every choice in love and righteousness.(2 Cor.8:9)
4. Jesus *being slain*: He had to become human and live in complete obedience to and dependence on the Spirit. He had to become *human forever* to qualify as a sacrifice for humans. He lived in *perfect love, humility, and righteousness* to qualify to bear God’s wrath.
5. Jesus lived *dependent on the anointing of the Spirit*. Ever since the incarnation, Jesus has never ever been less than God, but He has lived as though He was never more than a man. He waited on the Father, always in prayer and obedience, in order to release the Father’s will through the Holy Spirit every time. (Isaiah 11:2-3)
6. Jesus’ *humility* is beyond our understanding in His humanity, anointing and intercession.

J. The Father gives Jesus an unprecedented measure of favor over **Seven Spheres of Leadership** (Rev.5:11-12)

1. **POWER** (political) – Jesus will receive governmental leadership over all the nations. (Col.1:18 – *that in all things He may have the preeminence.*)
2. **RICHS** (financial) – all the money on earth will be under Jesus’ leadership
3. **WISDOM** (intellectual) – Jesus will replace every evil government on earth with new leaders, and laws, along with restoring every sphere of life (political, economic, education, agriculture, technology, every aspect of society).
4. **STRENGTH** (emotional) – Jesus will have strength in His inner man (Eph.3:16) so as to continue steadfastly as He restores the nations and contends against all resistance.
5. **GLORY** – (spiritual) – all will boast in Jesus with loving delight and joyful trust. Paul gloried in Jesus (Phil.3:3), children glory in their father (Prov.17:6), we glory in God’s name (Ps.105:3. 43:4)
6. **HONOR** – (relational) – Jesus will be greatly respected and listened to by all nations. Definition: to publicly esteem by showing unusual respect to one with superior standing and to listen to their words with reverence.
7. **BLESSING** – (social) – all will fully cooperate with His leadership resulting in the mightiest labor force in history. The nations will bless all of His plans and policies, cooperating with Him with all their resources.

K. SO WHERE IS THIS ALL GOING? At the end of the millennium, Jesus will ultimately give the nations to His Father -

See 1 Cor.15:24, 28 and Rev.21:1-3

- a. The Father’s promise to Jesus: To make Him preeminent in all things
...He is the head of the Body...that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Col. 1:18)
- b. Jesus earned the right to rule the earth, yet He gives it to the Father. Jesus absolutely delights in humility.

24 Then comes the end [millennial kingdom], when He [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He [Jesus] puts an end to all rule [hostile, evil authorities during the Millennium]...28 Now when all things are made subject to Him [Jesus], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [the Father]...that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:24, 28)

1. Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.(Rev.21:1-3)

Homework: Review/memorize **structure** of Revelation (4 parts, 5 sections in 4th part), **Re-read** Chapters 2-5.

Read chapters 6-9 carefully in **preparation** for next class