

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"THE THINGS WHICH ARE"

CHAPTER TWO

I. THE MESSAGE TO EPHESUS - THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH (2 : 1 - 7)

- A. Began with a commendation for their works
 - 1. They had labored in patience and not fainted
(2 : 2 , 3)
 - 2. They had tried false teachers and wouldn't tolerate those who were evil in the church (2 : 2) . In other words they had some standards as a church.
 - 3. They hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans (2 : 6) . The word means to conquer the people and refers to those who overlorded over others. This probably refers to early attempts to divide the clergy and the laity.
- B. Condemned something about their service (2 : 4)
 - 1. They had left their first love (2 : 4)
Ephesus means desired yet this church did not have the proper desire for the Lord. Here we see its not just what we do but the motive behind it. Are we doing it because we love the Lord.
 - 2. This church apparently had the programs and by the world's standards was successful but they were a backsliding church by the Lord's standards because they lacked the proper relationship with Him.
- C. Told them to correct these things (2 : 5)
 - 1. The first thing this involved was repentance or having a change of heart and mind toward Christ and their service.
 - 2. Secondly they were to do the first works - this meant serving the Lord like they did when they were first saved or doing things out of love for Christ and not otherwise.
- D. Gave them a challenge to consider (7)
 - 1. Note the challenge that Christ has for each church is revealed in the way He is presented to that

church.

2. Here we note Christ revealed to the church of Ephesus as the One who is walking in the midst of the church.
2. The challenge Christ gave to this church was meant to rekindle their love for Him. He said overcomers would have the right to the tree of life. Since all true believers are overcomers (I John 5:4, 5), we see it was an exhortation designed to bring them back into proper relationship. Note the tree in Gen. 3:22; Rev. 22:2.

II. THE MESSAGE TO SMYRNA-THE PERSECUTED CHURCH(2:8-11)

- A. Commended them for what they were suffering (9) .
 1. They were suffering tribulations and poverty.
 2. Secondly they were plagued with the devil's crowd.
 3. In contrast to the Laodicean Church they were said to be rich. The church has always been the purest and most fragrant in times of persecution.
- B. Had no condemnation nor correction for their service. They were apparently suffering such because they were doing what was right. Note II Tim. 3:12.
- C. Challenged them to remain faithful (10) .
 1. Here we see Christ presented to this church as the first and the last or the One with power over death having suffered and triumphed over it Himself (8) .
 2. The challenge Christ gave them was to be faithful and they would receive a crown of life and not be hurt by the second death. This refers to eternal life for the believer in contrast to eternal punishment for those unsaved.
 3. According to tradition Polycarp, the pastor at Smyrna, suffered a martyr's death. The ten days here have been applied to the ten great persecutions that the early church suffered.

III. THE MESSAGE TO PERGAMOS-THE COMPROMISING CHURCH

(2:12-17)

- A. Commended them for not giving up their faith (13)
 - 1. Antipas who had suffered death as a martyr was proof of this fact. Tradition says that Antipas was roasted in burning oil
 - 2. Note where they were dwelling. It was where Satan's throne was or in the world system.
- B. Condemned them for their compromise (14-18)
 - 1. They were tolerating those in the church
who held to the doctrine of Balaam. Balaam was a hireling prophet who led Balak to tempt Israel to marry Moabite women and lose their separation . (Num. 22-25; 31:15-16). So those in the church of Pergamos had corrupted others from living a separated (14) This compromise reflects their name which means married.
 - 2. They had also tolerated those in the church who overlorded over others (15). Note what began as "deeds" in the Ephesian Church (2 : 6) was a settled doctrine in this church. There was apparently a division between the people and the priests.
- C. Told them to correct their compromising situation (16) .
 - 1. This involved repentance or turning away from such a position and stop tolerating these people in the church.
 - 2. Failure to correct their compromising position would mean judgment.
- D. Gave them a challenge concerning their compromise (17) .
 - 1. Christ is presented to this church as the One having the sharp two-edged sword (12 , 16) . This represents judgment upon the wicked.
 - 2. The challenge that Christ gives is for hidden manna to eat and white stone. Note Israel was not given manna to eat until they had separated from Egypt with its onions, garlic, and etc. This is the challenge presented. Until folks separate from the

world with its carnality, they can't eat spiritual food. The white stone was given to those found innocent in Jewish courts. Those who repented then of such compromise and worldly living would be found innocent before Christ the Judge.

IV. THE MESSAGE TO THYATIRA - THE PAGAN CHURCH (2:18-29)

- A. Commended them for their manner of service (19)
 - 1. They had served in love, in patience and in faith.
 - 2. They were doing more than they had been doing before or increasing in their service.
- B. Condemned them for allowing a woman to lead them astray (20-22)
 - 1. Note Jezebel was a daughter of a priest of Baal who married Ahab the King of Israel. She was guilty of whoredom, witchcraft, murder, deceit and idolatry (II Kings 9) .
 - 2. The church of Thyatira, whose name means daughter's city, had allowed a woman to teach and this had led to false doctrine and spiritual adultery. This church is representative of the pagan church of: Rome In-history-which gave license to sin.
- C. Told them this situation had not been corrected in the time the Lord had given them to repent (22-25) .
 - 1. If they didn't repent now they would be judged(22-23)
 - 2. For those not involved in such spiritual adultery, Christ said to hold fast (24-25) .
- D. Gave them a challenge to continue in the Lord's work (26-29)
 - 1. Note Christ is presented to this church as the Son of God speaking of judgment (18) .
 - 2. The challenge to this church involved authority to rule over the nations and the Morning Star for overcomers. If the believers would keep the Lord's works they would rule. The Roman Catholic Church of the middle ages added to the finished work of Christ the idolatrous worship of Mary as co-redeemer with Christ. The Morning Star refers to Christ as the One returning before the

dark hours of the tribulation period. The emphasis seems to be in this challenge like this - if man can't rule over a woman instead of letting her lead him away from God, how is he going to rule over the nations?