



Vision 1: The Church on Earth

Revelation 1:9 – 3:22

Vision of Christ

Rev 1:9

John is exiled to Patmos for his faith. There is no idea of earthly victorious Christian living here. The idea is of participating in God's kingdom through persecution.

1. Tribulation

- a. John 16:33 – I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.
- b. Acts 14:21-22 – When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
- c. Rom 5:3-4 – Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope

2. Kingdom

- a. Matt 12:28 – But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
- b. John 18:36 – Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”
- c. Rom 14:17 – For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

3. Patient endurance

- a. 2 Tim 2:12 – if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;
- b. 2 Thes 1:4-5 – Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. 5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering
- c. Heb 10:36 – For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.
- d. Rom 8:23-25 – And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we await for it with patience.

4. Word of God and testimony of Jesus (Rev 1:3, 6:9; 12:17; 19:10)

Rev 1:10

1. In the Spirit – we can only see and understand spiritual realities by the Holy Spirit



- a. 1 Cor 2:18 – 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.
- b. 1 Cor 12:3 – Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.
2. **like** a trumpet – trumpet is a call to wake up and pay attention
 - a. Ex 19:16-19 – On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. 17 Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. 19 And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.
 - b. Is 58:1 – Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins.
 - c. Jer 6:17 – I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not pay attention.’
 - d. Ez 33:1-6 – The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman, 3 and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, 4 then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.
 - e. Heb 12:18-19 – For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest 19 and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.

Rev 1:11

Write...what you **see**

Rev 1:12

Seven golden lampstands

1. Ex 25:31 – You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of hammered work: its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it.
2. Heb 9:1-2 – Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. 2 For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence.

Rev 1:13

Like a son of man. Jesus refers to himself with this title more than any other title.



1. Dan 7:13 – I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.
2. Matt 20:18 – See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death.

Rev 1:14

White like wool, as white as snow. The color white is prominent in Revelation – Rev 1:14; 3:4, 5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14; 19:14

1. Dan 7:9-10 – As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. 10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.
2. Matt 28:3 – His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

Rev 1:15

His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

1. Dan 10:4-6 – On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) 5 I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude
2. Ez 1:24 – And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings.
3. Ez 43:2 – And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.

Rev 1:16

1. Right hand indicates the position of power
 - a. Heb 1:3 – He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high
 - b. Ps 44:3 – for not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face, for you delighted in them.
2. Sharp two-edged sword
 - a. Heb 4:12 – For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 - b. 2 Thes 2:8 – And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.
 - c. Is 11:4 – but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips she shall kill the wicked.
 - d. Is 49:2 – He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.



3. Like the sun shining in full strength
 - a. Matt 17:1-2 – And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.
 - b. Rev 10:1 – Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.

Rev 1:12-16

The overall picture is of one who has the power and authority to judge. This is not a picture of how Jesus actually looks. This picture tells us things about the risen and ascended Jesus.

The symbols seen by John in the vision reveal not what Jesus looks like but what he is like – his identity as the searcher of hearts, full of consuming holiness and boundless wisdom, the perfect priest standing for his people before the Father, the perfect king defending them against the devil by his invincible Word. Revelation's visions show us how things are, not how they look to the physical eye. (Johnson, 2001)

Rev 1:17

1. Fell at his feet as though dead. Very different from the scene in the upper room where John leaned back on Jesus. Would have expected more of a “comforting” picture of Jesus for the persecuted saints. However, as we find out, a God who is in absolute control of all things is a great comfort.
 - a. Matt 17:5-6 – He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.
 - b. John 13:21-25 – After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. 23 One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, 24 so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25 So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?”
 - c. John 21:20 – Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?”
2. Laid his right hand on me
 - a. Matt 17:7 – But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.”
 - b. Dan 8:17-18 – So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, “Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end.” 18 And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up.
3. Fear not
 - a. Matt 14:27 – But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”
 - b. Matt 17:7 – But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.”
 - c. Acts 18:9-10 – And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”



4. The First and the Last (Rev 1:8)

Rev 1:18

1. The Living One

- a. John 5:26 – For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.
- b. John 6:33 – For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.
- c. 1 John 5:11 – And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

2. I have the keys of Death and Hades

- a. John 5:28-29 – Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.
- b. John 10:17-18 – For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.

Rev 1:19

The “things that John has seen” is the vision of the Son of Man, “those that are” refers to the current state of the seven churches, and “what takes place after this” refers to all that will take place until Jesus returns according to the principles yet to be revealed to John.

Rev 1:20

Two symbols are explained

1. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches – refers to the pastors or ministers of the churches. Angel can also be translated messenger. In the specific letters to the churches John is commanded to write to the angel of each church. It doesn’t make sense that John would write an actual physical letter to a spiritual being.
2. The seven lampstands are the seven churches
 - a. Matt 5:14-16 – You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
 - b. In the Tabernacle there was one lampstand with seven lamps; here in Revelation we have seven lampstands. The reason for the difference is that during the old dispensation there was a visible unity, the Jewish church-state, whereas the churches of the new dispensation find their spiritual unity in Christ who is present and active among them in and through his Holy Spirit. Therefore they need not fear. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20). (Hendriksen, 1967)
 - c. The seven lampstands (*luchniai*) surrounding the Son of Man correspond on earth to seven lamps (*lampades*) that John will see in heaven (Rev 4:5). Since those later lamps picture the Spirit’s presence with the Father, these lampstands call the churches to reflect the Spirit’s presence on earth, in their communities. The letters will show them how. (Johnson, 2001)



Rev 2-3 – Letters to the seven churches

Each letter has seven parts

1. The address to each of the seven churches. Has the form of a royal edict.
2. An aspect of the Lord's appearance to John at Patmos.
3. An evaluation of the spiritual health of the individual church.
4. Words of praise or reproof.
5. Words of exhortation.
6. Promises to the conqueror.
7. A command to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The evaluation of each church begins with "I know." Christ is intimately aware of all that happens and the situation of every church.

The appearances of Jesus reflect the vision of Jesus from Chapter 1.

Appearances of Jesus

Church	Reference	Appearance of Jesus
Ephesus	Rev 2:1	Seven stars in his right hand; the golden lampstands (Rev 1:16, 13)
Smyrna	Rev 2:8	First and Last, who died and came to life again (Rev 1:17-18)
Pergamum	Rev 2:12	The sharp two-edged sword (Rev 1:16)
Thyatira	Rev 2:18	Eyes as blazing fire, feet as burnished bronze (Rev 1:14-15)
Sardis	Rev 3:1	Seven spirits and seven stars (Rev 1:4, 16)
Philadelphia	Rev 3:7	Has the key (Rev 1:18)
Laodicea	Rev 3:14	Faithful witness (Rev 1:5)

The first three letters end with a promise. The last four letters end with a command to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Each letter ends with a promise to "him who conquers." *Conquers* is translated as *overcomes* in other translations. Same word is used in Rev 6:2. The struggles they are experiencing are contrasted with the peace and victory at the end.

Promises of Jesus

Church	Reference	Promise
Ephesus	Rev 2:7	Grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (Rev 22:2, 14)
Smyrna	Rev 2:11	Will not be hurt by the second death. (Rev 20:6, 14; 21:8)
Pergamum	Rev 2:17	Give some of the hidden manna. (Ex 16:12-24; Heb 9:4; John 6:48-49; Matt 11:25; Col 2:3; Col 3:3; 1 Cor 2:14) Give him a white stone with a new name written on it. (Rev 3:12; 14:1; 22:4)
Thyatira	Rev 2:26-28	Give authority over the nations. (Matt 28:18; Ps 2:8-9) Give him the morning star. (Rev 22:16, Nu 24:17)
Sardis	Rev 3:5	Will be dressed in white. (Is 61:10; Rev 19:8) Never blot out his name from the book of life, will confess his name before my Father and his angels. (Matt 10:32; Luke 12:8; Heb 2:11)



Philadelphia	Rev 3:12	Make a pillar in the temple of my God. (Ps 27:4, 1 Pet 2:5) 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 (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22; Rev 21:2, 10-27; Ez 48:35), which comes down from my God out of heaven. (Rev 21:10)
Laodicea	Rev 3:21	Grant him to sit with me on my throne. (Rev 20:4; 2 Tim 2:12; Matt 19:28; Luke 22:28-30; Dan 7:27)

These seven churches of Asia Minor represent the totality of Christ's churches, scattered across the world and over time, and their problems are symptomatic of those confronting churches in all times and places. (Johnson, 2001)

Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7) – Discernment Without Love

The city's landmark was the temple of Artemis (Diana), and one of its symbols was the date palm tree (contrast "tree of life," v. 7). Before Paul's day, Ephesus had proudly obtained the right to host the Temple of the Divine Julius [Caesar] and the goddess Roma. The city later housed memorials to the emperors Trajan (a.d. 98–117) and Hadrian (a.d. 117–138); and it possessed a huge temple of Domitian (a.d. 81–96), which may have been constructed during the time the apostle John was in western Asia. (The ESV Study Bible, 2008)

The temple of Artemis was a place of refuge for someone that had committed a crime. Morality was very low. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus, as resident of Ephesus, supposedly said, "the morals of the temple were worse than the morals of beasts, for even promiscuous dogs to not mutilate each other." There were lots of influential and rich Jewish residents. (Kistemaker, 2001)

Rev 2:2

1. I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. Perseverance references.
 - a. Rev 1:9 – I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
 - b. Rev 2:19 – I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.
 - c. Rev 3:10 – Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.
 - d. Rev 13:10 – If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.
 - e. Rev 14:12 – Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.
2. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false
 - a. Acts 20:28-29 – Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.



- b. 1 Tim 1:3-4 – As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.
- c. 1 Thes 5:20-21 – Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good.
- d. 2 Cor 11:12-15 – And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Rev 2:4 – You have abandoned the love you had at first– literal translation is “You have left your love, the first.” Is this referring to their love for Christ or their love for one another? Based on verse 5 saying to repent and do the works you did at first it is probably primarily referring to their love for one another. However, our love for Christ and our love for one another go together.

- 1. Mark 12:29-31 – Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”
- 2. 1 John 3:16-19 – By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.
- 3. 1 John 4:20 – If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.
- 4. Matt 24:10-12 – And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

Rev 2:6 – Nicolaitans – most likely false apostles (Rev 2:14-16)

Rev 2:7 – Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches (note plural). (Rev 2:11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)

- 1. Matt 11:13-15 – For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- 2. Matt 13:16-17 – But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. 17 For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Smyrna (Rev 2:8-11) – The Riches of Poverty

Roman Smyrna (modern Izmir) was a harbor city renowned for its temple to the Mother Goddess and for its provincial imperial cult temples to Tiberius (1st century a.d.) and Hadrian (2nd century). Strabo in his Geography (14.1.37) reported early-first-century Smyrna to be a beautiful city possessing paved streets, a library, a gymnasium, and a shrine to Homer, who may have been born there. A few inscriptions point to a Jewish presence in the city. Jewish opposition to Christians in



Smyrna was alleged in the martyrdom accounts of Polycarp and of Pionius (2nd and 3rd centuries, respectively; cf. 2:9). Smyrna also had a wealthy Jewish population. (The ESV Study Bible, 2008)

Their opposition to Christianity is on record in connection with the martyrdom of Polycarp (a disciple of the Apostle John), who on February 23, 155, was killed for his refusal to deny the name of Jesus. He had been the bishop of Smyrna for many years. As an elderly saint, he responded to the proconsul who gave him the choice of cursing Jesus' name and living or confessing his name and dying: "Eighty-six years have I served Christ, and he has never done me wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Thereupon the proconsul sentenced him to die at the stake. The record indicates that the Jews were foremost in gathering wood for the fire. Even though it was the Sabbath, they deliberately carried burdens of wood and transgressed the law. (Kistemaker, 2001) (The ESV Study Bible, 2008)

Rev 2:9

1. I know your tribulation
 - a. John 16:33 – I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.
 - b. Matt 5:11-12 – Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
2. And your poverty (but you are rich)
 - a. James 2:5 – Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?
 - b. 2 Cor 6:10 – as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything
 - c. 2 Cor 8:9 – For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.
 - d. Eph 3:8 – To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ
3. Synagogue of Satan
 - a. Rev 3:9 – Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.
 - b. John 8:39-44 – They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, 40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. 41 You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
 - c. Though ethnically descended from Israel's patriarchs, the opponents' actions show that they are not God's people but Satan's synagogue. God shows covenant



faithfulness to families through the generations, but in the last analysis the people of God are defined Christocentrically, not genealogically. (Johnson, 2001)

Rev 2:10

1. For ten days you will have tribulation. Symbolically represents the complete period of suffering; which is neither long nor short but full, for its termination is sure.
 - a. Dan 1:11-15 – Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 “Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.” 14 So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food.
 - b. Gen 24:55 – Her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go.”
2. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. This doesn't mean just be faithful until you die but be faithful even if it costs you your life.
 - a. 1 Cor 9:25 – Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.
 - b. 2 Tim 4:6-8 – For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
 - c. James 1:12 – Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.
 - d. Heb 11:32-38 – And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. 36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—38 of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Rev 2:11 – Faithfulness to death by the believer in this life means conquering death.

1 Cor 15:50-57 – I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in



victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pergamum (Rev 2:12-17) – Steadfast Without Discipline

Pergamum had once been the capital of the Roman province of Asia, but Caesar Augustus had made Ephesus the center of the financial and administrative functions for the province. The city had a temple dedicated to Augustus and the goddess Roma, another temple and related medical college dedicated to Asklepios the Savior (patron god of healing, symbolized by a serpent), and an enormous altar to Zeus the Savior on the city’s highest point. (Johnson, 2001)

The name Pergamum has been perpetuated in the English term *parchment* (French *parchemin*; Dutch *perkament*; Spanish *pergamino*). The expression illustrates the industry of ancient Pergamum, where due to a trade embargo its people, unable to buy paper products (made from Egyptian papyrus leaves), prepared animal skins for writing purposes. The city not only marketed these skins but also opened a library that eventually housed some two hundred thousand scrolls. It became a learning center where knowledge was accumulated, applied, and disseminated. (Kistemaker, 2001)

Notice that the Greek word *soter* applied to both Zeus and Asclepius means “savior.” In view of their Savior Jesus Christ it was impossible for Christians to acknowledge these gods as saviors. In addition, they could never utter the motto *Caesar is Lord*, because for them the title *Lord* was reserved for Jesus only. Instead of the two hundred thousand or more volumes in the Pergamum library, they came only with the Scriptures. In place of numerous temples, they had no temple and said that their Christian fellowship and even their physical bodies served as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). And in lieu of Asclepius’ healing, the Christians taught that Jesus was their Great Physician. In brief, for Christians life in Pergamum was made nearly unbearable. (Kistemaker, 2001)

Rev 2:13

1. Where Satan’s throne is. Pergamum was the center of emperor worship.
2. My faithful witness (Rev 1:5)
3. Where Satan dwells – the verb *dwells* indicates a permanent dwelling (John 17:14-18)

Rev 2:14 – Hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality (Num 22-24)

1. Num 25:1-3 – While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. 2 These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.
2. Num 31:1-16 – The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Avenge the people of Israel on the Midianites. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people.” 3 So Moses spoke to the people, saying, “Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian to execute the Lord’s vengeance on Midian. 4 You shall send a thousand from each of the tribes of Israel to the war.” 5 So there were provided, out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. 6 And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand from each tribe, together with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, with the vessels of the sanctuary and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. 7 They warred against



Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses, and killed every male. 8 They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of their slain, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. And they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword. 9 And the people of Israel took captive the women of Midian and their little ones, and they took as plunder all their cattle, their flocks, and all their goods. 10 All their cities in the places where they lived, and all their encampments, they burned with fire, 11 and took all the spoil and all the plunder, both of man and of beast. 12 Then they brought the captives and the plunder and the spoil to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the people of Israel, at the camp on the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. 13 Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the chiefs of the congregation went to meet them outside the camp. 14 And Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. 15 Moses said to them, "Have you let all the women live? 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."

3. 2 Pet 2:12-16 – But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, 13 suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. 14 They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! 15 Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, 16 but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.
4. 1 Cor 10:18-33 – Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? 19 What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? 23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 26 For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—29 I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? 31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

Rev 2:14-16 – Note that were some who were participating in the pagan feasts with its immorality, and there were some who had false doctrine (held to the teaching of the Nicolaitans), but the whole church was commanded to repent. Thus, the primary issue was there was no church discipline.

Rev 2:17



1. I will give some of the hidden manna. Instead of eating at pagan feasts they will have heavenly food.
2. I will give him a white stone with a new name written on it. We are new creations in Christ (2 Cor 5:17).
 - a. Gen 17:5 – No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.
 - b. Gen 32:28 – Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.”
 - c. John 1:42 – He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

Thyatira (Rev 2:18-29) – Love Without Discernment

Thyatira was a politically and culturally marginalized city, finding its identity economically, with guilds dealing in metals and fabric (Acts 16:14). Guilds celebrated their patron deities in periodic festivities, so Christians may have been tempted toward the message of a “prophetess” who advocated participation in illicit sex and food sacrificed to idols, both staples of the social scene. (The ESV Study Bible, 2008)

Thyatira was situated along the trade route from Pergamum to Sardis; from Smyrna a leading artery led through the valley to this city. Hence, the location of Thyatira was along major trade routes that stimulated its economic growth. In addition, the local artisans produced a variety of merchandise, for they were bakers, painters, tanners, tailors, potters, and workers in wool, linen, and metal (chiefly copper); and there were slave dealers. Thyatira was an industrial center controlled by guilds, that is, trade unions. These guilds paid homage to the pagan gods Apollo and Artemis, and they worshiped at the shrine of Sambethe. Members of the guild were obligated to attend festivals in honor of these gods, to eat meals in their temples, and to indulge in sexual promiscuity. Non-compliance with these rules meant expulsion from the trade union, lack of employment, and poverty. Christians who refused to honor pagan gods, eat meat sacrificed to an idol, and engage in sexual immorality jeopardized their material necessities. They were regarded as outcasts of society. (Kistemaker, 2001)

Lydia, in Acts 16, who Paul met in Philippi, was from Thyatira.

Rev 2:19 – Your latter works exceed your first (Rev 2:4, Rom 13:9, Jas 2:8). Whereas the Ephesian church was told to do the works they did at first the church at Thyatira is told that they are doing more than they did at first. They were very loving.

Rev 2:20 – You tolerate that woman Jezebel

1. 1 Ki 16:29-31 – In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. 30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. 31 And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him.
2. 1 Ki 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.
3. 2 Ki 9:30-37 – When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it. And she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out of the window. 31 And as Jehu entered the gate, she said,



"Is it peace, you Zimri, murderer of your master?" 32 And he lifted up his face to the window and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked out at him. 33 He said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down. And some of her blood splattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled on her. 34 Then he went in and ate and drank. And he said, "See now to this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter." 35 But when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. 36 When they came back and told him, he said, "This is the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite: 'In the territory of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel, 37 and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one can say, This is Jezebel.'"

Rev 2:21 – I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. The patience of God is on display.

1. Rom 2:4 – Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?
2. Is 30:18 – Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.

Rev 2:23 – Who searches mind and heart

1. Ps 139:1-4 – O Lord, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.
2. Jer 11:20 – But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.
3. Jer 17:10 – I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

Rev 2:25 – Only hold fast what you have until I come

1. Rev 3:11 – I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.
2. Matt 24:13 – But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
3. Eph 6:13-20 – Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Rev 2:26-27 – 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.

1. Matt 28:18-20 – And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."



2. Ps 2:7-9 – I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

Rev 2:28 – And I will give him the morning star.

1. Num 24:17 – I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.
2. Rev 22:16 – I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

This church, commended for love, had failed to speak the hard truth in love (Eph 4:15). Church discipline and Jesus' demand of exclusive loyalty looked narrow to the pluralistic culture of the Hellenistic world, as it does in our tolerant and relativistic day; but church discipline, when pursued with biblical motives and methods, expresses Jesus' love for his bride. (Johnson, 2001)

Sardis (Rev 3:1-6) – Alive but Dead

The city of Sardis (modern Sart) was located approximately thirty miles southeast of Thyatira and fifty miles east of Smyrna. The plural name Sardis refers, first, to the city as a fortress on top of a promontory, and next, to the prosperous city of commerce, agricultural products, and related industry positioned on a level plane of the valley below. Situated on a high and narrow strip, the fortress was militarily invincible. The city could be reached only from the south along this narrow and elevated strip that terminated at the promontory on which the fortress was built. Steep cliffs protected the city so that it could not be scaled. Because of its strong defenses, Sardis became the capital of Lydia, but its location precluded expansion and forced it to remain small. It was completely dependent on the fertile valley below for all the necessities of life, which had to be carried up to the city. (Kistemaker, 2001)

Sardis was the capital of King Croesus, whose wealth was legendary. Croesus' reign ended, however, with an event notorious as an example of misplaced security. As the forces of the Persian Empire pushed westward, Cyrus and his troops caught Croesus' army by surprise in the field of battle and then besieged Sardis. The fortress of Sardis was surrounded on three sides by sheer cliffs, so apparently impregnable that “to capture the acropolis of Sardis” became a maxim for achieving an impossible feat. Herodotus recounts, however, that on the fourteenth day of the siege a few Persian troops climbed the cliff at a point “where no guard was stationed, for there was no fear that it would ever be captured at that place, for the acropolis is sheer and impregnable there.” The city fell quickly into Persian hands. Ancient commentators blamed Sardis's tragic fall on “a lack of vigilance in its defenders.” (Johnson, 2001)

Evidently the church at Sardis was busy but none of their works were acceptable. There appeared to be little difference between the members of the Sardis church and the population in general.

Rev 3:2

1. Wake up
 - a. Rom 13:11-14 – Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in



orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

- b. 1 Cor 15:34 – Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.
 - c. 1 Thes 5:6 – So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.
2. Strengthen what remains
- a. Luke 22:31-32 – “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”
 - b. Ps 51:12-13 – Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Rev 3:3 – I will come like a thief

1. Matt 24:42-44 – Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.
2. 1 Thes 5:1-10 – Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
3. 1 Pet 3:10-11 – But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness.
4. Rev 16:15 – Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!

Rev 3:4

1. Soiled their garments
 - a. Jude 20-23 – But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.
 - b. Zech 3:3-5 – Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. 4 And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the



filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.” 5 And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord was standing by.

2. Clothed thus in white garments

- a. Is 61:10 – I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- b. Ecc 9:8 – Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head.
- c. Rev 6:11 – Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.
- d. Rev 7:9 – After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands
- e. 1 John 3:2-3 – Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
- f. The link between purity in the present and white robes in the future shows that the life motivated by hope is shaped by the goal for which we wait. Because victors hope for white wedding garments, they strive for purity here and now. (Johnson, 2001)

Rev 3:5

1. Never blot his name out of the book of life
 - a. Ex 32:32 – But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.
 - b. Rom 9:3 – For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.
2. Book of life. Notice that this verse does not say that the unfaithful are removed from the book of life. The verse affirms that those who are in Christ, which is demonstrated by their faithfulness, are secure in Christ.
 - a. Rev 13:8 – and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.
 - b. Rev 17:8 – The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.
 - c. Rev 20:12 – And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.
 - d. Rev 20:15 – And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
 - e. Rev 21:27 – But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.



- f. Luke 10:20 – Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.
 - g. Phil 4:3 – Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.
 - h. Heb 12:22-24 – But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
3. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.
- a. Matt 10:32 – So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven
 - b. Luke 12:8 – And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God

Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-13) – Steadfast

Located nearly thirty miles to the southeast of Sardis and about sixty miles east of Smyrna, Philadelphia (modern Alasehir) was founded in 140 B.C. by Attalus the Second. His surname was Philadelphus, and out of love for his brother Eumenes he called the city Philadelphia, city of brotherly love. It was strategically located along a well-traveled highway that linked the east (Asia) with the west (Europe). It was a city with an open door through which trade, commerce, Greek language, and Greek culture spread from Greece and Macedonia to Asia Minor and Syria. A severe quake devastated the city in A.D. 17, after which Emperor Tiberius exempted Philadelphia from paying taxes. He donated a sum of money to be used to rebuild the city. The city honored the emperor by adopting the name Neocaesarea (the city of the new Caesar). Its inhabitants out of fear of the repeated tremors preferred to live outside the city walls in the countryside. Ramsay aptly summarized the characteristics of Philadelphia: “First, it was the missionary city; secondly, its people lived always in dread of disaster, ‘the day of trial’; thirdly, many of its people went out of the city to dwell; fourthly, it took a new name from the Imperial god.” (Kistemaker, 2001)

As with Smyrna there is no rebuke. Smyrna has poverty, and Philadelphia has little power. Both have reference to the synagogue of Satan.

Rev 3:7 – Has the key of David. The reference to David emphasizes the kingdom.

- 1. Is 22:20-22 – In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 21 and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22 And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.
- 2. Matt 16:18-19 – And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Rev 3:8 – Open door



1. Acts 14:27 – And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.
2. 1 Cor 16:9 – for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.
3. Col 4:3 – At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison

Rev 3:9

1. Synagogue of Satan (Rev 2:9; John 8:39-44). Jewish leaders met about 20 years after the destruction of Jerusalem to set the canon of Scripture and to create what came to be known as the Eighteen Benedictions. The twelfth of these says “For apostates let there be no hope, and the kingdom of insolence mayest thou uproot speedily in our days; and let Christians and the heretics perish in a moment, let them be blotted out of the book of life and let them not be written with the righteous. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the insolent.” (Kistemaker, 2001)
2. Bow down before your feet
 - a. Is 45:14 – Thus says the Lord: “The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying: ‘Surely God is in you, and there is no other, no god besides him.’”
 - b. Is 49:22-23 – Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders. 23 Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame.”
 - c. Is 60:14 – The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
 - d. Phil 2:9-11 – Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Rev 3:10 – I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth

1. Keep you from
 - a. Is 43:1-2 – But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.
 - b. John 17:14-15 – I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.
 - c. Mark 13:19-20 – For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. 20 And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.



- d. James 1:2-4 – Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
2. Hour of trial
 - a. John 2:4 – And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.”
 - b. John 4:21-23 – Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.”
3. Those who dwell on the earth – refers to unbelievers (Rev 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14: 17:8)

Rev 3:11 – Hold on to what you have

1. Matt 24:13 – But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
2. Rev 2:25 – Only hold fast what you have until I come. (Thyatira)

Rev 3:12

1. Pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it. – Sense of permanence that the citizens of Philadelphia did not have
2. The name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem – As Philadelphia got a new name, the saints in Philadelphia get the name of the new Jerusalem.

Laodicea (Rev 3:14-22) – The Poverty of Riches

Laodicea was located some forty-three miles to the southeast of Philadelphia, eleven miles west of Colosse and six miles south of Hierapolis in the Lycus valley. The Romans built a road system from east to west and north to south. At the crossroads was the city of Laodicea, which expanded in size, became a leading commercial center, and gained wealth and influence. Its wool industry flourished through the production and export of black wool, the manufacturing of common and costly garments, and the invention of an effective eye salve. It had a flourishing medical school that specialized in ear and eye care and had developed an ointment for treating inflamed eyes. Because of this ointment, the school became world famous. A devastating earthquake struck Laodicea in A.D. 17, and, like other cities in the province of Asia, it received financial aid from the Roman government. In A.D. 60 a second earthquake struck the city, and the Roman government offered financial aid to rebuild the city. But the city fathers sent the government a negative reply and made it known that they themselves had ample resources for reconstruction. In fact, they even contributed to the rebuilding of neighboring cities. The water supply for Laodicea came from a distance of six miles at Hierapolis via an aqueduct. Its sources were hot water springs laden with calcium carbonate; when the water arrived in Laodicea, it was lukewarm. (Kistemaker, 2001)

Jesus has no words of commendation for Laodicea. There is no mention of persecution or false teaching.

Rev 3:14 – The beginning of God’s creation

1. Col 1:15-17 – He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or



dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

2. It is interesting that Paul mentions Laodicea in the letter to the Colossians.
 - a. Col 2:1 – For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face
 - b. Col 4:16 – And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.

Rev 3:17

1. I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing
 - a. Hos 12:8 – Ephraim has said, “Ah, but I am rich; I have found wealth for myself; in all my labors they cannot find in me iniquity or sin.”
 - b. 1 Cor 4:6-8 – I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. 7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? 8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!
2. Not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked
 - a. Gen 3:21 – And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.
 - b. Luke 1:51-53 – He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; 52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; 53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.
 - c. John 9:39-41 – Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” 41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.”

Rev 3:18 – I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

1. Is 55:1-3 – Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3 Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.
2. Pro 17:3 – The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the Lord tests hearts.
3. 1 Pet 1:6-7 – In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
4. Eph 1:16-18 – I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that



you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints

Rev 3:19 – Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline

1. Pro 3:12 – for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.
2. Heb 12:5-6 – And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Rev 3:20 – Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

1. Luke 12:35-37 – Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, 36 and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. 37 Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.
2. John 14:23 – Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”
3. Marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9)
4. James 5:9 – Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

Rev 3:21 – Sat down with my Father on his throne

1. Heb 1:3 – He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
2. Heb 8:1 – Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven
3. Heb 12:1-2 – Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Conclusion

Not only does Jesus walk among the churches, but also he is coming to the churches – in two senses. To some he threatens a coming that will intrude into their present life in history with severe mercy and loving discipline. If they will not repent, he will come to remove a church’s candlestick or to wage war against the Nicolaitans. These comings, which occur through Christ’s providential rule and the Spirit’s work, are real visitations by the risen Lord with real effects in the church’s life and witness in the world, even though they are not that final coming in which “every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him” (1:7). To other churches Jesus’ promised coming is that bodily, glorious appearance from heaven that will bring the church’s life and witness in the world to a climax. That will be an arrival so public that none can ignore it. The promise of this coming must motivate the faithful to hold fast what they have “until I come” (2:25; 3:11). Though distinct in timing and visibility from each other Jesus’ providential comings *in* history and his final coming at

the end of history are related. His coming to purify his church foreshadows his coming to purge his creation of all who defile it. (Johnson, 2001)

As the church of Christ we must speak the truth in love, discipline in love, and serve one another in love. We must stand firm for the truth by not compromising with the world and by being faithful unto death. We must always remember that our life comes from Christ himself and apart from him we can do nothing.