

DANIEL 2 AND 7
PART 1
“The Prophetic Key to Revelation”
Chapter 2

1. The situation:

2:1-26

- a. Daniel and his friends are among Judean captives taken to Babylon in the service of the empire. (See chapter 1 for the backstory). (Also 2 King 24:8-17)
- b. They are surrounded by a pagan culture that viewed itself as superior to those it conquered.
- c. The king (Nebuchadnezzar) had a dream that troubled him and robbed him of sleep.
 - He also had to deal with a priestly class, advisors, occult practitioners etc. of whom he seemed to be suspicious.
 - SO - he summoned them to do something:
 - * Tell him his dream (After all, they claimed to be in touch with the gods so that should not be a problem. Right? Ever wonder why spirit mediums don't win the lottery? Just saying.
 - * Interpret the dream. If they could reveal to him their knowledge of his dream then he could trust their interpretation.
 - * For the king it was a “win, win.” If they could reveal the dream and tell him its meaning then he'd know the answer to what had been troubling him.
 - * If they could or would not, then he'd just eliminate untrustworthy people.
- d. The advisors ET AL, tried to rebuke the king and ended up admitting that they were *not* in touch with the divine.
 - So the king ordered them all rounded up for execution.
 - Daniel and his friends were included.
 - * Daniel asked for time and he and his friends sought the Lord.
 - * God answered.

2. The vindication of God before the bankruptcy of idols.

2:27-28

- a. Daniel went to the king.
- b. He called out the pretensions of false religion and human ability.
- c. He testified to the true God (“But there is a god in heaven...”)

3. Daniel revealed the king's dream and gave the interpretation. (Gen 41:28) 2:29-49

- a. Human dominion has its limits.
- b. God's kingdom will crush human pretensions of power and last eternally.
- c. Human dominion will be crushed by the Kingdom of God and blow away like dust in the wind. (Is 40:15 - It was never of much consequence anyway!)

4 segmented statue represents human dominion (Which is in rebellion against God)

- Each succeeding segment is lighter, more brittle than its predecessor
- Ever since the fall, humanity has said, “I'll do it *my* way. It never works (Ps 2)

Where others saw mortal danger, Daniel acted on faith. Any guarantee he'd succeed?
Daniel trusted in God to work in *any* situation.
Daniel sought the fellowship of faithful people.
Daniel bore witness to God and claimed no agency of his own.
And, he acted on conviction not on any certainty that he would be spared.

THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

Now - about the king's dream:

- 1. The dream concerns what will happen in the latter days.**
- 2. Human dominion** (remember that head of gold when you read chapter 3) **is represented by a four segmented statue.**
- 3. The statue was destroyed by a "rock cut out of a mountain but not by human hands." (Ps 46*)**
 - a. What's the deal about human hands? (See Ex 3:5, Ex 20:24-26, Det 27:5-6, Jos Jos 5:15, 8:31; Tit 3:3-8, Eph 2:8-9)
 - We cannot bring in the kingdom. It is a work of God, not of people. (Is 64:6)
 - The coming kingdom will be a complete work of God.
 - b. God's kingdom is eternal and will replace forever, human rule. (Heb 12:28)
 - c. We are citizens of what is now to the world, an invisible kingdom. Yet this kingdom will endure when the kingdoms of this world have vanished. (Rev 11:15)

God alone will bring in the kingdom (Rev 13:10).

But...we have a role to play.

No-one ever promised us that we'd be spared from adversity. In fact, Jesus made it plain that quite the opposite will be true (Jon 16:33)

While we live and await His coming/our redemption we are His agents in a hostile environment. Got your "green card?" Mat 5:13-16, Rom 8:18-27, Phil 3:20

But...we are to wait in confidence!

DANIEL 2 AND 7
PART 2
“The Prophetic Key to Revelation”
Chapter 7

1. Daniel’s vision

7:1-14

a. This took place in the first year of King Belshazzar (decades after the King’s dream in chapter 2). **What follows are the main facts of his visions.**

b. Before him were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four different beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

- The 1st was like a lion, with wings like an eagle.
 - * As Daniel watched, its wings were torn off and it was lifted to the ground and stood on two feet like a man.
 - * The mind of a man was given to it.
- The 2nd looked like a bear.
 - * It raised up on one side and had ribs in its teeth.
 - * It was told, “Get up and eat your fill of flesh!”
- The 3rd beast looked like a leopard, with four wings on its back like those of a bird.
 - * This beast had four heads.
 - * It was given authority to rule.
- The 4th beast was terrifying and frightening and very powerful.
 - * It had large iron teeth.
 - * It crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.
 - * It was different from the former beasts and it had 10 horns.

c. While Daniel was thinking about the horns, there was another horn before him, a little one, which came up among them.

7:8

- Three of the 10 horns were uprooted before it.
- It had eyes like that of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

d. While I watched the court sat (See 7:26) and the Ancient of Days took His seat.

7:9-12

- His clothing was white as snow and the hair of His head white like wool.
- His throne was flaming with fire and its wheels were all ablaze. (See Ezk 1:13)
- A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before Him.
- Thousands upon thousands attended Him.
- Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
- The court was seated, and the books were opened.
 - * the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts continued for a while but without power.)

e. In Daniel’s vision, he looked and saw before him “one like a son of man”, coming with the clouds of heaven. (Mat 24:30, Mk 13:26, Lk 21:27, Rev 1:7/Zec 12:10)

7:13-14

- He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence.
- He was given authority, glory and sovereign power.
- All nations and peoples of every language worshipped Him.
- His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away.
- His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

2. The Interpretation of the vision

7:15-28

a. Daniel was troubled in spirit and disturbed by the visions so he asked one of the persons (in his vision) standing there what it all meant.

- The four great beasts represent four kings that will arise from the sea/earth. (See 7:16b-18, Rev 7:1, 13:1, 17:1, 15 - *the imagery is consistent*)
- But the holy people of the Most High will receive a kingdom and will possess it forever.

b. Daniel wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast (The outlier - with iron teeth, bronze claws with which it crushed, devoured and trampled its victims.

- He also wanted to know about the 10 horns. Especially about the 3 that fell before the other (little horn - vs 8) before which 3 of them fell. It was more imposing than the others and had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.
 - * Daniel watched the horn wage war against the holy people and defeat them (See Rev 13:5-10).
 - * This lasted until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. (See Rev 20)
 - * The 4th beast is a 4th kingdom that will appear on the earth.
 - * It will be different from all the others and will devour the whole earth, trampling and crushing it. *World dominion ... but only for a time.*
- The 10 horns are 10 kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will rise, different from the earlier ones.
 - * He will subdue 3 kings.
 - * He will speak against the Most High. (Rev 13:6)
 - * He will oppress God's holy people. (Rev 13:7)
 - * He will try to change the set times and laws.
 - * The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.
 - * But - the court will sit, its power will be taken away and the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to...God's people. His *holy* people. (See Rev 11:15-19)
 - * His kingdom will be everlasting and all rulers will worship and obey Him.

3. That's all folks! Daniel was deeply troubled by his thoughts and his face turned pale. He kept the matter to himself. A case of 1 Pet 1:3-12.

Think of 1 Cor 2:6-10, Jn 18:1-14, Phil 2:5-11, 2 Thes 2:8

Our Lord was always in complete control - And He didn't mind saying so: Mat 24:30, etc.

Dan 2

Dan 7

The King's Dream

A four-segmented statue

- Head of gold
- Chest and arms of silver
- Belly and thighs of bronze
- Legs of iron, feet of iron/clay

Human dominion destroyed by God's kingdom

- (Rock cut out of mtn., not by human hands)
- Smashed statue and supplanted it.

God's eternal kingdom victorious

Daniel's dream/visions

Four beasts

- Lion w/ eagle's wings (torn off)
- Bear raised up on one side w/ ribs
- Leopard w/ 4 wings
- Beast w/ iron teeth, 10 horns
 - * 10 horns
 - * 1 horn replaced 3, eyes & spoke boastfully

Fourth Beast destroyed/judged

(God's rule will end man's 2 Thes 2:8)

- Ancient of Days sits in judgment
- One like a son of man comes (Jn 5:27)
 - * *Granted* auth., sov. power, glory
 - * Worshipped by all. (Phil 2:10-11)
 - * Possessing eternal dominion.
 - * Ruling an indestructible kingdom.

God's kingdom (His saints) will rule forever

A COMPARISON

DAN 2

DAN 7

Human dominion (Rep. by a statue with four segments) will be crushed and ended by God's kingdom.

This will take place in the future (vs 29/45)

Human dominion (Rep. by four beasts) will be judged and God's holy people will receive His eternal kingdom and possess it forever.

This will take place in the future (7:17)

The beast w/ 10 horns that crushed/devoured and trampled its victims:

- 4th kingdom that will appear.
- unique and world-wide in scope (7:23)
- 10 horns = 10 kings/rulers)
- Little horn (more imposing, w/ eyes and mouth that spoke boastfully)
 - * Would subdue three kings.
 - * Waged victorious war against the holy people
 - * Speak against Most High
 - * Oppress God's people.
 - * Try to change the set times/laws.
 - * Would prevail for time, times and 1/2 time.
 - * Court will sit, judgment executed.
 - * Sov., power & greatness of all kingdoms will be handed over to God's holy people.

God's kingdom everlasting and supreme.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

I. Introduction

1:1-8

1. The revelation from ("of") Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show His servants what must soon ("speedily/quickly") take place.
 - a. He made it known by sending His angel to His servant John who testifies to everything he saw ("as much as he saw") - that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Blessed is:
 - the one who reads [aloud] the words of this prophesy,
 - And [blessed are] those who hear it,
 - And **take to heart** what is written in it (See Det 29:19-21, 28-29) because the time is near. (Rom 13:11, 2 Pet 3:8-9, Rev 22:6)

II. The Greeting:

1. John, to the 7 churches in the province of Asia. *These were churches in the major cities of the province and likely their surrounding regions.*
 - a. Grace and peace to you from Him who:
 - is
 - was
 - who is to come
 - b. And from the seven-fold Spirit before His throne (Holy Spirit, see also Is 11:2, Zec 3:9, 4:10).
 - And from Jesus Christ who is
 - The faithful witness
 - The firstborn from the dead (Act 26:23, 1 Cor 15:20-23, Col 1:15-20, Heb 1:1-3)
 - The ruler of the kings of the earth (Dan 7:13-14, 26-27, Lk 1:33)
2. To Him who loves us ("to the One loving us") and has freed ("loosed") us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father - (Re: His making us to be a kingdom and priests - see Ex 19:6, 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 5:9-10, 20:6)
 - a. To Him be glory and power ("dominion") forever and ever! Amen
 - b. Look, He is coming in the clouds (Dan 7:13, Mat 26:64).
 - c. Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him (Zech 12:10/Jhn 19:37)
 - d. And all people on earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen. (His coming will be a two-edged sword. Salvation for His own, and judgment for those who have rejected Him.
3. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Heb 13:8, Rev 22:12-16)

So - what do we know from Rev 1:1-8?

It is the revelation of Jesus Christ that was given to John for the church.

It concerns the future.

Those who read it, hear it and take it to heart (act on the information) will be blessed. (See 2 Pet 3:1-18)

Grace and peace comes from the godhead. (Father = Who is, was, is to come, Spirit = 7 fold spirit, faithful witness, firstborn from the dead, ruler of the kingdoms of the earth = the Lord Jesus Christ.

What has Jesus done for His people?

- loves us
- has freed us from our sins by His blood
- made us to serve His God and Father as a kingdom and priests (See Lk 1:68-75)

He is coming - Dan 7:13 and Zec 12:10 will certainly be fulfilled.

He is God Almighty - from start to finish He is it!

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Key Verse: 11:15

II. The Setting

1:9-20

1. **John (their brother and companion in the suffering (“*tribulation*”), kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus... Where do we get the idea that believers will never suffer? (Jn 16:33, Act 14:22, Rom 8:28-39, 2 Tim 1:8).**
 - a. **He was on the isle of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.** This took place during the reign of the emperor Domitian in AD 95.
 - b. **On the Lord’s Day he was in the Spirit** (See also Ezk 3:12-14). The Spirit gave him a vision.
 - The Lord’s Day refers to the first day of the week. The early church met on that day in commemoration of the resurrection. (e.g., Act 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2, also the early leaders and writers of the church also bore witness to the early church meeting on the first day of the week - e.g., Ignatius, Chrysostom, Justin Martyr, Theodoret etc.)
 - He heard from behind him a loud voice like a trumpet (loud and clear?) which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches.”
 - John turned around to see who had spoken to him. When he did he saw:
 - * Seven golden lampstands.
 - * Someone among them like a son of man, brilliant, and dressed regally with a voice like rushing waters (So also Ezk 1:24, 43:2, Dan 10:6).
 - This son of man held seven stars in his right hand and a double-edged sword came out of His mouth (The word of God - e.g., Hos 6:5, Eph 6:17, Heb 4:12, Rev 2:12,16)
 - John fell at His feet as though dead (See Dan 8:17-18, 10:4-11)
 - The one speaking to him placed His hand upon John and said, “Do not be afraid. I am:
 - * The first and the last (See 1:8)
 - * The Living One (“I was dead and now look, I am alive forever and ever!
 - * And I hold the keys of death and hades.” (Is 53:11-12, Lk 16:19-31, Heb 2:9)”
 - * “Write therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.” Write **therefore**: *this is connected to what John has seen - the glorified Lord Jesus. Because he has been shown it, John needs to write it down. The messengers are waiting! “Therefore,” because He holds the messengers in His right hand and walks among the churches, write! Because He holds the keys to death and Hades, write! Because He is the glorified Son of Man, Lord of all - write!*
 - * The mystery of the 7 stars that you saw in my right hand and of the 7 lampstands is this:
 - + The 7 stars are the angels (“messengers”) of the 7 churches,
 - + and the 7 lampstands are the 7 churches.

Look at the information given in this brief introduction:

- **John was their brother in the suffering, kingdom and perseverance that are ours in Jesus.**
- **John is conveying Jesus’ message to the churches. Churches (as we will see in the next two chapters), that were enduring persecution.**
- **Notice that the Lord Jesus appears in this narrative glorified and in charge.**
- **Our Lord walks among the churches (lampstands) and holds their messengers in his hand.**

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
Key Verse: 11:15

III. A Message to the Churches

Chapters 2-3

“Do not forsake your first love”

1. Ephesus: “To the angel (messenger) of the church in Ephesus, write:

2:1-9

a. Our Lord identifies Himself: “These are the words (“*things*”) of Him who holds the 7 stars (messengers) in His right hand and walks among the lampstands (the churches).” *He is intimately acquainted with His people* (See Ps 139:1-6).

b. I know your deeds: (Heb 4:12-13)

- Your hard work (“*laborious toil*”)
- Your perseverance (“*patient enduring, steadfast*”)
- That you cannot tolerate (or, “*endure/bear*”) wicked (“*bad, rotten, malicious*”) people
- *That you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.*

Note:

(The things that marked an apostle were observable - see 2 Cor 12:12 and 2 Cor 13:3. And while many apparently made a claim of apostleship, the criteria was fairly narrow: One had to be chosen by the Lord Jesus - Act 1:2, as far as can be discovered in scripture they were all Jewish men - 1:11, Peter, in leading the apostles to choose a replacement for Judas took the criteria farther in stating that such a person had to have been with them “the whole time the Lord Jesus as living among us, beginning from John’s baptism o the time Jesus was taken up from us.” 1:21-22)

- That you have persevered and have endured [hardships] for my name, and have not grown weary.

c. Yet I hold this against you: you have forsaken the love you had at first.

- Consider how far you have fallen!
- Repent and do the things you did at first.

Repent! If you only went to work when you felt like it, would you have a job?

Repent! Do not wait until you feel like it, start cultivating your relationship with God and with your loved ones now.

- If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. *When is a church no longer a church? The Lord Jesus admonishes them and warns that if they do not repent He will “pull the plug” and shut them down.*

So, the Ephesian believers were “game on,” but despite their commendable faithfulness had grown cold in their love for God and it showed. (See Rom 12:9-13). They were “on a rail,” spiritually just “keeping on keeping on,” putting on foot in front of the other, day in, day out, “same old” rhythm.

* This can happen easily and affect not just our relationship with God but with people.

* Husbands, wives, don’t adopt the idea that “if things are not broke, don’t fix them.” Love is a word that demands action. Never stop showing each other appreciation, kindness and forgiveness. Remember those days when you were first together - things do not merely go stale. We allow them to.

d. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

There is a good bit of information concerning the Nicolaitans. But nothing definite. Their chief error seems to be that they advocated eating food offered to idols and practicing sexual immorality.

e. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. “Listen up!”

- To the one who is victorious I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. *And how are we victorious? By standing firm in our faith and seeking God.*

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Key Verse: 11:15

III. A Message to the Churches

Chapters 2-3

To this church and the church in Philadelphia only our Lord offers unqualified commendation

2. Smyrna: "To the angel ("messenger") of the church in Smyrna write:"

2:8-11

a. **Our Lord identifies Himself:** "These are the words of Him who is the First and Last, who died and came to life again." (Is 44:6, 48:12; Rev 1:18; Jhn 5:25).

b. **I know your affliction** (or, "*tribulation, distress*") **and poverty** ("*destitution*") - **yet you are rich!** (Many who are materially wealthy are spiritually impoverished and many who are materially poor are spiritually wealthy - see 1 Sam 2:8; Prv 11:28; Hos 12:8; Mat 6:19-25; Lk 16:1-15; 1 Tim 6:17-19; Jas 2:5).

- I know about the slander ("*coarse, abusive language*") of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. (Jhn 8:31-47; Rom 2:28-29; 9:6; 2 Cor 11:26, Gal 6:15).

* *In the same way, mere outward conformity to religious forms does not a believer make! In the words of evangelist Billy Sunday, "Going to church does not make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile."*

* Eph 2:11-22; 1 Cor 7:19/Jhn 6:28-29; 1 Cor 12:12-13; Gal 3:25-29)

- Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. (Jhn 16:33; Act 14:22; Phil 3:10-11; 2 Thess 3:1-5)

* I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days.

* Be faithful, even unto the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.

c. **Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.** (See Ps 32:8-10; Mtt 13:9; Lk 6:46-49)

- *Many hear, but do they listen? In my time in the military, it was not uncommon to see a notice on a bulletin board titled, "Read and Heed." Do not allow what is described in Jas 1:22 be true of you!*

Some things to take away from this passage:

- He knows us and our situations intimately.
- He wants us to be rich in faith. He sees us far differently than this world does. (E.g., Lk 16:15)
- He wants us to be unintimidated by those who oppose and revile us (and not to be surprised that it happens!) See Php 1:27-30; 1 Pet 3:14; 1 Jhn 3:13; Jhn 17:14.
- Live out your faith! 1 Pet 2:9-12; Phil 1:6; 2:12-17 - It matters!
- Pay heed to His Word.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
Key Verse: 11:15

III. A Message to the Churches

Chapters 2-3

3. Pergamum: “To the angel (“messenger”) of the church in Pergamum write:” 2:12-17

a. Our Lord identifies Himself: “These are the words of Him who has the sharp (or “*swift*”) double-edged sword (See also Eph 6:17, Heb 4:12, 2 Thes 2:8, Rev 1:16, 2:16) He has us in His hands and rules by His powerful word.

b. I know where you live - where Satan has His throne. Yet you remain true to my name.
Pergamum was a center of pagan worship. The worship of Zeus, Athena, Dionysius, Aesculapius and notably, emperor worship. Politics and religion were closely allied in Pergamum. Remember, our Lord does not taking sides-He is taking over!

c. You did not renounce your faith in Me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city - where Satan lives. Persecution had broken out, even claiming the life of a faithful believer. (Jhn 15:18). God may deliver us from trouble or *through* it. E.g., Dan 3:18.

d. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you:

- You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught the Israelites to sin (“*casting a snare*”) by eating food sacrificed to idols
 - * Eating food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 10:14-24, 1 Thes 4:1-8)
 - * and by committing sexual immorality. *Idol worship and sexual rites were a part of the false religion promoted by idolatry. The pressure the world exerts is to force conformity. Yet our faith directs us to live differently - to live in such a way as to shine the light of God on the darkness of culture (See Eph 5:11). It is dangerous to “skate close to the edge.” It is treason against heaven to do it to avoid inconvenience or persecution (Mat 10:33)*
- Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

e. Repent therefore! (See 2:4-5) - *Change your mind and actions. Don’t merely think about it but act.*
- Otherwise I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. (Heb 12:6-7, 1 Pet 4:17)

f. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. *God sustains His people. We are not speaking of physical food (See Jhn 6:49). Look to Jhn 6:26-27*
- I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it. (2 Tim 2:19 - God knows His own and they know Him. And...their lives show it.)

Some things to take away from this passage:

- **He knows us and our situation.**
- **He can deliver us from trouble or through it.**
- **Compromise with the world to avoid being identified with Jesus is dangerous.**
- **Compromise to indulge our flesh is equally dangerous.**
- **God sustains His people.**

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
Key Verse: 11:15

III. A Message to the Churches

Chapters 2-3

4. Thyatira: "To the angel ("messenger") of the church in Thyatira write:"

2:18-29

- a. Our Lord identifies Himself:** "These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. (See 1:12-16, 19-20)
- b. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.** *Again, as He states to each church, He knows them, He walks among them and holds their messengers (their pastors?) in His hand.* (See Jn 1:43-51, 2:23-25)
- c. Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet.** *"Jezebel" is likely as name given to this woman by our Lord. The woman named Jezebel to whom this person is likened was an idolater.* (See Col 3:5)
- By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. *Similar to the Nicolaitans and compromisers with the culture, she advocated "going along to get along" - which can never work.* (Rom 12:2, Jas 4:4, 1 Jhn 2:15-17, Jde 1:3-5)
 - I have given her time to repent of her immorality but she is unwilling. (Gen 15:16, Rom 2:5-6, 2 Pet 3:9 - and Gal 6:7-8)
 - So I will cast her on a bed [of suffering] and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer (affliction, pressure, distress) intensely, unless they repent of her ways. (Heb 12:4-13)
 - I will strike her children dead (See 1 King 14:12-13, 1 Cor 11:27-29, 1 Cor 3:10-15). *By "children" it likely means her adherents/followers. However, it is possible that her actions have resulted in her and her offspring being afflicted with a venereal disease (which at that time might likely have been incurable).*
 - Then all the churches will know that I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. (See Acts 5:11) - Where does judgment begin? 1 Pet 4:16
- d. Now to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets.**
- I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have until I come. (Rev 3:11, 16:15)
 - To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations -
 - * That one will rule them with an iron scepter and dash them to pieces like pottery -
 - * Just as I have received authority from my Father.
 - I will also give that one the morning star. (Num 24:17, 2 Pet 1:19, Rev 22:16)
- e. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**

Are we in the world or of it?

Can we discern truth from error?

Are we willing to stand for the truth?

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
Key Verse: 11:15

III. A Message to the Churches

Chapters 2-3

5. Sardis: "To the angel ("messenger") of the church in Sardis write:"

3:1-6

- a. Our Lord Identifies Himself:** "These are the words of Him who holds the seven spirits (or "Seven-fold Spirit") and the seven stars. (See also Is 11:1-9, Jhn 15:26, Rom 8:9, 11)
- b. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead ("lifeless").**
- wake up! ("be watchful")
 - Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. (See also 2:4-5)
 - Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard;
 - * Hold it fast ("keep it") See Col 4:17, 2 Tim 4:5
 - * Repent ("change your mind/purpose")
 - * But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief and you will not know at what time ("hour") I will come to ("upon") you. (See Lke 12:35-40, 1 Cor 3:10-15)
- c. Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes** (See Isa 64:6, Zec 3:3, Rev 3:4-5, 18).
- They will walk with me [dressed] in white, for they are worthy.
 - The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white.
 - I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge ("confess") that name before my Father and His angels.
- d. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.** (Exo 32:32-33, Psm 69:28, Phil 4:3, Rev 13:8, 17:8)

Some things to take away from this passage:

It is not those who begin a race but those who complete it who are rewarded. Seek to finish well.

As mentioned in Rev 2:1-9, attempting to serve God without seeking Him is to rely on our own strength and wisdom. It can be a subtle form of idolatry.

Are you going through a dry time spiritually? "Coasting," and just going through the motions? Repent. One day you will stand before Him - it could be today!

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
Key Verse: 11:15

III. A Message to the Churches

Chapters 2-3

6. Philadelphia: “To the angel (“messenger”) of the church in Philadelphia write:” 3:7-13

- a. Our Lord identifies Himself:** “These are the words of [Him who is] holy and true (“*made of truth.*” *that is, genuine*), who holds the key of David. (See Jhn 14:6-7, 17:17)
- What [He] opens no one can shut
 - and [what He] shuts no one [can] open. (See Gen 49:10, Psm 2, Isa 22:15-25) *He is Lord.*
- b. I know your deeds.**
- See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. (See also Act 14:27, 1 Cor 16:8-9, 2 Cor 12:12 - *our testing/trials can be unrecognized times of opportunity*).
 - I know that (“*because*”) you have little strength [yet] you have kept my word and have not denied (“*disavowed, denied, rejected*”) my name. (*How do we overcome this world and the powers of darkness? See Jer 4:6, Zec 4:6, Jhn 15:5*)
 - [Behold] I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars - (Rom 2:28-29, 9:6-7, Gal 3:7-9)
 - [Behold,] I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. (Is 60:14, 1 Pet 2:9-11, 1 Cor 1:18-25). *A time is coming when justice will prevail, when this world’s veil will be stripped away and everything made plain. God’s people will be revealed clothed in His glory. Every knee will bow (Is 45:20-24/Phil 2:5-11).*
- c. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently (“*The word of my patience*”), I will also keep you from the hour (“*time*”) of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. (God may save us *from* it or *through* it - Dan 3, Rev 13:10)**
- I am coming soon, hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. (1 Cor 3:10-15, 1 Cor 9:25, 2 Tim 4:8). *Let us make it our ambition to finish well.*
 - The one who is victorious (“*overcoming*”) I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.
 - * Never again will they leave it. (See Jn 10:29)
 - * I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God. (Psm 48:8, Jer 17:25)
 - * And I will also write on them my new name. (Rev 2:17)
- d. Whoever has ears, let them (“him”) hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**

Let the nations rage, Jesus reigns! His word alone stands.

There is a difference between the visible church and the true church.

God knows our trials and will preserve us from and/or through them.

The church, like Israel has a role to play in this world drama. Jer 51:20-23, Dan 2:35, 44-45, 7:13-14, 27, Rev 11:15

God does not promise that our lives will be an easy journey, but at the end we have a safe harbor. Jhn 16:31

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
Key Verse: 11:15

III. A Message to the Churches

Chapters 2-3

7. Laodicea: “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:”

3:14-22

a. Our Lord Identifies Himself: “These are the words of the Amen (“*true, trustworthy*”), the faithful and true witness (Det 18:18/Jhn 8:28), the ruler of God’s creation” (or “*beginning*”; See also 1:8, 11; 21:6).

b. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold (“*chilly*”) nor hot (“*boiling hot*”).

- I wish you were either one or the other! (Jas 4:17)

- So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. (See Rev 2:5; 3:19) (“*Spit out*” here describes doing so with disgust. Kind of like biting an apple and seeing half a worm where you had just bitten and spitting out your mouthful.)

* You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ (Lit: “*I am rich. I have begotten/acquired riches.*”) Compare with Det 8:11-20; Lke 16:10-15; Mat 5:3.

* But you do not know that you are wretched (“*the afflicted*”), pitiful (or “*pitiful, in need of mercy*”) poor (“*impoverished*”), blind and naked (“*poorly clothed*”).

- I counsel you to buy from me:

* gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; (See Is 55:1-3; Rev 2:9/Gal 5:22-23). *Laodicea was wealthy and self satisfied. See this quote from Tacitus ... “One of the most famous cities of Asia, Laodicea, was in that same year overthrown by an earthquake and without any relief from us recovered itself by its own resources.”* (Tacitus: Annals 14: 27)

* and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; (Rev 16:15; 19:8,14).

* and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. (*An ear and eye salve was manufactured in Laodicea. But physical sight does not equate spiritual perception. See Jhn 9:35-41.*)

2 Pet 1:3-11

c. Those whom I love (“*regard with affection*”), I rebuke and discipline. Lest the Laodiceans suppose He has cast them aside God reminds them of one way that He shows His love - chastisement. And if they did not respond, He makes it plain that it was coming. (Heb 12:4-13)

- So be earnest (“*desire to and act*” - “*fervently*”, “*boiling*”) and repent. (Rom 12:3-21; Rev 2:5, 16)

- Here I am! (“*Behold, look*”) I stand (“*have stood*”) at the door and knock(ed).

* If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. (*In the words of another - “If you feel God is far away, who moved?”* Jhn 14:21)

- To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on His throne. (See also Rev 2:26-29)

d. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The “lukewarm” state being addressed in this passage is not one of rejection. Rather it describes one who believes, is convinced and is disobedient and or apathetic. A 1 Cor 3:10-15 situation perhaps? Certainly 2 Pet 1:3-11 applies here.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
Key Verse: 11:15

IV. Things to come - "What will take place after this."

Chapters 4-22

1. The Throne of God and of the Lamb (Or, "Who is worthy to reveal the future?") Chapters 4-5

Part 1: Chapter 4

a. The Throne. After this (*the giving of the messages to the 7 churches*) I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet (See 1:9-11) said,

- "Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this."

- At once I was in the Spirit (See also *Isa 6:1-13; Jer 1:4-19; 2 Cor 12:2-4*), and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

* And the one who sat there ("*sitting*") had the appearance of jasper (*a translucent stone that can be colored purple, blue, green or bronze*) and ruby ("*sardine stone*" could be flesh colored or blood red).

* A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.

* Surrounding the throne were 24 other thrones, and seated on them were 24 elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. (*righteous and victorious*)

* From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.

* In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the 7 spirits (or, "the 7 fold Spirit") of God. (See also *Isa 11:1-3*)

b. The sea of glass. In front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass [clear] like crystal. Look at *1 Kng 7:23; Heb 8:1-5; 9:24; Rev 11:19; 15:5* - *this is a scene from heaven's temple.*

c. The four living creatures. And in the center ("*in the midst*") were four living creatures and they were covered with eyes, in front and back. (See also *Ezk 1:4-21; 10:1-22*). So, *what's with the eyes? God is omniscient, that is, nothing is hidden from Him. See Psl 139:1-18; Heb 4:13. All creation is naked before Him. We are known completely.*

- The 1st living creature was like a lion, the 2nd like an ox, the 3rd like a man and the 4th like a flying eagle. (See *Ezk 1:10*).

- Each of the 4 living creatures had six wings covered with eyes all around, even under its wings.

- Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

- Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to Him who sits upon the throne and who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say,

* "You are worthy our Lord and God, to receive glory honor and power

* for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

A few things to remember:

John was called by our Lord to “come up here,” to be shown what “must take place after this.” He is being shown future events. Our Lord reveals the things to come.

John is shown God enthroned in glorious majesty on His throne. He rules! (Do what they may, the devil, his angels and the world are inconsequential - Isa 40:1-17; Dan 2:31-35, 45)

John is shown 24 elders also crowned and enthroned before Him. Believing Israel and the church victorious!

- They rule because He rules.
- They have overcome (See 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:4-6, 12-13, 21-22). How? The same as any of God's people do—through faith in Christ alone. Jn 14:6; Act 4:12; Rom 10:5-13
- * They will have the right to eat from the tree of life.
- * They will not be hurt at all by the second death.
- * They will be sustained by God (“hidden manna”) and be given a new name/white stone.
- * They will be given His authority over the nations. (Remember Dan 2:44-45; 7:27)
- * They will be dressed in white (reckoned righteous) and acknowledged by Jesus before the Father.
- * They will be made a pillar (permanent, we belong!) in His temple, and have new names written on them.
- * They will be given the right to sit with Jesus on His throne.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
Key Verse: 11:15

IV. Things to come - "What will take place after this."

Chapters 4-22

1. The Throne of God and of the Lamb (Or, "Who is worthy to reveal the future?") Chapters 4-5
Part 2: Chapter 5

a. Then ("and") I saw in ("upon") the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.

- And a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break ("loose") the seals and open the scroll?"
- But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could ("was able to") open the scroll or even look inside it. (*It has been sealed up until...revealed in God's time.* Eg., Dan 12:9, Isa 29:11, 1 Pet 1:10-12)
- I wept and wept because no one was found [who was] worthy to open the scroll or look inside it.
- Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep!"
- * See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.
- * He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

b. Then ("and") I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.

- The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven (*or, "seven-fold"*) spirit(s) of God sent out into all the earth. (*Zec 3:9, 4:10*) *The 7 horns show perfect power, the eyes the omnipresent and watchful Spirit of God. Seven being the number of perfection.*
- He went ("came") and took the scroll ("it") from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.
- And when He had taken it ("the scroll"), the four living creatures and the twenty four elders fell down before the Lamb.
- * Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people ("saints").
- * And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain and with your blood you purchased for ("to") God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. Mat 28:19
- * You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on earth."
(See 1:6,2:27, 3:21, Ex 19:6, 1 Pet 2:5, Dan 7:15-18)

c. Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and the thousand times then thousand. (Lit: hundreds of millions. Likely an uncountable multitude).

- And they encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.
- In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power, and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise." (See Phil 2:5-11)

d. Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

- To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!
- The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshipped.

Some things to take away:

God alone knows and rules the past, present and future. Our call is to follow and trust.

In this passage we see the Father, the Son (Lamb) and the Holy Spirit. (e.g., 1 Cor 12:4-6)

The Lamb's victory is complete (Heb 1:1-4)

As the glorified representative of humanity, He reigns eternally.

The angels and saints share in His triumph and will reign with Him eternally. How should this affect us?