

## Chapter 2 Revelation

MacArthur – introduction chapter 2

The seven churches represent the types of churches that are generally present throughout the entire church age. 5 or 7 were rebuked for tolerating sin in their midst. (Smyrna and Philadelphia were not) Ephesian church was 1<sup>st</sup> in the postal route as it was also the most prominent – mother church from whom the others were founded. It contains 7 features:

1. Correspondent
2. the church
3. the city
4. the commendation
5. the concern
6. the command
7. the counsel.

The One = the Lord, Jesus Christ

Seven Stars = leaders from the seven churches

Holds/Right hand = they are His ministers

Lampstands = churches (Christ scrutinizes, examines, assesses, and evaluates the churches)

Palmer – This city, though not the capital, is the most well known. Trade route from Euphrates. There was the 45,000 seat amphitheater. Known for mystery cult religions... Ephesus Charms-good luck charms.

The messenger of the church is addressed and the people are told the Jesus knows who they are and where they are.

3 parts to the message

1. a statement about the church
2. an exhortation
3. a promise

Lenski- the messenger to each of the seven churches may have been more than one person per church... Ephesus may have had many churches and they might have sent a Bishop.

The Ephesian church was founded in 55 and was now 40 years old.

There is no greeting in the nominative, followed by a dative, etc. These are true letters dictated by the Lord. These 7 letters are to be read at each of the churches, as a single book.

The Church 2:1a

Ephesus had a rich heritage. Gospel introduced by Paul's close friends Priscilla and Aquila (acts 18:18-19)

Apollos was 1<sup>st</sup> preacher/debater.

Paul visited toward the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey and his 3<sup>rd</sup> journey

Timothy, Onesiphorus and Tychicus served as ministers there.

John spent the last decades of his life at Ephesus (probably arrested and exiled to Patmos from Ephesus)

Ephesus (the city) was center worship of goddess Artemis (Diana)

Lots of magic arts – yet many conversions.

2:b1 the City

Palmer – Balaam, as a sorcerer and as an opportunistic false prophet, becomes the hidden symbol in Revelation of such false teaching.

Love used here is agape.

Somehow they have left behind the very best and the most important of all their discoveries.

Barclay – Ephesus, the greatest harbor in Asia, was the “Gateway of Asia”. Christians were brought from Asia to be flung to the lions ... called the “Highway of the Martyrs”.

Political distinctions: a free city – one with limits of self-governing & exempted from having Roman troops garrisoned there.

Pagan religion was at its strongest in Ephesus. There were the Ephesian Letters – remedies for sickness. Center for crime and immorality.

Population of Ephesus: 6 tribes

1. natives of the country
2. colonists from Athens
- 3-5. other Greeks
6. Jews

Today little is left of Ephesus... no longer a harbor because of the silt of the Cayster river.

**Vs 1. Holds**

Christ holds the churches in his hand = **Kratein**- strong word complete control (john 10:28 no one shall snatch them out of my hand)

**Kratein** with accusative after it.... Means the “whole”- “entire”.

**Walks**

Unwearied activity in the midst of his Churches

Lenski- Walking in the midst adds the idea of majestic activity

**Vs 2. know**

MacArthur – the Lord’s knowledge, perfect knowledge.(complete and full)

**Vs 2. Toil - Deeds**

Kopos – Toil, work hard (used throughout the NT)

The Christian is to be a toiler for Christ, and, even if physical toil is impossible, he can still toil in prayer.

The Ephesians were diligent workers for the cause of Christ.

**Tested -** – many an evil man came into the congregations of the early church  
More than once the NT insists on the necessity of testing;

*<sup>1</sup> Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup> but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.*

*1 John 4:1-3 (NIV)*

*<sup>21</sup> Test everything. Hold on to the good. <sup>22</sup> Avoid every kind of evil.*

*1 Thess 5:21-22 (NIV)*

*<sup>29</sup> Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.*

*1 Cor 14:29 (NIV)*

*<sup>15</sup> "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. <sup>16</sup> By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

*Matt 7:15-20 (NIV)*

Not lacking is spiritual discernment.

### **Vs 3 Perseverance, endured**

Lenski- high praise for enduring and hardship. They remained faithful to the Lord, loyal to His Word and to the work to which He had called them.

### **Vs 4. Lost your first love**

They had sunk to the place where they were carrying out their Christian responsibilities with diminishing love for their Lord and others.

Palmer – The love of God had become a theoretical starting fact, **one of the sentences on the menu, but not the very daily bread** by which they were even alive in the first place and through which they would continue to stay alive.

It was an illness that until this letter arrived, they were unaware of. **They drifted into the loss.**

Lenski- this is a strong reproach. **First love is tied to the Word**

Love itself is misconceived when it is supposed that it can be great and strong without faithfulness too the Word.

<sup>15</sup> *"If you love me, you will obey what I command*

*John 14:15 (NIV)*

*"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.*

*John 14:23-24 (NIV)*

<sup>10</sup> *If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*

*John 15:10-15 (NIV)*

Love was not absent, but the first love had been left.

Barclay- Lost your first love – a) **first enthusiasm is gone.**

"I remember the devotion of your youth,  
how as a bride you loved me  
and followed me through the desert, Jer 2:2 (NIV)

B) Much more likely this means that the first fine rapture of love for the brotherhood is gone. Early on they really loved each other.

### **Vs 5 Remember , Repent and do**

#### **This is the cure to be applied**

Christ appeal in 3 steps

1. Remember - realize that something has gone wrong. Constant remembering, not boasting of the past as an excuse for their sloth in the present, but to restore the present.

Forgetfulness is frequently the initial cause of spiritual decline.

2. Repent – this is our action when we realize that something has gone wrong (there are many other actions – ignore, blame others, etc...) we accept the responsibility.

Completely – Luther says our whole life is to be a constant or ceaseless repentance.

3. Do - 1<sup>st</sup> to fling ourselves on Christ, 2<sup>nd</sup> drive us to action to bring forth fruits for repentance. A CHANGED LIFE

Decisively, it is the evidence of true repentance.

They needed to recapture the richness of Bible Study, devotion to prayer, and passion for worship. Christ warns the Ephesians to take the necessary steps to recover. He demanded that they change or be chastened.

### **Vs 6. Nicolaitans**

He held the teaching of Balaam --- connected with eating things offered to idols and with immorality (look at verse 14) This is the same charge at Thyatira. **Loose living**

**Danger is coming from inside the church and not outside of the church**

**To John, the Nicolaitans were worse than pagans, for they were the enemy within the gates. If this practiced held, the world would have changed the church, not the church changing the world!**

This is a registered as a hopeful sign as the church shows itself by such hate of those who are out to oppose.

Linski - considers equating them with Balaam as fanciful, they were an early Gnostic sect. all else is uncertain. Cannot be positively identified.

(Note: nicolaitans means conquer the people balaam means conquer the people)  
Balaam in Hebrew history stood for an evil man who seduced the people into sin.

<sup>28</sup> It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: <sup>29</sup> You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Acts 15:28-29 (NIV) **Gentiles were to be admitted to the Church by Act 15:28-29**

The Church hated.... An appropriate attitude... God hates impurity.

<sup>8</sup> "For I, the LORD, love justice;  
I hate robbery and iniquity.

Isaiah 61:8 (NIV)

Again and again I sent my servants the prophets, who said, 'Do not do this detestable thing that I hate!' <sup>5</sup> But they did not listen or pay attention; they did not turn from their wickedness or stop burning incense to other gods. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, my fierce anger was poured out;

Jer 44:4-6 (NIV)

### **Vs 7. having an ear**

MacArthur – emphasizes the sober responsibility believers are to have in regards of God's word.

Hence the guilt when one who has an ear does not hear. You who have an ear have no excuse. The Lord always speaks so that he shall be heard effectively.

<sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: (Isaiah 6:9-10)

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding;  
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

<sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has become calloused;  
they hardly hear with their ears,  
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts  
and turn, and I would heal them.'

*Matt 13:14-15 (NIV)*

### **Vs 7. The Tree of Life**

Jewish concept of the tree of life = that which gave man life indeed, Wisdom, Righteous and hope. To eat of the tree of life means to have all the joys that the faithful conquerors will have when Christ reigns supreme.

### **Vs 7. Paradise**

A) Persian word meaning pleasure garden, a serene beauty.

B) Septuagint – a Greek OT, 2 uses

- a. Garden of Eden
- b. any stately garden

C) Early Christian thought

- a. a place when we awaited after we die, the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.
- b. a stage or sphere which are the heavens
- c. in the presence of our Lord.

Paul was caught up into the heavenly Paradise

*I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know--God knows. <sup>3</sup> And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows--<sup>4</sup> was caught up to paradise.*

*2 Cor 12:2-4 (NIV)*

*Look up over come vrs 7 in the greek*

### **Vs 8. To the Angel of the church in Smyrna**

Palmer – Smyrna is a coastal city of great wealth, some 40 miles north of Ephesus. A suffering church which was made up of poor members.

MacArthur –The church at Smyrna displayed the power and purity that comes from successfully enduring persecution. Did not receive any rebuke in its letter (along with Philadelphia). **We learn how to properly respond when trials come via Smyrna's example.**

Barclay – of all the cities of Asia, Smyrna was the loveliest, the ornament of Asia, the crown of Asia and the flower of Asia. It stood at the end of the road which crossed Lydia and Phrygia, it was a great trading city. It was one of the very few planned cities in the world.. 1000 BC founded and then destroyed in 600BC, 200 BC Lysimachus rebuilt it as a planned whole. As John says “He who died and came to life” is an echo of the city. A free city. First city in the world to erect a temple to the goddess Roma. Picked for a temple to the godhead of Tiberius.

Famous Christian martyrdom Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna was martyred in 155 ad. He said “I must be burnt alive.” How can I blaspheme my King who saved me... his reply when asked to say Caesar is Lord.

### **First and the Last**

Local pride...gives insight as to why God said that He was the First and the Last... it is not about us, but about Him.

To the Christians, a tremendous promise

Linski – one at the beginning and at the end of history, from whom and for whom all history exists, who controls all of it for the sake of his church.

MacArthur –OT title for God.

<sup>6</sup> "This is what the LORD says--  
Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty:  
I am the first and I am the last;  
apart from me there is no God.

Isaiah 44:6 (NIV)

Affirms Christ equality with God.

### **Was dead and Came to Life**

Linski – This is a letter from the Lord who himself was put to death by his enemies and yet rose again in glory.

One action completed in the past. Christ experienced the worst that life could do to him and He conquered.

...profound mystery: How can the ever-living die? Peter gives us the answer.

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison <sup>20</sup> who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.

1 Peter 3:18-20 (NIV)

This was a reminder to a church enduring persecution that Christ transcended temporal matters. Death has no hold. (for comfort and encouragement to the church at Smyrna)

Vs 9 –Linski - I know --- is comfort for us. God knows where we are. The Lord is fortifying the church for what is yet to come. The Jews will succeed in stirring up the pagan authorities to arrest Christians.

Vs 9 – MacArthur – Blasphemy, Jesus’ use of the strong term usually reserved for hostile words against God, indicates the slander’s wickedness, intensity, and severity.

Vs 8 - 11 Barclay – The church of Smyrna was in trouble and further trial was imminent. 3 things the letter says about this trial

1. affliction = crushing beneath a weight (pressure of events on the church)

2. poverty = the state of a man who has nothing at all.

- a. they belonged to the lower class of society

- b. the heathen mob would attack the Christians and wreck their homes.

3. imprisonment ten days = a short time which was soon to come to an end.

Warning and promise. In that day, a man was only a prisoner until he was led out to die.

Vs 9 Synagogue of Satan – haters of the gospel, influential Jews who reported false allegations to the Romans.

Palmer – ten days, the devil has power, but there are limits to the power – not the final power.

The portrayal of the **devil** is that of personal will against the will of God at the cosmic level of the created order.

Linski – tested, tried.. This refers to trial of faith Ten days = during a complete period, one that is long enough for the work of God.

Ten days.... Intense but brief.

The instigators of persecution were the Jews.

## Six slanders leveled against the Christians

1. Sacrament, Christians were cannibals
2. Agape, love feast = orgies of lust.
3. split families when some would become believers
4. atheism because they did not have an image of a god to worship
5. Politically disloyal because they would not say, Caesar is Lord.
6. Christians would start fire... because they foretold of the end in flames

Verse 10 MacAuthor – Do Not Fear.... He would give them strength to endure it.

<sup>33</sup> "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 (NIV)

<sup>9</sup> Then my enemies will turn back  
when I call for help.  
By this I will know that God is for me.  
<sup>10</sup> In God, whose word I praise,  
in the LORD, whose word I praise--  
<sup>11</sup> in God I trust; I will not be afraid.  
What can man do to me?

Psalms 56:9-11 (NIV)

Verse 10 Crown of life – not a royal crown, but one of joy and victory.

In this life Christian's loyalty will bring him a crown of thorns, but in the life to come it will surely bring him the crown of glory.

Palmer – Their Lord knows their city as well as He knows them.. assurance. Crown not of Smyrna, but of life.

Verse 10 MacAuthor The attacks on God's true children cannot succeed.

John 10:28

<sup>27</sup> My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all ; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

John 10:27-29 (NIV)

Not is the strongest negative the Greek language can express. **Will not be hurt by the second death**..... though persecuted believers many suffer the first (physical) death, they will never experience the second death.

**Pergamum** – 100 miles north of Ephesus (Smyrna ½ between) 15 miles inland (not a port city) ancient capital – considered Asia's greatest city. (now Turkish city of Bergama) Pergamenes developed parchment – Known for it's libraries. 4 main idol worship, Athena, Asklepios (Called Asclepios the Savior- or the Pergamum god), Dionysos, and Zeuw... but known for daily emperor worship.

Palmer – in the year 133 BC, Pergamum became the capital of the Roman province of Asia. 45 miles north of Smyra, built on a rock – natural fortress.

Barclay – it was not on any great roads. It was built on a tall hill, which dominated the valley of the River Caicus. They had a Asclepios's serpent as part of their design on their coins.

Linski – Serpent – to the Christians, the serpent was the symbol of the serpent of Eden.

The church... Paul passed through Mysia on his second missionary journey – but probably started as a result of his work in Ephesus, when the gospel went out from there to be preached throughout the province of Asia.

Verse 12 **Worldliness** – some churches today, don't preach much against worldliness... they don't want to make people feel uncomfortable.

Worldliness is any preoccupation with or interest in the temporal system of life that places anything perishable before that which is eternal.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

Titus 2:12 (NIV)

<sup>4</sup> You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

James 4:4 (NIV)

Verse 12

Linski –**These are the Words**—the Lord designates himself as the one having the great sword.

**The Sharp Two-Edged Sword** – is the risen, glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

Linski –**Sword** – symbol of omnipotent power which will devour the Lord's enemies when it descends in judgment.

The Lord is not only a loving compassionate Christ, but also the Christ having the great sword!

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Heb 4:12-13 (NIV)

MacAuthor - Depicts the Word's potency and power in **Exposing and Judging** the heart on man.

This is the first negative introduction of Christ because the Pergamum church faced imminent judgment. It is a but a short step from compromising with the world to forsaking God altogether and facing His wrath.

Palmer – right of the sword... authority of governors of provinces.

The church is challenged to repent of the Balaam – Nicolaitan error. This letter as in Jeremiah (30:14) calls the reader to faith and repentance, and with repentance there is healing.

Barclay –Roman governors were divided into two classes – those who had the right of the sword, and those who had not. The Pergamum governors had the right. However, the power of the Rome might be satanically powerful; the power of the Risen Lord is greater yet.

Verse 13 Barclay – Christians of Pergamum have their permanent residence, so far as the world is concerned, in Pergamum, where Satan's rule is the strongest. Yet, God has planted them there to be his witnesses.

Verse 13 Linski – The pagan city Pergamum as being a citadel of Satan himself - his supposedly permanent residence. The Lord himself regarded Pergamum as the one city among the seven where Satan even had his throne and thus ruled as king. All seven were thoroughly pagan, this one was the worst.

Antipas – was the bishop of the church as was burned alive in a heated metal image of a bull during the days of Domitian (according to a legend that appeared in the 10<sup>th</sup> century)

Remained true --- The days of Antipas which reached their climax when he was killed must have tried the entire church; all stood firm, none denied the gospel of Christ. The Lord acknowledges this glorious fact. **Martyrdom is the result where Satan is dwelling is to be expected.**

V 13 MacAuthor – God commended them for continuing to hold fast His name – even though they lived where Satan’s throne is, where Satan dwells.

Some saw Pergamum as the place where the god Asklepios was worshiped. (the god of healing – people from all around came there for healing) Depicted as a snake – non poisonous snakes roamed freely in his temple. Pergamum was also known as center for emperor worship. Satan’s throne = the god of this world.

Commended for God’s word in Matthew 16:18 “I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

**Few things against you....** Not a grave nature, but a few members with-in.

MacAuthor – Like many churches today, the church at Pergamum failed to obey the biblical mandate to practice church discipline. Matt 18:15-18

Verse 14 Barclay – Few things against you.... The man who is not prepared to be different need not start on the Christian way at all! Paul shares this concern in 2 cor.

<sup>14</sup> Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? <sup>15</sup> What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

<sup>17</sup> "Therefore come out from them  
and be separate,  
says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing,  
and I will receive you."

<sup>18</sup> "I will be a Father to you,

and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

2 Cor 6:14-18 (NIV)

Barclay – Paul goes on to say that we need to come along side of a lost man to reach them for Christ.

<sup>19</sup> Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. <sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

1 Cor 9:19-23 (NIV)

in the word of Christ there is conviction of sin; in it a man is confronted with the truth and thereby with his own failure to obey it.

Verse 14 - the **story of Balaam** is found in Numbers 22-24. Balaam gave cunning counsel to Balak to entice Israel. His evil principle was to secure personal advancement and money by ungodly means. MacAuthor – an OT prophet for hire.

**Balak = king of Moab**, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites. After 3 tries, he came up with a plan to entice the Israelites to go after the Moabite women – who led them into godless world behavior – sexual immorality and idolatry. God intervened in when the Israelites were falling. He executed 24 thousand Israelites.

(To eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication) Paul fought against these temptations during his time. The apologist argued that they were perfectly allowable to Christians, it was **claimed that what the flesh and the body did was immaterial and did not affect the spirit.**

**“To Balak” = “To Teach”**

Verse 15- Linski- Nicolaitans... **see verse 6 ... (Vs 6. Nicolaitans**

He held the teaching of Balaam --- connected with eating things offered to idols and with immorality This is the same charge at here at Pergamum as well as Thyatira & Ephesus.  
**Loose living**

**Danger is coming from inside the church and not outside of the church**

**To John, the Nicolaitans were worse than pagans, for they were the enemy within the gates. If this practiced held, the world would have changed the church, not the church changing the world!)**

MacAuthor – the majority of the believers at Pergamum did not participate in the errors of either heretical group. They remained steadfastly loyal to Christ and the Christian faith. But tolerating the groups and refusing to exercise church discipline, they shared in their guilt, which brought the Lord's judgment.

## **Verse 16 Repent --- who is to repent?**

Same command in vs 5. the whole church is involved... even when only a few are doing the action. Leaders are held accountable.

The only remedy for any sinful behavior is to repent – a change of mind that results in a change of behavior.

Will fight against – not final judgment, but a preliminary one.

Verse 17 Palmer – He who has an ear, let him hear” at the close of each of the seven letters. Christians are called to decide.. not forced. Ours when we are able and willing

Two promises... manna (from the OT) and white stone (1<sup>st</sup> century Roman). To help fight the temptation of idolatries and immoralities. **Manna**--- malnourished on the falsehoods of hatred, fear, selfishness, sexual narcissism, self-indulgence, etc. need the protein.. of God's love. **White Stones** – symbol used in legal trials, academic grading systems. Sin need not to have the last word. A new identity to fulfill the identity distorted by sin.

When a person worships something other than the true God, the result is that a confusion sets in.

Verse 17- Linski – **hidden manna** represents a benefit pertaining to the future kingdom of glory. **Name on the pebble** = the name for the person who receives the pebble.

*Talmud states that together with the manna precious stones and pearls fell from heaven and were picked up by the Israelites in the desert.*

**New name** – Isa 62:2 “thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.” Isa 65:15 “Shall call his servants by another name.”

Verse 17 Barclay – Christ promised 2 things

### a. The Bread of Heaven

1. **Hidden manna** – When the need of the manna assed, the memory did not. Rabbi's had a legend that, when Solomon's temple was destroyed, Jeremiah hid away the

pot of manna in a cleft in Mount Sinai and that, when the Messiah came, he would return and the pot of manna would be discovered again. To the Jews, to eat of the hidden manna meant to enjoy the blessings of the Messianic age.

2. Heavenly Food – give up the seductions of earth if you wish to enjoy the blessings of heaven.

3. Bread of God – given to Christians at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This is Christ giving himself faithfully as God has called him to give.

MacAuthor – Hidden Manna represents Jesus Christ – the bread of Life, symbolizes all the blessings and benefits of knowing Christ. (Eph 1:3)

#### b. The White Stone

1. stones fell from Heaven along with the manna = precious gifts from God to man.

2. verdict of juries – white and black. This would mean that Christians are acquitted in the sight of God because of the work of Christ.

3. stones for calculations – Christian is counted among the number of faithful.

4. tesserae – tablet which one possessed conferred some kind of privilege.

Linski- white stone = testimony of ones faith

Winning athletes were given a white stone with their name inscribed on it. This was their ticket to a special awards banquet. Believers = eternal victory celebration in Heaven.

Barclay – extra.... White and New --- Characteristic of the Revelation.

White – white garments (3:5), white robes (7:9), white linen (19:8,14) the great white throne of God (20:11) **White, then, is heaven's color!**

New – neos, new but could be like something else

Kainos, new both in time and quality, nothing like it has ever been made before

It suggests that the white stone means that Jesus gives to the man who is true to him a new self and that the new name means the new status of glory into which the man who has been true to Christ will enter when this life ends and when the next begins.

## **Thyatira –**

*To the Church in Thyatira*

*<sup>18</sup> "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:*

*These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. <sup>19</sup> I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.*

*<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. <sup>22</sup> So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. <sup>23</sup> I will strike her children dead. 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. <sup>24</sup> Now I say 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): <sup>25</sup> Only hold on to what you have until I come.*

*<sup>26</sup> To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--*

*<sup>27</sup> 'He will rule them with an iron scepter;  
he will dash them to pieces like pottery' --*

*just as I have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> I will also give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

*Rev 2:18-29 (NIV)*

Palmer - 30 miles inland from Pergamum – no high-fortress, therefore not suitable as a major city. Originally a military outpost to protect the road from Pergamum to Sardis. Trade guilds play an important religious role in this city... they build items for the temples to worship gods.

MacArthur – The Letter to the church in Thyatira begins the **second group** of messages to the churches of Asia. In the **first group**, the church of Ephesus was characterized by loyalty to Christ which was lacking in love. In the church of Smyrna loyalty was tested by fire. In the church of Pergamum the loyalty was lacking in moral passion. Yet all three churches were true to the faith, and had not yielded to the assaults of evil.

IN the case of the church at **Thyatira**, as of the churches in **Sardis and Laodicea**, the situation was far more serious. Here not merely a small minority was indifferent, but large numbers had actually yielded to the demoralizing influences of false teaching.

Palmer – The church is honored for its love, faith, service, courage, and the fact that it is growing in good works. Thyatira crisis = “Jezebel”. The church perhaps had been deceived by a woman who evidently claims to be a prophetess, and who, like the Jezebel of Ahab’s time, is tempting the people toward immorality, and also to eat foods offered to idols.

**Message:** false doctrine and sin are not to be allowed – even under the banner of love, toleration, and unity. *[It may appear on the surface to have an effective ministry, be growing numerically, and even have cordial society. Yet immorality and false doctrine, if not confronted, will bring judgment from the Lord of the church.]*

Barclay –The longest of the seven letters is written to the least important of the seen cities. None the less, the problem which faced Thyatira and the danger which threatened it were those which were universally involved in the position of the Christians in Asia.

Location – in the long valley connecting Hermus and Caicus Rivers (geographical importance) on the road which connected Pergamum (gateway) and Sardis (then on to Philadelphia and Laodicea to Smyrna and Byzantium)

No special religious significance. Local god was called Tyrimnus and he appears on its coins on horseback. No threat of persecution hung over the Thyatiran Church.

Thyatira – Linski --- Was the name of Lydia, the seller of purple in Philippi (Act 16:14) the church was smaller in size than the others, but this letter is the longest of the seven.

Charge – for the church not to join the union guilds. This was a form of pagan worship and drunken revelry.

Allusion to Psalm 2 - Linski

## Psalm 2

<sup>1</sup> *Why do the nations conspire  
and the peoples plot in vain?*

<sup>2</sup> *The kings of the earth take their stand  
and the rulers gather together  
against the LORD  
and against his Anointed One.*

<sup>3</sup> *"Let us break their chains," they say,  
"and throw off their fetters."*

<sup>4</sup> *The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.*

<sup>5</sup> *Then he rebukes them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,*

<sup>6</sup> *"I have installed my King  
on Zion, my holy hill."*

<sup>7</sup> *I will proclaim the decree of the LORD:  
He said to me, "You are my Son ;  
today I have become your Father.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ask of me,  
and I will make the nations your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.*

<sup>9</sup> *You will rule them with an iron scepter ;*

*you will dash them to pieces like pottery."*

<sup>10</sup> *Therefore, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.*

<sup>11</sup> *Serve the LORD with fear  
and rejoice with trembling.*

<sup>12</sup> *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry  
and you be destroyed in your way,  
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

Psalms 2:1-12 (NIV)

**It may be a highly successful Christian club rather than a real Christian congregation.**

**18)**

Flaming eyes – penetrate into all the deceptions of the false prophetess. Taken from Daniel 10:6. Flaming eyes stood for 2 things, anger against sin and ability to see the inner most heart of man.

Feet – gold-bronze crush and burn to ashes all such opposition. Brazen feet must stand for the immovable power of the Risen Christ.

**19)**

**Linski - Works** denote the whole conduct. **Love** is place next because all true works are the product of love. This love is itself the product of **faith**. Unlike Ephesus, Thyatira had not grown slack in love. The Lord here bestows high praise and full credit for all that he with his all-seeing eyes beheld in the church of Thyatira.

**20)**

It was not bound completely to the Word. She is like Pergamum in this respect; for Thyatira has permitted a vicious prophetess in her midst, while in Pergamum the Balaam-like Nicolaitan doctrine that came from without had affected a few members.

MacAuthor – Church Discipline was for 2 reasons (1) to call sinning believers back to righteous behavior and (2) to purge from the church those who stubbornly cling to their sin. Purity of the church is maintained. See Acts 5:1-11 executing Ananias and Sapphira.

**Jezebel** – could she have been the bishop of the church's wife? Probably not.

Jezebel, with-in the church, pleaded for compromise with the world's standards in the interests of business and commercial prosperity.

What Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, was for the northern kingdom of Israel that this woman was in the church at Thyatira. Neither the elders nor the congregation took proper measures against her.

21)

Linski – despite the Lord's patient extension of time this woman does not will to repent.

22)

The time of grace lasts for a long time, but when it ends, judgment follows.

23)

Theses children are the second generation, the young "Jezebel brood". They are hers if they follow her works.... Who's works are you following?

These works shall be seen and exposed according to their true inwardness and not as men may regard their superficial outward appearance.

<sup>11</sup> One thing God has spoken,  
two things have I heard:  
that you, O God, are strong,  
<sup>12</sup> and that you, O Lord, are loving.  
Surely you will reward each person  
according to what he has done.

Psalms 62:11-12 (NIV)