Revelation 2 – 4 October 2026
"What's Your Issue: Episode 1 of 2"

Introduction

*Chap 2-3 is "the things that are" from our outline of Rev 1:19

*In Chap 2-3 Jesus will address specific messages to these seven churches in Asia Minor

*Within these 7 churches, we can see parallels to…
- *Global church characteristics thru ages of time
- *Church denominations today
- *Individuals (we'll primarily use this application)

*Each church had specific characteristics or issues that Jesus wanted to highlight…..and so do we!
- *Example: The Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10

*These 7 churches give us the chance to see…

1. ***Study the source*** of their strength & ours
   a. The attributes of Jesus from chap 1 are seen
2. ***Identify key issues*** in their life & ours
3. As well as see the ***results we all can rely on***

1st Church is Ephesus [The Apostolic Church of 32-100 AD] (2:1-7)

Read 2:1

1. Jesus wants to be our ***source*** of security & rest
2. He 'holds the 7 stars in His right hand'
    a. Read John 10:27-29 – Authority & security
3. Jesus 'walks among the 7 golden lampstands'
    a. Read Matt 11:28-30 – Presence & rest

Read 2:2-4

1. They're great with works, Christian service, and truth, but where's the love?
2. The ***issue***: Are we leaving our love for Christ & others within the work? (***Are you calloused?***)
    a. Example of Martha (Read Luke 10:38-42)
3. Notice they didn't *lose* love but they *left* it

Read 2:5 [Vs 5-7 shows the ***results***]

1. The way back is to simply repent
2. Belief what is right & godly from the Word

Read 2:6

1. The word Nicolaitans means those *ruling over the people*
3. Jesus ripped the veil so that ***all*** could come
4. We have no mediator but Jesus alone

Read 2:7

1. "He who has an ear, let him hear" indicates a choice – the results will depend on that choice
2. We want to overcome, but how?
    a. Read Rev 12:11 – blood and Word
3. Just as the Tree of Life was in the midst of the Garden of Eden, it will be back for the overcomers
4. The ultimate ***results*** that we can obtain…
    a. Have your lampstand (God's presence & their rest) removed (vs 5)
    b. Have eternal life w/ God in Paradise (v 7)

2nd Church is Smyrna [The Persecuted Church of 100-313 AD] (2:8-11)

Intro – More than 6 million martyrs during this time

Read 2:8

1. Jesus wants to be our ***source*** of resiliency & life
2. He went thru the hardness of life & overcame
    a. Read John 16:33
    b. Read Gen 41:14-16 – Joseph's prosperity after resiliency

Read 2:9

1. The ***issue***: Are you shrinking back from serving Christ & gaining rewards b/c of negative effects in this life? (***are you a Christian Coward?***)
    a. Peter warmed himself at the enemy's fire in a time of cowardness
    b. Matt 10:28 – Don't fear those that kill body
    c. Read Jer 20:9 – Jeremiah couldn't hold back

2. Who are those that "say they're Jews" but are of the "synagogue of Satan?"
    a. In John 8 the Pharisees said they were of their father Abraham, but Jesus denied this
    b. Read Rom 2:28-29 – A true Jew is one who has the faith of Abraham

Read 2:10

1. The ***results***: The crown of life to recognize your endurance and prosperity in Christ
    a. This is for enduring hardship and trial
    b. This is also for enduring temptation (see James 1:12)
    c. It's a sin to boast of ourselves, but to think that the Lord will boast about us! Wow!

Read 2:11

1. The second death
    a. Born once, die twice, born twice, die once!
    b. 2nd death: death & hell cast into the L of F.
2. As w/ each of the 7 churches, we must choose

3rd Church is Pergamos [The State-Run Church of 313-590 AD] (2:12-17)

Read 2:12

1. Jesus wants to be our ***source*** of identity & character
2. It's thru receiving the Word that this happens
   a. To be identified w/ Christ keep His Word (Read Luke 8:19-21 & 11:27-28)
   b. The Word has the power to change our character (Read Jer 23:28)
   c. Will you accept the Word (Read Rom 10:17)

Read 2:13 [Vs 13-15 shows the ***issue***]

1. Are you willing to identify with ***all*** the truths in God's Word or are you allowing false teaching in your life? (***are you a contaminated Christian?***)
2. Satan runs this world system; there will be times we'll have to kick false teaching out of our homes & churches
   a. Evil creeps in from schools

b. Evil creeps in from neighborhood
c. Evil creeps in from internet, & social media

Read 2:14

1. Tempt people to ***add*** beliefs & behavior, not take away from believing in God
   a. Problem is, they never consider if the new addition is honoring God
2. Doctrine of Balaam was the introduction of idolatry (spiritual adultery) [Num 22-24]
   a. Churches began adding other practices, arts & statues & yet claiming it was ok with God
   b. We can only worship God the way He prescribes, in Spirit and in truth

Read 2:15

1. Nicolaitan = *ruling over the people*
2. Establishing of a priesthood God hates
3. Our identity & character shouldn't be shaped by a man but by God's Word

Read 2:16 [Vs 16-17 shows the ***results***]

1. Your true identity and character will be revealed thru God's Word
2. Read Matt 21:42-44 – Jesus, God's Word, will save your broken soul or it'll grind you to powder
    a. Receive God's Word by faith & be saved
    b. Or…Rev 19 – His sword will destroy you

Read 2:17

1. He'll give you the hidden manna
    a. Fresh, new knowledge of God
    b. Always more to know of God (John 17:4)
2. Our new identity is complete when God re-names us using a white stone! (i.e. Isa 62:2)
    a. White stone of acceptance (Not black)
        i. Adoption is special – God has knowledge of us and still chose to bring us into family

4th Church is Thyatira [The Medieval Church of 590-1517 AD] (2:18-29)

Read 2:18

1. Side note: In Rev 1:13 this One was called Son of Man, now He's called the Son of God
2. Jesus wants to be our ***source*** of justice & ruling authority
3. God will judge even the hidden lusts of the heart – Achan in Josh 7
4. We don't have to engage with sinners or sinful things to "help take charge of the matter"
    a. David wouldn't kill God's anointed king Saul (1 Sam 24)
    b. Abraham took Hagar – Thought God needed help creating his ruling legacy.

Read 2:19-21

1. The ***issue***: Are you losing sight of right & wrong in your loving faithful service?
2. Are you letting truth mingle with your love or ***are you a Compromised Christian***?

3. Specifically – Do you cast out lustful pleasures; either sexual or just lusting for stuff?
    a. Backstory on Jezebel is in I Kings 16-21
        i. Known for being very loving
        ii. Known for whoredoms and witchcraft
4. If Ephesus was all truth & no love; Thyatira is all love & no truth
5. In Psm 51:1-6 – David's repenting of his sin with Bathsheba & says, "I know You desire truth"

Read 2:22-29

1. The ***results***: Be made a servant to lust or be made ruler over much
2. In Psm 32:10 w/ David's repentance, he said, "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked"
3. No greater example of this than Samson
    a. Phrase used often in Judges, "…the land had rest XX years…", but not used of Samson
    b. His lusts ending his service to the Lord shorter than it should have been
    c. His lusts ended in great trouble rather than a long rule as judge

Conclusion

For each one of us, we're given the ability to…

1. **Study the Source:** How did Jesus role-modeled and teach how to believe, think and act
2. **Identify the Issue**: Ask other people if you have that issue
3. **Rely of the Results**: God will have His Word fulfilled
    a. Do you want to be on the winning side?

Are you prone to be…

1. A Callous Christian like Ephesus?
2. A Christian Coward like Smyrna?
3. A Contaminated Christian like Pergamos?
4. A Compromised Christian like Thyatira?

NEXT WEEK: We'll identify the 'Defining Issue for the last 3 churches