

## Revelation – Week 2

### *Introduction – Ron*

The seven churches addressed in Revelation chapters 2-3 were actual existing churches when John wrote the book.

What was happening in these seven churches would not be uncommon problems for churches throughout the entire church age.

Ephesus was the first church to be addressed. Perhaps it was out of Ephesus that the remaining six churches would be birthed.

- **Ephesus** was the “**fundamental**” church of the seven. **Busy** and **doctrinally** sound, they loved their work but had grown cold in their love for Christ.
- **Smyrna** would be the “**persecuted**” church.
- **Pergamos** was the “**compromising**” church.
- **Thyatira** was the “**corrupt**” church.
- **Sardis** was the “**successful**” church.
- **Philadelphia** was the “**faithful**” church.
- **Laodicea** was the “**affluent**” church.

*Greg – the explanation of the structure of the messages to the seven churches.*

1. **Greg – Ephesus**

2. **Ron – Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11)**

- **I.D.** – Christ identifies Himself as “**first** and last who was dead and came to life.”
- **What we know about Smyrna** – knowledge based assessment
  - I know your **works**, **tribulation**, and **poverty**. The congregation at Smyrna was **poor** by the world’s standards but **rich** according to God.
  - Verse 10 “*Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer.*”
  - Who is persecuting this church? Verse 9 says, “*Those who say they are Jews and are not but are a **synagogue of Satan**.*” Verse 10 “*The devil is about to throw some of you into prison*”.
  - The persecution seems to be from unbelieving Jews in the city.
- **The encouragement to the church** – Smyrna is one of only two churches that was **not rebuked**. Revelation 2:10 “*Do not fear*” “*Be faithful unto death.*”
  - God does not alter the course of suffering – we sometimes assume He will.
- **The promise of reward** – “*I will give you the crown of life.*” = eternal life
- **Appeal for attention** – “*He who has an ear, let him hear.*”

3. **Greg – Pergamos**

4. **Ron – Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29)**

- Thyatira is the church that **tolerated sin**.
- **I.D.** Authoritative self-identification – Revelation 2:18 “*The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like burnished bronze*”. In Christ’s second coming, He is **not** coming back like a **lamb**. This description likely created fear in the church.
- **What we know about Thyatira** – knowledge-based assessment.

- Revelation 2:19 “*I know your works, love, service, faith, and patience”.*
- Thyatira was **strong** and Ephesus was **weak**. Thyatira is the first church to be **commended** as “**loving**”.
- They were faithful = dependable, reliable, consistent
- Thyatira was growing stronger!
- **Warning** – Revelation 2:20 “*Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.*”
  - **Jezebel** is **not** her **real name**; it would be like calling a traitor “Benedict Arnold” – it’s a descriptive name.
- **Warning** – Revelation 2:24-25 for those in the church who had not fallen into “the depths of Satan”.
  - Not all of the church followed Jezebel’s teaching or temptation.
  - The Lord encouraged them to “*hold fast what you have till I come.*”
- **Promise of reward** – “Authority over nations” “*and I will give him the morning star*”.
  - This is possibly a promise concerning the millennial kingdom.
  - The reference to morning star is a name for Christ.
- **Appeal for attention** – “*He who has an ear, let him hear.*”

## 5. **Greg – Sardis**

## 6. **Ron – Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)**

- Philadelphia was the **faithful** church; one of two church that was not rebuked.
- **I.D.** – Jesus identified Himself as “*the Holy One*”, “*the True One*”, “*He who as the key of David.*”

- A **“key”** in scripture represents authority. Jesus has authority over whoever enters His kingdom.
- **What we know** – knowledge-based assessment Revelation 3:8 “*You have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*”
  - As was the case in Smyrna, Christians at Philadelphia faced persecution from unbelieving Jews.
- **Encouragement** – Revelation 3:9b “*I will make them come and worship before your feet.*”
  - Bowing at someone’s feet was a sign of absolute defeat and submission.
- **Promise of reward** – Revelation 3:10-11 “*Behold I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown.*”
  - “Quickly” depicts the **immanency** of Christ’s coming.
  - Verse 10 “*I also will keep you from the **hour of testing**.*”
  - Many believe this is a reference to the fact that the church will be raptured before the tribulation.
- **Appeal for attention** – “*He who has an ear, let him hear.*”

## 7. **Greg – Laodicea**

## 8. **Ron - Conclusion**

The astounding vision John saw inspired in him a healthy tension between **fear** and **assurance**.

While love for the Lord will always be present in the life of true believers, Revelation chapters 2 and 3 is a warning that our love can grow cold and fluctuate in intensity.

The problems in five of the seven churches ranged in severity from **“waning love”** to **“total apostasy”**.

Any church in any age is susceptible to sin.