

1/18/04

## Revelation 2

We come to the second major division of the book of Revelation, in chapter two and three, the things which are, identifying the seven churches in Asia Minor, the three-fold division is given to us in chapter one. Rev. 1:19

1. They were actual churches in John's day, representing the total church.
2. They cover a period of church history.
3. They identify a type of church in every age.
4. They identify a type of Christian in every age.

There is an obvious pattern to the letters.

1. Jesus the author is identified from a portion of the vision in Chapter 1, the address is to the messenger.
2. Jesus then commends the church.
  - \* Laodicea has no commendation.
3. Jesus then condemns their shortcomings and sin.
  - \* Smyrna and Philadelphia alone; have no rebuke.
4. Jesus then gives an exhortation.
5. Jesus finally gives a promise.

There are particular elements regarding the churches.

1. The first and last church are threatened with extinction
2. The second and sixth have complete praise.
3. The third and fifth have commendation and condemnation.

### 1:1-7 The church of Ephesus.

2:1 The confrontation.

- 1) The message is addressed to the angel "angeli", the pastor most likely, not an angel.
- 2) The church of Ephesus is the loveless church, which occupied the period of history between 30-100 A.D.
- 3) The name Ephesus means desirable.
- 4) The located in Asia Minor on the mouth of the river Cayster.
- 5) The city was a very important city politically and export center.
- 6) Paul came to Ephesus on his 2nd missionary journey and later returned on his third for three years.
- 7) The temple to the goddess Diana, the goddess of fertility, was a principle deity.
- 8) Jesus identifies Himself. Rev. 1:12-13
  - a) He who holds seven stars, the messengers, pastors, etc.
  - b) He walks in the midst of the golden lampstands, the churches.
    - \* He sees all things Heb. 4:13

**2:2-3, 6** The church is commended.

- 1) "I know your works".
- 2) Labor - to point of exhaustion
- 3) Patience - endurance
- 4) Cannot bear those who are evil
- 5) Tested those who say they are apostles  
scrutinized
- 6) Persevered and have patience
- 7) Labored for His name sake and not  
became weary.
- 8) Hated the deeds of Nicolaitans of  
Antioch, from two words Nekos, to  
conquer and laos, the people or laity,  
believed to be Neolaus the proselyte of  
Antioch but it is uncertain.  
\* A system that ruled and lorded over the  
people like the Catholic priest or other  
elite religious men or women.

**2:4** The church is condemned for sin.

- 1) Jesus says, He had something against  
them.
- 2) Literally, your first love you have left not  
lost.
  - a) Thirty years before Paul commended  
them for their love for Christ. Eph.  
1:5
  - b) The possibility of being scripturally  
right and full of works but void of  
fervent love for Jesus is very real.

**2:5** The church is exhorted.

- 1) Remember from where you have fallen.
- 2) Repent is change of mind and life.
- 3) Return and repeat and do your first  
works.
- 4) Real warning, "Or I will remove your  
lampstand from its place, unless your  
repent!  
\* She would cease to be used.

**2:7** The church is given a promise.

- 1) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the  
Spirit says to the churches. vs. 2:7a-b
  - a) The individual is addresses to pay  
heed.
  - b) The individual is to learn from the  
messages to the churches, plural.
- 2) To him who overcomes I will give to eat  
from the tree of life, which is in the midst  
of the Paradise of God. vs. 7c-d
  - a) The overcomer will eat of the tree of  
life, eternal life.  
\* Our faith in Jesus. 1Jn. 5:4-5
  - b) The location of the tree of life is in the  
midst of the paradise of God. Gen.2:9;  
Rev.22:2

**2:8-11** **The church of Smyrna.****2:8** The confrontation.

- 1) The message is addressed to the angel “angeloi”, the pastor most likely, not an angel.
- 2) The church of Smyrna is the suffering church (100-312 A.D.).
- 3) The name means bitter from its commercial product myrrh taken from tree for perfume, embalming and oil for the priest.
- 4) It had to be crushed to release the fragrance.
- 5) The church was located about thirty-five to forty miles N.E. of Ephesus with a harbor narrow enough to close at time of war, for her protection.
- 6) The city was beautiful, wealthy and called by some the Ornament of Asia with an important road extending eastward to carry her rich products from the Valley of Hermus.
- 7) The city was second to Ephesus in exports.
- 8) In 600 B.C. the city was destroyed by the Lyddians and rebuilt in 290 B.C by Lysimachus and Antigonus as a model city.
- 9) The city had a famous thoroughfare called the Street of God, which curved around Mt. Pagus, 500 feet above the harbor and at either end was a temple,

one to a local variety of Cybele and the other of Zeus.

- 10) The acropolis on Mt. Pagus was called the crown or garland of Smyrna, coins described the city as “First of Asia in beauty and size.”
- 11) The population was about 200, 000 and it became one with Emperor worship and the first to build a temple in honor of the emperor Tiberius.
- 12) The city had a large Jewish population and with her allegiance to Rome made it very difficult to live as a Christian.
  - \* The most famous martyr was Polycarp, who would not acknowledge Caesar as Lord, early second century.
- 13) Jesus identifies Himself. Rev. 1:17-18
  - a) He is the one who was dead and came to life, by rising from the dead, destroying him who had the power of death. Heb. 2:14
  - b) He understood martyrdom, even to death, they could trust Him.

**2:9** The church is commended.

- 1) “I know your works”;
  - \* The word works are absent from some Manuscripts.
- 2) Tribulation, pressure and crushing persecution.

- 3) Poverty, due to becoming economically destitute for their faith and violence against them but are rich spiritually. Heb. 10:34
- a) Foxes book of Martyrs recounts the horror of Christians who have suffered from the beginning! Heb. 11:34, 37-38
  - b) From Nero to Dometian Christians were dipped in wax, crucified and lit for torches, hot led was poured on their bellies, wild dogs were loosed to tear at them as they were sown in animal skins, fed to the lions, etc.
  - c) Jesus became poor for us. 2Cor. 8:9
- 4) Blasphemers of those who say are Jews but are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Jn. 8:41-44; Rom. 2:28-29
- a) Like Satan slanderers and false accusers, probably attempting to mix the Jewish ritualism to substitute personal relationship.
  - b) Persecution has never destroyed the church but caused it to purity and grow. (The Church in China).
  - c) Smyrna has no condemnation or sin mentioned and as well as Philadelphia.

**2:10** The church is exhorted.

- 1) Do not fear things you are about to suffer.

- 2) You will be thrown into prison and tested 1Cor. 10:13; 1Pet. 4:12
- a) Though Rome was the instrument, Satan was the one responsible.
  - b) Prison often was the place waiting for execution.
- 3) Tribulation for 10 days.  
\* Believed to be the 10 edicts Rome to persecute Christians from Nero to Diocletian, in which over 6 million died, from 54 A.D. 284 A.D.
- 4) Be faithful to death and receive crown of life, the victor's crown.
- a) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown "stephanos" of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Ja. 1:12  
\* The victors crown awarded at the games.
  - b) Opposite of Laodicea. Rev. 3:17
  - c) Polycarp was martyred in his nineties.
- 2:11** The church is given a promise.
- 1) The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. vs. 11a-b
- a) The invitation and responsibility is individual.

- b) The obedience is to all the messages, plural.
  - c) The speaker is Jesus and the Holy Spirit is the representative of Jesus, speaking on His behalf as the illuminator of the word.
- 2) The overcomer will not be hurt by the second death. vs. 11c
- a) The implication being the first death, physical will take place but second death is spiritual and eternal separation from God, will not.
  - b) The second death is by being cast into the Lake of Fire, after the White Throne Judgment. Rev. 20:6, 14; 21:8.

### **2:12-17      The church of Pergamos.**

#### **2:12** The confrontation.

- 1) Again it is address to the angel, the messenger or pastor.
- 2) The church of Pergamos was the worldly church, covering the period of history between 313-600 A.D.
- 3) The name means fortified, castle, fortress or citadel.
- 4) The city was north of Smyrna, then inland northeasterly up to the Valley of Caicus River, about ten to fifteen miles from the Aegean Sea was Pergamos.

- 5) The city was built on a one-thousand feet high hill in the valley of the river Caicus, viewing the Mediterranean from that vantage point.
- 6) The city was one of fashion, commerce, with its temple to Caesar, Asclepeos or Aesculopeus, the god of healing, who was worshipped in the form of a serpent, the emblem for medical doctors.
  - \* Many came to be healed, Galen, one of the most famous physician was a native of Pergamos.
- ) The city rose to prominence in the third century B.C. when it became the capital of the Attalids, under Eumenes II, 197-159 B.C., was known as “the finest flower of the Hellenic civilization”
- 8) In 133 B.C. Attalus III bequeathed the city to the Roman Empire and was the first city to build a temple to the divinity of Julius Caesar in 29 B.C.
  - \* Pergamum was the official center in Asia for the imperial cult, “To the divine Augustus and the goddess Roma”.
- 9) The city has a large library of 200,000 parchment rolls which were later given to Cleopatra by Mark Anthony.
  - \* They say that parchment was invented there when the supply of papyrus from Egypt was cut off in reprisal for

Eumenes' attempt to lure a famous librarian by the name of Aristophanes away from Alexandria.

- 10) The city has an enormous statute of Zeus that could be seen for miles and was one of the seven wonders of the world.
- 11) In it's historical period Constantine had a vision of the cross and heard a voice "conquer", he stopped the persecution and commanded all to become Christians.
  - \* The church married the world living in comfort compromise, becoming a state church.
- 12) Jesus identifies Himself. Rev. 1:16
  - a) He who has the sharp two edged sword "rhomphaia" a judgment sword.
  - b) Rome had the "right of the sword" "juus gladii", the power of life and death.
  - c) Jesus is the great worrier and the one who will judge their compromise and has the power of life and death.
    - \* The Old Testament calls Him, the Lord of host, the Captain of the armies of heaven!

**2:13** The church is commended.

- 1) "I know your works".

- 2) Where you dwell, Satan's throne, Caesar worship had to burn incense to him once a year.
  - a) The seeds of the Roman Catholic Church.
  - b) Tolerating, compromising and mixing.
- 3) You hold fast and did not deny my faith.
  - \* God has His faithful in every church!
- 4) In the days of the faithful martyr of Jesus, Antipas.
  - a) Though little is known about him, they saw it and knew about it.
    - \* Tertullian mentioned that he was roasted to death in a brazen bowl during the reign of Domitian?
  - b) The source was Satanic.

**2:14** The church is condemned for their sin.

- 1) But I have a few things against you.
  - \* This is their Lord accusing them.
- 2) They had those who held the doctrine of Balaam. Num. 23-25; 31:16; 2Pet. 2:15; Jude
  - a) He advised Balak to corrupt them by introducing their idolatrous sexual practices by their young women and God would destroy them Himself.
  - b) A stumbling block, eating sacrifices of idols and sexual immorality, physical and spiritual.

- c) Heathen basilicas and temples were turned to churches and there was a mixture of truth and error, corrupting the truth and camouflaging the lie.
  - 1)) The way of Balaam is that he loved the wages of unrighteousness.
  - 2)) The error of Balaam was greed for profit. Jude 11

**2:15** The church is condemned for another sin.

- 1) They also had those who held the doctrine of Nicolaitans, which I hate.
  - a) In Ephesus it was the deeds. Rev. 2:6
  - b) To rule over the people, denying the headship of Christ by their abuse and misuse of their office.
- 2) The doctrine could refer to the many Roman Catholic decrees that came forth in this historical time period of 300-600 A.D., remember that these letters are prophetic in nature.
  - a) Prayer for the dead.
  - b) The sign of the cross.
  - c) The worship of saints and angels.
  - d) The doctrine of Purgatory, etc.

**2:16** The church is exhorted.

- 1) Repent “metanoea” to change their minds.

- a) The specifics are the doctrine of Balaam and Nicolaitans.
- b) The call to repent is both an invitation and a warning against their idolatry, immorality and infidelity.
- 2) The option is, Or I will come to you quickly the faithful and fight against them, the unfaithful with the sword of My mouth.”
  - a) The word quickly “tachu” means suddenly or speedily, appearing seven times in Revelation. Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:7, 12, 20
  - b) The one speaking again is Jesus, who has perfect knowledge, they are word of judgment.
  - c) This is not a threat but a promise, He will fight against them, if they do not repent. Rev.19:15
    - \* The word is to make war in three of the six occurrences in the book. Rev. 13:4; 17:14; 19:11

**2:17** The church is given a promise.

- 1) The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. vs. 17a-b
  - a) The invitation and responsibility is individual.
  - b) The obedience is to all the messages, plural.

- c) The speaker is Jesus and the Holy Spirit is the representative of Jesus, speaking on His behalf as the illuminator of the word.
- 2) The overcomer will receive two things.
  - a) He will be given some of the Hidden manna to eat. Ex. 16
    - 1)) Indicating complete dependency and fellowship with Christ literally.
    - 2)) Jesus said, "I Am the bread from heave and bread of life." Jn. 6:32-33, 35
  - b) He will be given a white stone with a new name, known only by the person.
    - 1)) Conferring privilege and favor of ruling and reigning with Him.
    - 2)) Conferring blessing and honor, being pure, whiter than snow by being acquitted of all sins.
    - 3)) A white stone was used for as a ticket for admission to an event and by juries to acquit a person of charges.

### **2:18-29      The church of Thyatira.**

**2:18**      The confrontation.

- 1) Again it is address to the angel, the messenger or pastor.

- 2) The church of Thyatira is the pagan church. occupying the period of history form 600-1500 A.D., know as the dark Ages, under the full development of the Papal Church of Rome.
  - \* This it the longest of the seven letters!
- 3) The name means continual sacrifice.
- 4) The city was built by Seleucus I to guard the mouth of a long pass between the Hermus and Caicus valley, forty miles north-east of Ephesus, in 301-281 B.C.
- 5) The city was a great military city and its god was Tyrimnos, the Greek sun-god Appolo, depicted as a worrier armed for battle with a great two-edged axe.
- 6) Paul went out to Philippi and when he arrived he met Lydia from Thyatira a seller of purple. Acts 16:14
- 7) The city was an industrial city of trade, potters, tanners and dyers famous for its purple, having many guilds.
- 8) In the seventh Century the bishop of Rome was recognized as the head of the church and successor of Christ.
- 9) Continual sacrifices for sins of living and dead was an insult to the finished work of Christ.
- 10) The Temple of the goddess Diana (fertility).
- 11) Jesus identifies Himself. Rev. 1:14-15
  - a) He is the Son of God. Ps. 2:9

- \* He is the Son of God not Mary nor the was Tyrimnos the protector of the city but Jesus, the Son of God.
- b) He is the one who has eyes like a flame of fire. Dan. 10:6
  - \* Penetrating vision and searching!
- c) His feet are like fine brass.
  - \* Indicative of strength and splendor of His perfect Judgment!

**2:19** The church is commended.

- 1) “I know your works”.
- 2) Love “agape”, divine love.
- 3) Service “diakonia”, ministry or service.
- 4) Faith “pistis” belief in the truth.
- 5) Patience “hupomone”, steadfast endurance.
- 6) Their works, the last are more than the first.

**2:20** The church is condemned for their sin.

- 1) The one accusing them is Christ, He has a few things against them.
- 2) They allow the woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce His servants, calling herself a prophetess, as from God.
  - a) The sin of tolerance and permissiveness, like today’s relativism, situational ethic and value clarification!

- b) She was allowed to take leadership of the church, contrary to the Scriptures. 1Tim. 2:12-14
  - \* The number of cults, spiritism, etc that have and are led by women is astounding, throughout history, our present day is no different.
- 3) The teachings were opposed to holiness.
  - a) To commit sexual immorality.
  - b) To eat things sacrificed to idols.
    - \* The pressure by the trade guilds to participate in these feast practices would make life difficult for Christians!
  - c) Jezebel tried to unite the religion of Baal to Israel. 1Kings 16
  - d) She was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians and married Ahab.
  - e) Elijah destroyed the prophets of Baa 1King 18
  - f) Elijah ran in fear 1King 19
    - \* The compromise is severe, denouncing their spiritual adulterous unfaithfulness!

**2:21-23** The church is exhorted.

- 1) I gave her time to repent of hr sexual immorality, and she did not. vs. 21
  - a) The word time “chronon” means running time.

- b) Certainly Luther and many others before him called the Catholic church to repent but she has not to this day!  
\* The goodness of God that leads us to repentance. Rom. 2:4
- 2) I will cast her into a sickbed and great tribulation unless they repent. vs. 22
  - a) A bed of sickness and pain spiritually speaking of the heretical deception.
  - b) The specific time is “The Great-Tribulation”.
  - c) The only way to avert is to repent of their deeds.
- 3) I will kill her children with death. vs. 23
  - a) All the churches will know I am He who searches the mind and hearts. Jer. 17:10
  - b) And I will give to each one of you according to your works. Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2

2:24-29 The church is given a promise.

- 1) To whoever does not have this doctrine or known, the depths of Satan, as they say. vs. 24-25
  - a) The declaration could have been a boastful confession of being beyond the affects of sin, possibly referring to the Gnostics.

- b) The address it I say “to you”, the pastor and the rest in Thyatira, I will put on you no other burden. vs. 24  
\* These are the faithful in Thyatira!
- c) The directive is, “But hold fast what you have till I come.” vs. 25
- 2) To overcomer is given two promises. vs. 26-27
  - \* The promise precedes the double condition for the first time, unlike the first three, after the call!
  - a) And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations. vs. 26
    - 1)) The word power “exousia”, mans authority.
    - 2)) Without doubt indicative of the millennium.
    - 3)) He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels' --as I also have received from My Father. vs. 27
      - a)) The word rule “poimaino” means to feed, tend, shepherd. Ps. 2
      - b)) With a absolute standard, “righteousness”.
      - c)) The consequences will not be delayed but executed instant.

b) And I will give him the morning star.  
vs. 28

1)) The morning star is Jesus. Rev.  
22:16

2)) To whosoever hears and what the  
Spirit says to the churches, plural.

### **Conclusion**

These are the first four churches.

1. Ephesus: The loveless church.
2. Smyrna: The suffering church.
3. Pergamos: The worldly church.
4. Thyatira: The pagan church.