

Revelation Chapter 2– Verse by Verse

Revelation 2:1-7

- **Vs 1** - The first church to be given a message is the one in Ephesus
 - This is not to be confused with the believers in the dispensation of grace which Paul writes to in his letter with the same name
 - This is a future assembly of Jews in Ephesus during the time of Jacob's trouble (**Jer 30:7**)
 - Jesus Christ is the one giving the message as we read in **Rev 1:12-16, 20**
- **Vs 2** – Note that works are mentioned first. This corresponds with the way God dealt with Israel, in that they had to have faith plus keep the works of the Law to inherit salvation (**Ex 19:5-6**)
 - This church is trying the spirits as John instructed in **1 John 4:1-6**
 - Christ warned the apostles that many false prophets and false Christs would show up during this time in **Matt 24:23-28, Mark 13:4-13, Luke 21:8-19**
- **Vs 3** – They are enduring to the end to be saved, as in **Matt 24:13** and **Mark 13:13**
- **Vs 4** – The works are well done, but the faith is lacking.
 - Who is the first love? Is it not Christ?
 - They are acting as some of the religious leaders of Jesus' earthly ministry where they flatter with their mouths, but their heart is far from Him (**Matt 15:1-9, Mark 7:1-9**)
- **Vs 5** – The message therefore to this church is a heart/attitude change
 - *Remember* – They know of God, His word, and of His Christ in time past, but have taken things into their own hands now
 - *Repent* – turn from the current state of neglecting the heart/faith
 - Note how Jesus immediately follows this command with “do the first works”
 - Works of the Law not the problem here, it's a heart/faith issue
 - The consequence is the candlestick will be removed
 - This means the church will be removed, possibly even destroyed physically
- **Vs 6** – These Nicolaitanes are not mentioned elsewhere in scripture
 - Some false speculation is that this group was started by Nicolas the Gentile proselyte from **Acts 6:5**
 - Can't be true for several reasons
 - First, the Nicolas of Acts 6:5 was full of the Holy Ghost (**Acts 6:3**)
 - The apostles prayed for God's choice in the matter (**Acts 6:6**)
 - No scripture about Nicolas falling away from the faith and starting a cult
 - The Nicolaitanes are a group of pagans that will exist during the Tribulation period, committing abominations, perhaps described by **Rom 1:20-32**
- **Vs 7** – Jesus perhaps makes reference to **Isa 6:9** with the phrase “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear...”
 - Note the reward happens to “him that overcometh”, being consistent with the directive “he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved” (**Matt 24:13**)
 - The reward is to eat from the tree of life, *which is in the midst of the paradise of God*
 - Clearly a reference to the eternal life promised to the Jew
 - Note the salvation is yet future
 - Compare this to what the Body of Christ has, which is salvation and all spiritual blessings *now* (**Rom 8:38-39, Eph 1:3-14, 2:4-6, 1 Cor 15:1-4, Phil 3:20-21**)
 - What about this comment that the tree of life is in the midst of the paradise of God?
 - Tree of Life first mentioned in the Garden of Eden (**Gen 2:9**)

- After Adam sinned, cherubim guarded access to the Tree of Life along with a flaming sword ([Gen 3:22-24](#))
- After this, the place of the dead was made in the center of the earth as Sheol/Hades/Hell. In Sheol/Hades/Hell, there is the “good” place where believers go, the “bad” place where unbelievers go, and the great gulf/abyss in the middle for the spirit angels that sinned ([Gen 37:35](#), first mention of Sheol – note how it is always “go down” to Sheol, [Luke 16:23-25](#), [23:43](#), [Eph 4:8-10](#), [1 Pet 3:18-20](#), [2 Pet 2:4-5](#), [Jude 6-7](#))
 - All these await the final judgement to be placed in the final eternal state
 - Good place = New Heaven/Earth with God forever ([Eph 1:10](#), [1 Thess 4:13-18](#), [Rev 21:1-3](#))
 - Bad place and great gulf/abyss = Lake of fire ([Matt 25:41](#), [Rev 20:10-15](#))
- Paradise only mentioned 3 times in scripture: [Luke 23:43](#), [2 Cor 12:4](#), and [Rev 2:7](#)
 - Paradise was in Sheol/Hades/Hell, “the good place”
 - After Calvary, Christ removed it from the earth and placed it in the third Heaven where it is today ([2 Cor 12:1-4](#))
 - Eternal state paradise will be the New Heavens/Earth after the White Throne judgment ([Rev 20:10-Rev 21:5](#))
- Tree of life may be in the Millennial kingdom, but scripture doesn’t specifically say ([Rev 20:4-6](#))
 - It/they will be on the new Earth ([Rev 22:1-2](#))
 - Text in [Rev 22:1-2](#) seems to indicate 2 or 3 trees (in the midst of the street and on both sides of the river of life)
 - Either midst, left, and right sides are 3 trees, or there is a tree on the left and right sides of the river which is in the midst of the street and there are 2 trees

Revelation 2:8-17

- [Vs 8](#) – Should remind us of [Rev 1:18](#)
 - The name Smyrna comes from myrrh, which spice is associated with the dead
 - This seems to be a theme for this letter
- [Vs 9](#) – Works at the forefront, consistent with the gospel of the Circumcision ([Gal 2:7](#)), which is faith plus works (keeping the Law)
 - Note the contrast here. These are believing Jews, which have tribulation and poverty according to worldly standards, yet God describes them as rich
 - Recall in [Acts 4:32-37](#) how the Little Flock, those believing Jews that would inherit the kingdom, sold all things and had all things common
 - Jesus told the rich young ruler to do the same in [Matt 19:21-22](#), [Luke 18:22-23](#)
 - Jesus told them to leave everything behind at the midpoint of the Tribulation in [Matt 24:15-22](#), referencing [Dan 9:24-27](#), [11:22-39](#)
 - Should bring to light why Jesus taught the disciples to pray “give us this day our daily bread,” and “deliver us from the evil one” in what most call The Lord’s Prayer ([Matt 6:9-13](#), [Luke 11:2-4](#))
 - God would be supernaturally taking care of the believing remnant during the last half of the Tribulation
 - These believing Jews in Smyrna are rich by God’s standards because they would be inheriting the everlasting kingdom and receiving a hundredfold. Jesus makes the comparison right after the exchange with the rich young ruler ([Matt 19:23-30](#))

- Clearly there is division at this church in Smyrna. There are believing Jews and unbelieving Jews, and Jesus is calling them out
- **Vs 10** – We need not spiritualize this. This particular group of believing Jews will be going through some ordeal in prison that will last 10 days, ending in their deaths
 - This will be taking place during the Tribulation period for this particular group
 - Once more we see a variation of the phrase “he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved (**Matt 10:22, 24:13**)
 - Their prize (eternal life/crown of life) comes after they endure to the end
 - Contrast that to the eternal security and salvation we have in the Body of Christ *now*, in the moment of faith in God’s faithfulness of His work on the cross through Christ (**Rom 8:1-4, 38-39, Eph 1:13-14, Eph 2:8-9, Titus 3:4-8**)
- **Vs 11** – once more a plea to those in the Tribulation to have “ears to hear”. They need to listen to truth and accept God’s word as truth. Those that do are not hurt by the “second death.”
 - The “second death” is defined and contrasted to the first resurrection in **Rev 20:4-15**
 - This is the difference of the eternal state
 - 1st resurrection is for Jewish saints to enter the promised kingdom and live forever after with Jesus Christ on earth and in the New Jerusalem
 - 2nd death is the second time those souls will be separated from God (death is a separation).
 - The first separation occurred in the Garden of Eden when God had to evict mankind from His presence since Adam willfully sinned (**Rom 5:12**).
 - The second is when those disobedient souls will be cast into the lake of fire (**Rev 20:14-15**)
 - This is why it is imperative that we share the gospel of grace now, so that others will have a reasonable understanding of the eternal choice they have to make
 - Who are the overcomers? John defines it for us: they are those that are “born again”, which means they are those that believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and keep His commandments. **1 John 5:1-5**

Revelation 2:12-17

- **Vs 12** – Should remind us of **Rev 1:16**
 - We know this to be a reference to the word of God (**Matt 10:34, Heb 4:1-16**)
- **Vs 13** – Pergamos means “height” or “elevation”, which is fitting for what is written to this church
 - Satan’s seat is said to be here at this city. Satan wanted to “ascend into Heaven” and be “above the stars of God”, and “ascend above the heights of the clouds” to be “like the most High” (**Isa 14:12-14**)
 - Yet, Satan’s fate is the lake of fire in death (**Isa 14:15, Rev 20:10**)
 - There is confusion today where some think Satan is some little red demon with a pitchfork already residing the lake of fire
 - No one is there today, though, according to scripture. The first to go are the Beast and False Prophet (**Rev 19:19-20**). Satan doesn’t get cast to the lake of fire until after the Millennial kingdom of Christ on Earth (**Rev 20:7-10**)
 - Satan is currently roaming about as a lion, seeking whom he may devour (**1 Pet 5:8**). Satan is also referred to as the prince, the power of the air (**Eph 2:2**), the

god of this world (2 Cor 4:3-4), and is leading his angels, those spirit beings that rebelled against God, against us in spiritual battle (Eph 6:10-19).

- Satan confesses that he goes to and fro through all the earth (Job 1:6-7, 2:1-2)
 - Even though our physical eyes can't see it, that spiritual battle is very real every day
- The word "seat" here is "thronos" in the Greek (English throne), so we can understand that the power of darkness has a hold on this city
- Bear in mind that Satan currently has dominion on the earth, which is why he was able to offer it to Christ in temptation (Matt 4:8-9, Luke 4:6)
 - Some say that Satan is at work in brothels, casinos, taverns, and drug houses
 - He really just opened that door and let the lust of the flesh take over
 - Where Satan really is at work is in churches and pulpits, to twist the word of God, and destroy the plan and purpose of God, which is to have all mankind saved and know the truth (1 Tim 2:4)
 - To accomplish this, Satan uses ministers that transform themselves into ministers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:12-15)
 - Why we must "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15) and compare everything said from a pulpit or bible study with scripture to see if things are so (Acts 17:10-12)
- Despite this, there is a remnant of faithful Jews residing there, holding fast Jesus as the Christ. Again, these would be the "overcomers" as we read in 1 John 5:1-5
 - It's to this group that John is to write "I know thy works...thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith."
- Then a faithful martyr Antipas is named, but bear in mind *when* he is being named. This is the future Tribulation period, so one would search in vain to find the faithful martyr named Antipas in the city of Pergamos today. There is no reference other than here in the bible, because it will happen in the future.
 - Not the first time God names a prominent figure before he was born
 - Josiah, ~300 years before his birth (1 Kings 13:1-3, 2 Kings 22:1-2, 15-16)
 - Cyrus of Persia ~200 years before he came on the scene (Isa 44:24-45:6, 2 Chron 36:22-23)
- Vs 14 – Doctrine of Balaam can be traced back to the account of Balaam in Num 22:1-24:25 who met his demise in Num 31:8
 - God was wroth with Israel because they committed whoredom (spiritually) with the daughters of Moab through the counsel of Balaam (Num 31:16, 25:1-3)
 - Details of that event are given here, where Israel was worshipping God along with the false gods of Moab and their daughters, joining in the sacrifices
 - They were joined to the pagans which God told them to be separate from, therefore breaking the covenant (Ex 19:5-6, 20:3-6, 22:20, 23:20-25, etc)
 - Evidently, this church in Pergamos had some that would adhere to the covenant, but also allow for idol worship and sacrifice that Jesus is calling them out on here
- Vs 15 – Nicolaitanes are not mentioned anywhere else in our bible. What we can conclude is that this is a group in the future Tribulation period that go against God's Law
 - These also are present in Pergamos
 - This group is in no way started by Nicolas in Acts 6:5. Some say that this Nicolas fell away from the doctrine and started the Nicolaitanes based on the similar name, but there is no scriptural proof for that

- Counter to this notion is that scripture claims this Nicolas was full of the Holy Ghost ([Acts 6:3-6](#)). We can conclude safely that this is some heretical group in the Tribulation period and have a voice in Pergamos
 - We also know that this doctrine is different than Balaam by implication of it being called out separately
- **Vs 16** – This should trigger our memory of [Rev 1:16](#)
 - For those that hold to false doctrine, the Judge would come quickly with His word, which would mean their destruction ([Rev 19:17-21](#))
 - Those that hold to false doctrine would be unaware of Christ’s second coming, thus the thief in the night analogy ([Matt 24:42-51](#), [Luke 12:32-40](#), [2 Pet 3:7-10](#))
 - This church needed to change their attitude and get right with the doctrine of the circumcision (faith + works) or they would be in danger of hellfire
- **Vs 17** – Again, Jesus makes reference to [Isaiah 6:9-10](#) as he does to each of the 7 churches. No wonder, as He wishes none to perish but all to come to repentance ([2 Pet 3:9](#))
 - Note again as the reward is to “him that overcometh”. The Jew’s salvation is yet future into the promised kingdom after the Tribulation period is over.
 - Contrast to the Body of Christ which has salvation now ([Rom 3:23-24](#), [1 Cor 6:11](#), [Eph 1:3-14](#), [Col 2:8-15](#))
 - We simply are waiting for the redemption of our bodies ([Rom 8:18-25](#))

[Revelation 2:18-29](#)

- **Vs 18** – Recall the description in [Rev 1:14-15](#). This verse also alludes to the deity of Christ as we know the description in [Rev 1:12-17](#) shows He is the first and last, alive, but was dead, and is alive forevermore ([Rev 1:18](#)).
- **Vs 19** – The first thing noted is the works as with the other letters to the churches
 - See that works is noted twice in this verse, why? First look at each point
 - Works – doing good unto others/love your neighbor as yourself ([Lev 19:18](#))
 - Charity – selfless or sacrificial giving (defined in [Rom 12:9-13](#) and [1 Cor 13:1-7](#))
 - Service – Greek diaconia (English deacon). This is acts of service
 - Faith – whenever we see “faith” in the bible, ask, “faith in what?” For this Jewish church at Thyatira in the future Tribulation period ([Rev 1:10](#)), their faith is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ and the promised kingdom is coming to Israel in 7 more years, where Israel’s sins are blotted out and the times of refreshing and rest come ([Acts 3:19-26](#)). Jesus will be on the prophesied throne of David in Jerusalem ([2 Sam 7:4-17](#), [Psalm 110:1](#), [132:11-12](#), [Acts 2:29-36](#))
 - Patience – They will have to wait 7 years through the worst time on earth ([Matt 24:3-25](#))
 - Now works are noted again, but with the added description that the last are more than the first. This isn’t a separate commendation to works, but noting that this church is increasing in good works, charity, service, faith, and patience
 - Thyatira is being commended twice over for their works – clearly on covenant doctrine and not grace apart from works as in Paul’s doctrine to the church today
- **Vs 20** – The reason for the letter. This church is doing quite well, but they are allowing Jezebel, a false prophetess to teach false doctrine to the Jews, provoking spiritual fornication.
 - Remind us who Jezebel is, as this could be a new woman in the future church at Thyatira named Jezebel with idolatrous tendencies, or more likely a reference to Jezebel, Queen of Israel and wife of Ahab

- **1 Ki 16:30-33** – Jezebel is the daughter of a pagan king married to an Israelite, something God said was forbidden (**Deut 7:1-4**)
 - Note the consequence was that God would destroy them suddenly for this sin
- Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord (**1 Ki 18:1-4, 13**)
- Jezebel promoted the worship of Baal, which Elijah challenged those prophets to prove their worship was vanity (**1 Ki 18:19-40**).
 - Note in this passage that these prophets “ate at Jezebel’s table”, meaning they were held in high esteem to worship idols
- Jezebel was not happy her special prophets were killed, clearly unrepentant (**1 Ki 19:1-2**)
- Jezebel stole the inheritance of an Israelite for her greedy husband (**1 Ki 21:1-24**). The Law spoke against this **Deut 19:14**
 - That passage shows that all her evil intents had dire consequences. That prophecy was fulfilled in **2 Ki 9:1-37**
- Jezebel was an evil woman of Israel’s history, and her evil was worshiping idols and provoking others to do the same, breaking God’s covenant with the people of Israel
- Whether this is a woman named Jezebel or another woman described with the reference to Queen Jezebel of time past, the evil in the church at Thyatira is that false doctrine and idolatrous practices are being taught and followed
 - Some Jews are falling away from true salvation in God through Christ and the promises to the fathers by sacrificing to idols
- **Vs 21** – This verse is the reason I would say **vs 20** is a reference to Queen Jezebel of time past, and there is a false prophet in the church of Thyatira acting in the same way. We should not get caught up on the “Jezebel” part of these verses, though, and note that the problem is idolatry and wayward Jews
 - Jezebel in Israel’s history was given plenty of opportunity to change her ways, but as we have seen she did not repent and met her gruesome end
- **Vs 22** – Jesus is pronouncing His judgment for those that follow after Jezebel in this verse. They will all be in the same spot and will endure great tribulation EXCEPT they repent
 - Note how it is possible to be saved during the Tribulation period. The conditions of salvation are to have faith in Jesus as the Christ and that the promises made for Israel are about to come to be, and then keep the works of the Law (**Rom 11:25-32**). Gentiles would have to have the same faith and bless Israel, becoming proselytes to be saved from the lake of fire.
 - Once more, it is a matter of the heart and choice of each individual whether to choose salvation or to choose to be ignorant (**2 Pet 3:1-7**)
- **Vs 23** – The final consequence of idolatry is death. This verse is telling of the consequence of Jezebel and those that follow her in **vs 22**, but sin leads to death regardless of what form, and the death referred to is ultimately the separation from God for eternity in the Lake of Fire (**Rev 20:11-15**).
 - Please use this as motivation to share the message of reconciliation while God is offering grace and peace to all who will believe that Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection is sufficient to pay for their sins (**1 Cor 15:1-4, 2 Cor 5:17-6:2, Eph 2:8-9**, etc).
 - It should also motivate us to look at our day-to-day and examine if what we’re doing honors God or not. What is holding us back from sharing biblical truth?
 - This action will once for all prove Jesus is God, who alone knows the hearts of mankind (**1 Chron 28:9, Jer 17:10, Zeph 1:12**)
 - Reward is based on works. We can take away 2 points with this

- There are different degrees of good to be rewarded to the faithful
 - There are different degrees of evil to be rewarded to the unbelievers
- **Vs 24** – The “angel” or messenger to the church at Thyatira is singled out here (note “you” and not “ye”), and then “the rest at Thyatira”
 - This is the main message to this church: Stay away from idolatrous doctrine
 - The promise is they will have “no other burden” because they have been increasing in faith and good works as noted in **vs 19**
- **Vs 25** – To emphasize the point they will have “no other burden” as long as the idolatry is dealt with, Jesus reminds them to “hold fast” that which they already have
 - What did they have? Refer to **vs 19** – faith in God’s word and doctrine and keeping the good works of the Law
 - Note they are to do this until Jesus comes
 - When is that? After the 7-year Tribulation period, hence the constant phraseology of “he who endures to the end”, like “he that overcometh” as in the next verse
- **Vs 26** – Those that have faith and keep “my works unto the end” will get “power” over the nations
 - What are “my works”? Just what Jesus commanded while He was on earth confirming the promises to the fathers, which would be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (**Matt 15:24, Rom 15:8**)
 - **Matt 28:19-20** – Jesus commanded them to keep the commandments of the Law (**Matt 19:16-21, John 14:15, 15:10-14, Matt 22:35-40**)
 - End of what? End of the Tribulation period
 - What power? Even without looking at the Greek, we should expect this not to be some superhuman ability, but rather authority. It is exousian in the Greek, which is authority
 - Remember the promise to Israel is that they should be a “peculiar treasure unto [God] above all people” and a “holy nation” (**Ex 19:5-6**) IF they keep the covenant.
 - Here in this verse, we have the same view stated the other way with the same result. IF they keep the covenant (my works), they will have authority over the nations.
- **Vs 27** – the colon in the KJV indicates this verse is an additional thought related to vs 26. Believing Israel will have authority over the nations, and Jesus tells them they shall rule with a rod of iron and indicates a strong rule with the imagery of the pottery being broken, equating their authority with His own
 - How is that possible? Because if they abide in Jesus’ commandments, they are abiding in the vine. They are one with the Father as Jesus was (**John 15, 17:11, 21-26**)
 - Recall that the promise of the New Covenant with Israel was that the Law would be in their hearts and they would walk in all the ways of God (**Jer 31:31-34, Eze 36:21-31**)
 - Israel was to reign as God’s chosen nation, where all were welcome if they believed and obeyed God’s commandments. To all who “overcometh” will this reward be granted
- **Vs 28** – Many commentators differ on the meaning of this verse. Jesus says that He will give the morning star to “he that overcometh”.
 - Jesus just got done explaining the authority they would have over the nations if they endured to the end of the Tribulation as their reward. We can expect this morning star to also be a reward
 - **Dan 12:1-3** speaks something of this time as well

- Note that those that awake to everlasting life, i.e. believing Israel, will shine as the brightness of the firmament and those that turn many to righteousness will shine as the stars for ever
- Those that overcome will enjoy their new bodies fit for eternal life, and they will shine
 - Similar to what believers in the Body of Christ will have in heavenly places ([1 Cor 15:35-58](#), [Phil 3:20-21](#))
- **Vs 28** – The familiar conclusion to each of the 7 letters. Jesus is exhorting all to heed His call as this is the time of Jacob’s trouble ([Jer 30:7](#)) and a time of judgment on the children of disobedience