

Apocalypse Now: The Challenge of Revelation
Week 2—Revelation 2:1-3:22
September 21, 2022

I. Review

- A. What the book is about
- B. The challenge of Apocalyptic Genre

II. John's vision on Patmos. Why is he there?

- A. Jesus lifts the veil to show the way things really are.
 - 1. One "like a Son of Man"
- B. Cosmic Jesus in robe of a priest/king (the high priest/king)
- C. The voice; Jesus says that ultimately makes the difference.
 - 1. "Look! I am alive. And I have the keys!"
- D. Three themes:
 - 1. Perseverance; patient endurance (Ephesus, Thyatira, Philadelphia)
 - 2. Accommodation (Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira,
 - 3. Complacency (Sardis, Laodicea).

III. Ephesus: Revelation 2:1-7

- A. The City & Church. 4th largest city of Roman Empire; major financial center; Home to Artemis (Diana); Center of worship for goddess Roma and emperor cult.
- B. The message. Jesus holds seven stars, walks among lampstands." A high level program church that does a lot! Perseverance. Uncompromising in matters of morality and ethics. You have left your first love (2:4).

IV. Smyrna: Revelation 2:8-11

- A. The City & Church. Loveliest of the seven cities. "Crown (Flower) of Asia. Fierce loyalty to all things Roman.
- B. The message. Jesus: "First and last, who died and came to life again"; they were under crushing affliction or pressure;
- C. Evil is a real spiritual force.

V. Pergamum: Revelation 2:12-17

- A. The City & Church. Jesus as "two-edged sword."—symbol of Pergamum.
- B. Real battle in Pergamum was a two-front battle for the mind: from outside and inside

VI. Thyatira: Revelation 2:18-29

- A. The message (most difficult to interpret of the seven). Commended for love, patient endurance and faith. But, they tolerate “Jezebel:” Things are fine the way they are now; we really don’t have to change.
- B. The picture of Jesus we need to remain loyal. He is the “son of God.” He has eyes like blazing fire, feet of burnished bronze. Jezebel is given chance to repent. He gives according to our deeds.
 - 1. Two incredible promises for those who “overcome”: Authority over the nations; The Morning Star.

VII. Sardis: Revelation 3:1-6

- A. The message: You are dead! Wake up! For all the busyness, a lack of spiritual vitality. They’d become complacent, accommodating surrounding culture.
- B. How to shake off cultural accommodation. Wake up! Need for spiritual formation. Strengthen what remains. Remember what you received. (Reading Scripture) Obey. Repent.

VIII. Philadelphia: Revelation 3:7-13

- A. Small, poor and harassed by pagans and local synagogue.
- B. The message: no word of correction; only encouragement. Main command: “Behold.” “Look!” An open door, The door has two aspects: salvation and opportunity.

IX. Laodicea: Revelation 3:14-22

- A. Laodicea a very “well-healed” city (banks, wool, medical)
- B. The message Jesus expresses his displeasure in almost violent terms; followed by an offer of greatest blessings. You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. Lukewarm faith. Jesus receives “mild approval.” Lukewarmness is caused by compromise.
- C. Jesus’ counsel (cf. “I have need of nothing”) Jesus stands at the door of the complacent, lukewarm Christian. He offers table fellowship—the height of intimacy.