

Revelation Chapter 2

1) Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia

- a) Seven elements found in most of the letters
 - i) A salutation or greeting
 - (1) To the angel of the church in ... write
 - ii) A description of Jesus
 - (1) Corresponds to descriptions given in Chapter 1
 - iii) A commendation of the congregation as a whole
 - (1) Two of the churches have no commendation
 - (2) Notice that where there is a commendation, it is given first.
 - iv) A condemnation of the congregation as a whole
 - (1) Two of the churches have no condemnation
 - v) A warning
 - (1) The two churches with no condemnation have no warning
 - vi) An exhortation
 - (1) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches
 - vii) A promise
- b) Key words in each of the seven letters
 - i) Love – Ephesus
 - ii) Suffering – Smyrna
 - iii) Truth – Pergamum
 - iv) Holiness – Thyatira
 - v) Genuineness – Sardis
 - vi) Evangelism – Philadelphia
 - vii) Dedication – Laodicea
 - viii) *If the positive aspects of all these key words were found in one church, we would have an ideal community of God's people.*
- c) Jesus was intimately acquainted with all that the churches did, whether good or bad.
 - i) He also knew their hearts, mind, and feelings.
 - ii) No one could be better qualified to commend, condemn, warn, and exhort.
 - iii) No one could be better qualified to dispense reward or punishment.

- d) The futurist/premillennialist interpretation is that the seven churches represent seven periods of the church from its beginning to some point in the future.
- i) I see letters as being to real churches in real cities that were to endure real tribulation in the last 20 years of the first century, and to people who needed real encouragement to stand fast, persevere, overcome, and be victorious.
- e) **Ephesus (2:1-7)**
- i) Some background
- (1) Paul has spent three years there (Acts 20:31)
 - (2) Paul wrote to the Ephesians while imprisoned at Rome
 - (3) Paul left Timothy there to guard against false teaching (1 Tim. 1:3-4)
 - (4) John moved to Ephesus around 70 AD and stayed there until exiled to Patmos.
- ii) Salutation (2:1)
- iii) Description of Jesus (2:1)
- (1) him who holds the seven stars in his right hand (1:16)
 - (2) who walks among the seven golden lampstands (1:12-13)
- iv) Commendation (2:2-3)
- (1) I know your works
 - (a) The knowing one, with eyes like a flame of fire (1:14)
 - (b) Their works were good.
 - (2) your toil and your patient endurance (*loyalty in practice*)
 - (a) κόπον (kopon) – trouble, toil leading to extreme fatigue, even leading to pain
 - (b) ὑπομονήν (hypomonēn) – endurance, steadfastness, patience in waiting, staying power when the burden is heavy
 - (3) how you cannot bear with those who are evil (*loyalty in doctrine*)
 - (a) They could bear with fatiguing toil, but they could not tolerate evil, especially of false teaching which comes from those who are evil.
 - (b) Cannot bear with, tolerate – they would not allow them to remain among them.
 - (4) have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false
 - (a) Acts 1:21-22 – accompanied the twelve all the time Jesus was with them, a witness to Jesus' resurrection

- (b) 2 Cor. 12:12 - The signs of a true apostle were performed among you ... signs and wonders and mighty works.
 - (c) Anyone today who claims to be an apostle or a successor to the apostles ought to be so tested.
- (5) enduring patiently
- (a) ὑπομονήν (hypomonēn) - endurance, steadfastness, patient waiting for
- (6) bearing up for my name's sake
- (a) ἐβάστασας (ebastasas) - to take up in order to carry or bear; to put upon oneself (something) to be carried; to bear what is burdensome, endure
 - (b) διὰ (dia) - properly, across (to the other side), back-and-forth to go all the way through, "successfully across" ("thoroughly"), for the sake of (same root from which we get diameter – distance across a circle).
 - (c) ὄνομα (onoma) - name, character, reputation
- (7) you have not grown weary
- (a) οὐ (ou) – no, not
 - (b) κέκοπιάκες (kekopiakes) - grow weary, toil, work with effort (of bodily and mental labor alike)
- v) Condemnation (2:4)
- (1) you have abandoned (completely abandoned) the love you had at first
 - (a) A student once turned in a paper on this scripture, with the title “The Honeymoon is Over”.
 - (2) ” So love me like you used to When our love was brand new” ... “And hold me like you want to ... Instead of like you have to”
 - (a) Tanya Tucker sang about love gone wrong – a recurring theme of Nashville music.
 - (3) Jesus knew their works, and he knew their hearts.
 - (4) It seems a little odd that they were commended well for their works, but their love had faded.
 - (a) Do we sometimes get stuck in a mode of doing things because we have to instead of want to?
 - (5) No need to ask “Love for God or Love for a neighbor”?
 - (a) Matt. 22:34-40

- (b) 1 John 3:16-18
- (c) 1 John 4:7-12, 19-21
- (6) Have you ever heard it said: “Their heart is not in it?”
 - (a) Someone may be going through the motions, even working very hard, but they would rather be somewhere else or doing something else.
- (7) Note that John wrote of love more than any other apostle.
 - (a) John moved to Ephesus prior to 70 AD.
 - (b) Some have thought that John returned to Ephesus after being released from Patmos about 98-99AD.
 - (i) There is a story which says, that John had to be carried in near the end of his life, and his short message was always the same: “Little children, love on another.” Some complained and asked why he never said something different. John replied, “It is the Lord’s command.”
 - (c) How strange is it, that the church which heard John’s message of love so much need to be reprimanded for not having the love they had at first.
- vi) Warning (2:5)
 - (1) Remember therefore from where you have fallen (2:5)
 - (a) Luke 15:17 – the prodigal son came to his senses – remembered.
 - (2) Repent (2:5)
 - (a) No one can repent for another – the individual will must decide to change, and then act.
 - (3) do the works you did at first (2:5)
 - (a) They were commended for their unceasing toil in verses 2-3.
 - (i) What needed to change? The heart!
 - (4) If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. (2:5)
 - (a) The consequences – remove your lampstand from its place!
 - (b) They had given light in Ephesus – removal of that light would leave the city in darkness.
 - (c) Apparently, they did not heed the warning.

- (d) Acts 18:26 - He (Apolos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.
- (e) Acts 20:28-31 - fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock
- (f) 1 Timothy 1:3-7 - charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine
- (g) Ephesus lies in ruins today.
 - (i) This was thought to be the site of a church edifice at some point.



- (ii) The church is not a building – it is a body of Christ.
 - (iii) Some semblance continued for several centuries. At some point, they ceased to be recognized by God as a body of His people.
- vii) Another commendation (2:6)
 - (1) Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. (*hate the works!*)
 - (a) The Nicolaitans were known for false teaching, ungodly lives, and for urging others to do the same.
 - (b) Also named in Revelation 2:15 in the church at Pergamus.
 - (c) Acts 6:5 - and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.
 - (i) Hippolytus (170-236 AD), reportedly an elder of the church at Rome, identified the Nicolaitans as an early Gnostic group that practiced immorality.
 - (ii) Their claim was to have been taught by Nicolaus.

1. Some early writers have written that Nicolaus fell away from the truth.
 2. The name has been linked to Nicolaus. Whether this doctrine originated with him or his name was adopted, I have not been able to determine.
- (2) They did not waver in doctrine – the teaching of Paul, Apolos, Priscilla and Aquila, Timothy, and John was remembered, but somehow they were lacking the love they had at first.
- viii) Exhortation and Promise (2:7)
- (1) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches
 - (a) The letter was addressed to the congregation, but each individual must understand and respond.
 - (b) 1 Cor. 2:14-16 - The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ...
 - (2) To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.
 - (a) Conquers (νικῶντι, nikōnti) - conquer, am victorious, overcome, prevail, subdue
 - (i) To be victorious over the circumstances in which one finds himself.
 1. Temptation, persecution, hardship
 - (b) Eat of the tree of life
 - (i) Genesis 3:22-24 - lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever
 - (ii) Revelation 22:1-2 - the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.

f) **Smyrna** (2:8-11)

i) **Background**

(1) 40 miles north of Ephesus

(2) A seaport that competed with Ephesus for trade



(3) The Turkish city of Izmir is built over the ruins of much of Smyrna, so excavation has been limited.

(4) There was a substantial population of Jews at Smyrna in the first century, and they were extremely anti-Christian.

ii) **Salutation** (2:8)

(1) The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.

(2) Recall Revelation 1:17-18

iii) **Commendation**

(1) I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) (2:9)

(a) The knowing one, with eyes like a flame of fire (1:14)

(b) Tribulation (θλίψιν, thlipsin) - persecution, affliction, distress, tribulation – pressure, as in being caught beneath a millstone.

(c) Poverty (πτωχείαν, ptōcheian) - beggary, poverty, destitution

(i) Not just being poor, but being destitute of necessities

(d) Rich (πλούσιος, plousios) - rich, abounding in, wealthy;

(i) Despite their physical destitution, they were spiritually rich.

(ii) Matthew 6:19-21 – treasure in heaven

(2) (I know) the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

(a) Slander (βλασφημίαν, blasphemian) - abusive or scurrilous language, blasphemy

- (i) Isaiah 5:20 - Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,
 - (b) Romans 2:28-29 - a Jew is one inwardly
 - (c) Romans 10:1-4 - they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge
 - (d) Synagogue (συναγωγή, synagōgē) - an assembly, congregation, synagogue, either the place or the people gathered together in the place
 - (e) John 8:39-47 - You are of your father the devil ...
 - (f) Revelation 3:9-10 – Philadelphia had this in common with Smyrna.
- (3) Do not fear what you are about to suffer (2:10)
- (a) 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 - this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison
 - (b) “about to suffer” may also be indicative of an earlier date for Revelation.
 - (c) Revelation 2:10 - Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- (4) the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested (2:10)
- (a) Jesus has already named the Jews as an “assembly of Satan”.
 - (b) Jews who rejected Christ were persecuting Christians from the very early days of the church, and that persecution is continuing 40+ years later in Smyrna.
 - (c) Since the Jews could not prosecute on their own, they turned them over to the Romans, and thereby were doing the work of their father, the devil.
 - (d) James 1:2-4 - the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.
 - (e) 1 Peter 1:6-9 - the tested genuineness of your faith ...
- (5) for ten days you will have tribulation. (2:10)
- (a) Ten and multiples of ten (100; 1,000; 10,000) signified completeness in Revelation. The higher the multiple, the greater the completeness.
 - (b) Ten by itself signifies a comprehensive tribulation, but not without limits.
 - (c) In Revelation, numbers should be interpreted as symbolic unless we are given specific reason to interpret them literally.

(i) 10 days of tribulation would be bearable because of hope that it will end soon.

(ii) A greater promise is given to those who remain faithful (below)

(6) Notice that there is no promise to take away their difficulty. There is a warning that they will be pressured, but ***do not fear***. The promise of the crown is for those who are faithful unto death.

iv) Condemnation

(1) Neither Smyrna nor Philadelphia are given a condemnation

v) Warning

(1) Since Smyrna received no condemnation, there is no warning.

vi) A Promise

(1) Be faithful unto death, (2:10)

(a) Unto (ἄχρι, achri) - as far as, up to, until, during

(i) It may mean "until the time you die".

(ii) It may mean "even if it means your death".

(iii) Luke 4:13 - until an opportune time

(iv) Acts 22:4 - I persecuted this Way to the death

(2) and I will give you the crown of life. (2:10)

(a) 2 Timothy 4:8 - there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness

(b) James 1:12 - he will receive the crown of life

(c) 1 Peter 5:4 - you will receive the unfading crown of glory

(d) Two words for crown

(i) Crown (στέφανον, stephanon) - a crown, garland, honor, glory

1. properly, a wreath (garland), awarded to a victor in the ancient athletic games (like the Greek Olympics); the crown of *victory*

2. This is the word used in Rev. 2:10, 2 Tim. 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4.

(ii) Crown (διαδήματα, diadēmata) - a head-wreath, crown, diadem

1. properly, a *royal* crown: "a narrow filet encircling the brow," a "kingly ornament for the head"

2. This word is used in Rev. 12:3, 13:1, and 19:12

a. Revelation 12:3, 13:1 – pagan rulers

b. Revelation 19:12 - the infinite majesty (kingship) of Christ

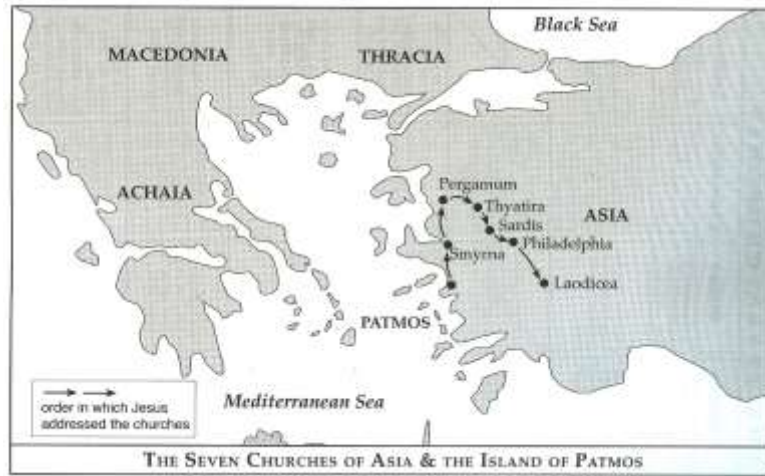
- vii) An exhortation (2:11)
 - (1) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches
 - (2) Each individual in the body ...
- viii) Another promise (2:11)
 - (1) The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death
 - (a) Revelation 20:14-15 - the lake of fire
 - (b) Revelation 21:8 - the lake that burns with fire and sulfur,
 - (c) Conquers (νικῶντι, nikōnti) - conquer, am victorious, overcome, prevail, subdue
 - (i) To be victorious over the circumstances in which one finds himself.
 - 1. Temptation, persecution, hardship
 - (d) *thánatos* – physical or spiritual *death*; (figuratively) separation from the life (salvation) of God forever by dying without first experiencing *death to self* to receive His gift of salvation.
 - (i) 1st Death - Physical – separation from life
 - (ii) 2nd Death - Spiritual – separation from God
- ix) Written by Eusebius describing how Christians in Smyrna were treated
 - (1) ... those standing around were struck with amazement, at seeing them lacerated with scourges, to their very blood and arteries, so that now the flesh concealed in the very inmost parts of the body were exposed to view. Then they were laid upon conch shells from the sea, and on sharp heads and points of spears on the ground, and after passing through every kind of punishment and torment, were at last thrown as food to the wild beasts. (Ecclesiastical History 4.15)

g) **Pergamum** (2:12-17)

i) Background

(1) North of Smyrna, and 15 miles inland from the sea.

(2) Sometimes served as the capital of the Roman province of Asia



(3) Remains of temple of Trajan..



ii) Salutation

(1) The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. (2:12)

(a) Revelation 1:16 - from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword

(i) Heb. 4:12 - ... discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

(b) The swords of Rome should not intimidate you – the sword of Jesus (the word of God) is more powerful.

(c) The sword can also be used in judgment, especially since they were harboring false teachers. (See 2:16)

(2) I know where you dwell (2:13)

(a) The knowing One knows their trials

(3) Where Satan's throne is (2:13)

(a) The influence of Satan was strong in Pergamum

(i) In Smyrna, persecution was initiated by the Jews.

(ii) In Pergamum, persecution was initiated by the Romans.

(b) Capital city of the Roman province of Asia

(c) Center of enforcement of emperor worship (Concilia)

(d) Commissioned to build a temple for the emperor Trajan

(i) Trajan was emperor of Rome 98-117 AD.

(e) Built temples to Athena and Dionysius

(f) Alter to Zeus (believed by Greeks and Romans to be the chief of the gods)

iii) Commendation

(1) You hold fast my name (2:13)

(2) you did not deny my faith (2:13)

(a) even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells

(b) Herod Antipas is mentioned 9 times in scripture

(c) But, Herod Antipas was not the faithful witness mentioned here

(d) Jesus knows Antipas; we do not.

(e) Antipas was a martyr (2:13)

(f) Where Satan dwells (2:13) – where Satan's throne is

iv) Condemnation

(1) But I have a few things against you: (2:14)

(a) you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam (2:14)

- (i) who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel (2:24)
 - 1. Numbers 22-25 gives the account of Balaam and Balak
 - a. Numbers 22:1 --- Then the people of Israel set out and camped in the plains of Moab
 - b. 2 Peter 2:15 --- Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam ...
 - i. Numbers 31:16 --- Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the Lord.
 - ii. Micah 6:5 --- remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him
 - c. Number 25:1-9
 - i. the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab
 - ii. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods
 - iii. the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel
 - iv. those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.
 - d. so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. (Rev. 2:14)
- (ii) Who were the ones holding to the teaching of Balaam?
 - 1. Compromisers, tolerant of false teaching.
 - 2. Ephesus did not tolerate evil; Pergamum allowed false teachers to come in and stay.
- (iii) What was the false teaching?
 - 1. Idol worship
 - a. 1 Cor. 6:16 - What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God;
 - b. Gal. 5:19-21 – Now the works of the flesh are ... ,idolatry,
 - c. 1 John 5:21 - Little children, keep yourselves from idols.
 - 2. Eat things sacrificed to idols
 - a. 1 Cor. 8 - ... Not all possess this knowledge ...

- b. Rom. 14 - Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God
 - 3. Commit acts of immorality
 - a. Pagan worship was abundant in Pergamum
 - b. Pagan worship usually involved sexual immorality
 - (b) So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. (2:15)
 - (i) Recall that the church at Ephesus was commended for hating the works of the Nicolaitans.
 - (ii) One of the “popular” Gnostic teachings was, that the child of God could sin all he wanted and the grace of God would still cover his sin, whether he repented or not.
 - 1. Jude 4 - For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who **pervert the grace of our God into sensuality** and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Romans 6:1-2 - 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
 - (iii) Sexual immorality was not only practiced by Nicolaitan false teachers, it was also encouraged by them
 - (iv) Romans 16:17-18 - I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; ...
 - v) A warning
 - (1) Therefore repent. If not, I will come to **you** soon and war against **them** with the sword of my mouth. (2:16)
 - (a) Confront the false teachers
 - (b) If they refused to repent, put them away from your midst.
 - (i) 1 Cor. 5:1-13 - Purge the evil person from among you.
 - (c) In this context (war against them), “sword of my mouth” should be understood as a sword of judgement.
 - (i) Jesus did not say how he was going to do this.
 - (ii) The implication is – you will not be happy when I do.

- (d) Preventive discipline involves teaching and training, and may *prevent* the need for corrective discipline.
- (e) Corrective discipline is for the purpose of keeping the church pure, of good reputation, and saved.
 - (i) 1 Cor. 5:1-13 - Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
 - (ii) Galatians 6:1 - if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.
- (f) Note Jesus said “I will come to you” and “war against them”.
 - (i) If you fail to distance yourself from the false teachers, you will not go unscathed.

vi) Exhortation and Promise

- (1) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (2:17)
 - (a) Hear and obey!
- (2) To him who overcomes ... (2:17)
 - (a) Hidden manna (2:17)
 - (i) Manna was physical food that sustained the Israelites in the desert.
 - (ii) Hidden manna may refer to spiritual sustenance for the soul, or it may refer to blessings the Christian receives that the world does not recognize.
 - (iii) John 6:31-35 - Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness ... the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world ... I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.
 - (b) A white stone (2:17)
 - (i) ψῆφον (psephon) - (a) a pebble, small stone, (b) hence, from their use in voting: a vote.
 - (ii) Acts 26:10 - when they were put to death I cast my vote against them
 - (iii) In voting, a white stone meant “approval” (or yes) and a black stone meant “disapproval” (or no).

- (iv) Another meaning of the white stone may have to do with the ancient Roman custom of awarding white stones to the victors of athletic games. The winner of a contest was awarded a white stone with his name inscribed on it. This served as his “ticket” to a special awards banquet. According to this view, Jesus promises the overcomers **entrance to the eternal victory celebration in heaven.**
- (v) Other possible meanings of the “white stone”
 1. Given to one who had been tried and justly acquitted. He was free of the charge of crime that had been made against him.
 2. Given to one who had been freed from slavery and made a citizen.
 3. Given to a warrior who had returned from battle and had been victorious over the enemy.
- (vi) Exodus 28:15-30 - There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel.
- (c) with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it. (2:17)
 - (i) Rev. 3:12 - The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (to church at Philadelphia)
 - (ii) Jesus – Joshua – Yeshua (Ἰησοῦς, Iēsou) - *Jesus*, the transliteration of the Hebrew term, ("Yehoshua"/*Jehoshua*, contracted to "Joshua") which means "*Yahweh* saves" (or "*Yahweh* is salvation").
 - (iii) Phil. 2:9-11 - the name that is above every name
 - (iv) Rev. 19:12 - His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.
 - (v) We will probably have to wait until we receive it in order to know it.

h) **Thyatira** (2:18-29)

i) Background

(1) East of Pergamum

(2) Not a large city; no other letters were written to Thyatira. However, Jesus knew them, and the letter to Thyatira is longer than any of the other six.

(3) It was known for wool and purple dye (extracted drop by drop from an obscure variety of shellfish)

(4) It was known for guilds. No one could work without being a member of a guild. A problem to Christians is that each guild had its own patron deity, feasts, and seasonal festivities that included sexual revelries.



(5) Acts 16:14 - One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God.

(a) Note that Paul was in Phillippi in Macedonia.

ii) Salutation (2:18)

(1) The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

- (a) This is the only time “Son of God” appears verbatim in Revelation.
- (b) If there was any doubt about the identity of the “one like a son of man” whom John saw in Revelation 1:13, it should be removed.
- (c) Recall Revelation 1:14-15
- (d) I know ... (2:19)
- (e) I am he who searches mind and heart (2:23)

iii) Commendation

- (1) I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. (2:19)
 - (a) The knowing one, with eyes like a flame of fire (1:14)
 - (b) Thyatira was an active, working church
 - (c) Thyatira was a loving, charitable church
 - (i) The only one of the seven commended for love
 - (d) Thyatira was a believing church, depending on the Lord rather than on their own strength.
 - (e) Thyatira was a steadfast church – patient endurance.
 - (f) Thyatira was an improving church – latter works exceed the first.
 - (g) If the letter closed here, Thyatira would be considered a perfect church.

iv) Condemnation

- (1) you tolerate that woman Jezebel
 - (a) 1 Kings 21:25 - There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited.
 - (i) 1 Kings 16:29-21:24; 2 Kings 9
 - (b) Jezebel was a pagan who married Ahab, king of Israel, and led him into idolatry.
 - (c) People don't name their daughters Jezebel because of all the name connotes.
- (2) who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.
 - (a) Some think the name is symbolic of a segment of false teachers in the congregation.

- (b) To Pergamum, Jesus said “you have *some* there who hold the teaching of Balaam” (2:14). To Thyatira, Jesus seems to be addressing an individual, whether that was her actual name or not.
- (c) Calls herself a prophetess
 - (i) Women did receive a gift of prophecy in the early history of the church
 - 1. Acts 2:17 - your sons and your daughters shall prophesy
 - 2. 1 Cor. 11:5 - every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head
 - a. 1 Cor. 14:33-34 - As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in the churches.
 - i. Those who had received such a gift were not to use it in the assembly.
 - (ii) What she was teaching was not from God. She “called herself” a prophetess.
- (d) and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.
 - (i) The teaching of the Balaamites (Pergamum) and the Nicolaitans (Pergamum, works hated in Ephesus) produced the same result although it is not called by the same name in Thyatira.
 - (ii) These things were called the “deep things of Satan” in 2:24.
 - 1. The attraction may have been that she claimed mystical, profound insight was only available through her.
 - a. As though no one else could help them know Satan.
 - 2. Satan is again identified as being behind the evil.
 - a. Smyrna – synagogue of Satan
 - b. Pergamum – where Satan’s throne is
 - c. Thyatira – deep things of Satan
 - 3. Jezebel may have worked through guilds, which had their patron deity, feasts, and seasonal festivities that included sexual revelries.
 - (iii) Why had the church in Thyatira tolerated these teachings?
 - 1. Some have suggested that she may have been the wife of one of the leaders of the church.

- a. This is based upon a few manuscripts that have “your woman” or “your wife” instead of “that woman” in 2:20.
 - b. Manuscripts which have been examined and found to be reliable do not have such a reading.
 - 2. It can be said for certain that Jezebel was an influential woman who caused trouble within the congregation.
 - 3. Some may have taken pride in themselves as having a non-judgmental spirit, as some in Corinth had done.
 - a. 1 Cor. 5:1-2 - [1](#) It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father’s wife. [2](#) And you are arrogant!
 - 4. It is also certain that dealing with Jezebel was a high priority for the church.
- v) Warning about Jezebel
 - (1) I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. (2:21)
 - (a) It is implied that she had opportunity to repent
 - (b) She may have been confronted and asked to repent.
 - (c) She refused!
 - (2) I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation (2:22)
 - (a) κλίνην, klinēn –
 - (i) Luke 5:17-26 – he said to the man who was paralyzed—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.”
 - 1. Here, a bed where the sick (paralyzed) man lay.
 - (ii) Luke 8:16 - No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed
 - 1. Here, an ordinary bed, not associated with sickness
 - (iii) Adultery is commonly committed on a bed.
 - (iv) She may have been afflicted with a physical disease; she certainly had a spiritual disease.
 - (b) Physical adultery may be implied; spiritual adultery is certain.
 - (c) Whether physical or spiritual adultery, or both, those who joined her would be cast on a bed of great tribulation.

- (i) Throw her onto a sickbed – thrown into great tribulation.
- (ii) Specifics of the tribulation are not given unless it is, according to 2:23 that “I will strike her children dead”.
- (d) Unless **they** repent of **her** works
 - (i) **They** were following her – Jesus was making **them** responsible for **her** deeds.
 - (ii) Gen. 3:12-19
 1. The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate. (3:12)
 2. And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife ... (3:17)
- (3) and I will strike her children dead. (2:23)
 - (a) a few translations add “with pestilence”.
 - (b) Children are those who followed her teachings.
- (4) And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. (2:23)
 - (a) A purpose – that all the churches will know
 - (i) Strongly implies that the pestilence and death were physical and observable rather than symbolic.
 - (b) They will know that I am he who searches mind and heart
 - (i) Five times in Revelation 2, Jesus says “I know”.
 - (ii) He will use “I know” four more times in Revelation 3.
 - (iii) Psalm 44:20-21 - [20](#) If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, [21](#) would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart.
 - (c) and I will give to each of you according to your works
 - (i) All the churches will know ... and they will know that they will not escape punishment if their works are evil.
- vi) Exhortation
 - (1) But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. [25](#) Only hold fast what you have until I come. (2:24-25)
 - (a) How widespread were the false teachings of Jezebel?

- (i) “the rest of you” were not held responsible.
 - 1. “the rest of you” did not learn or observe the false teaching of Jezebel.
 - 2. Someone must have known who was not counted among “the rest of you”.
 - a. Some were tolerating that woman and her teaching of evil.
 - b. The “rest of you” apparently did not have authority to do anything about the false teaching.
 - c. Jesus warned that he was coming to punishment Jezebel and her followers.
 - d. Since Jezebel was given opportunity to repent, she must have been carrying on for more than a brief time.
- (2) Who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan
 - (a) “Deep things” may indicate hidden from view.
 - (b) More likely, “deep things” indicates a profound, artful way of teaching error and leading people astray.
 - (c) Romans 16:18 - For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.
- (3) Do not lay on you any other burden
 - (a) The rest were not given the responsibility to resolve this problem.
 - (b) Only hold fast what you have until I come.
 - (i) Jesus was going to be the one to throw her onto the sickbed, to bring pestilence, to strike her children dead.
 - (ii) Whether “until I come” refers to Jesus’ second coming or the judgment upon Jezebel and her children, their responsibility is the same: to hold fast to true teachings and shun false teachings.
- vii) A Promise
 - (1) [26](#) The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, [27](#) and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. [28](#) And I will give him the morning star.
 - (a) The one who conquers - victorious over the circumstances in which one finds himself

- (b) Authority over the nations
- (i) In the sense that they will be completely vindicated before men (nations) who are now persecuting them.
 - (ii) Romans 8:16-18 - provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him
 - (iii) Luke 22:24-30 - let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.
 - (iv) ἐξουσίαν (exousian) - refers to the *authority* God gives to His saints – *authorizing them to act to the extent they are guided by faith* (His revealed word) --- power, authority, weight, especially: moral authority, influence,
- (c) and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces,
- (i) Psalm 2:7-9 - You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.
 - (ii) Rev. 5:9-10 - **9** And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, **10** and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”
- (d) even as I myself have received authority from my Father.
- (i) Matt. 28:18 - “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
- (e) I will give him the morning star.
- (i) 2 Peter 1:19 - And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,
 1. As when the darkness is fading, and the light of day is coming.
 - (ii) Rev. 22:16 – “I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”
 - (iii) Matt. 13:43 - Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

- (iv) Psalm 37:5-6 - **5**Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. **6** He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.
- (v) Psalm 112:4 - Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.
- (f) Gifts to other churches
 - (i) Rev. 2:7 - I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (Ephesus)
 - (ii) Rev. 2:11 - The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death. (Smyrna)
 - (iii) Rev. 2:17 - To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone (Pergamum)
 - (iv) Rev. 2:26, 28 – authority over the nations; the morning star.
- viii) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’
 - (1) Pay attention!