

# Revelation 2

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

## Message to Ephesus

2:1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

### I. Context

- A. John is having a vision in which he is standing with Jesus (the Highest High Priest) in the Holy Room of the Temple.
  - 1. They are standing in front of the Menorah (which are the churches) which lights the way to the Holy of Holies (the Throne Room of God).
  - 2. John is told to write a message to each of the churches that light the path to God.
- B. The first church is Ephesus.
  - 1. The “Angel” of this church is most likely Timothy.
  - 2. The message starts showing Jesus as the one that holds the churches in His hands
    - a) Which means he protects them and uses them as He chooses.

### II. NOTES

- A. Acts 8:24 - Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.
- B. Acts 18:19 When they reached Ephesus, Paul parted ways with Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue there and reasoned with the Jews.
- C. Acts 18:26 - and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.
- D. Acts 20:31 - Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.
- E. 2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement can exist 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."
- F. Revelation 1:16 He held in His right hand seven stars, and a sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth. His face was like the sun shining at its brightest.
- G. Revelation 1:11 saying, "Write in a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."
- H. Revelation 1:13 and among the lampstands was One like the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe, with a golden sash around His chest.
- I. Revelation 1:20 This is the mystery of the seven stars you saw in My right hand and of the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.
- J. Adopting the view that the angel represents the chief pastor or bishop of the Church, the angel is no other than Timothy. Some striking coincidences favour this view. Labour, work, endurance, are what St. Paul acknowledges in Timothy, and which he exhorts him to cultivate more and more. Again, against false teachers he warns him. Further, there is “a latent tone of anxiety” in the Epistles to Timothy. The nature with which he had to do was emotional even to tears, ascetic, devout; but there was in it a tendency to lack of energy and sustained enthusiasm. “He urges him to stand up, to rekindle the grace of God, just as here there is a hint of a first love left.” [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- K. [Ephesus] The chief city of Ionia, and at this time the most important city in Asia. It possessed advantages commercial, geographical, and ecclesiastical, and, in addition, great Christian privileges. It was a wealthy focus for trade; it reached out one hand to the East, while with the other it grasped Greek culture. Its magnificent temple was one

of the seven wonders of the world; the skill of Praxiteles had contributed to its beauty. The fragments of its richly-sculptured columns, now to be seen in the British Museum, will convey some idea of its gigantic proportions and splendid decorations. But the religious tone induced by its pagan worship was of the lowest order. Degrading superstitions were upheld by a mercenary priesthood; the commercial instinct and the fanatical spirit had joined hands in support of a soul-enslaving creed, and in defence of a sanctuary which none but those devoid of taste could contemplate without admiration. But its spiritual opportunities were proportioned to its needs. It had been the scene of three years' labour of St. Paul (Acts 20:31), of the captivating and convincing eloquence of Apollos (Acts 18:24), of the persistent labours of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:26); Tychicus, the beloved and faithful, had been minister there (Ephesians 6:21); Timothy was its chief pastor. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

- L. Ephesus was built near the sea, Its harbor, though partly filled up, was crowded with vessels, and it lay at the junction of roads which gave it access to the whole interior continent. it was the residence of the Roman proconsul; and the degenerate inhabitants descended to every species of flattery in order to maintain the favor of Rome. The great temple of Diana, the Oriental, not the Greek divinity, was ranked among the seven wonders of the world, - [Vincent's Word Studies](#)
- M. the place of St. John's principal residence. It is called by the Turks Ajasaluk, or the temple of the moon, from the magnificent structure formerly dedicated to Diana. The whole town is nothing but a habitation for herdsmen and farmers, living in low and humble cottages of mud, sheltered from the extremities of weather by mighty masses of ruinous walls, - [Benson Commentary](#)
- N. and was said to have been founded by the Amazons. Under the Romans it was the capital not only of Ionia, but of the entire province of Asia, and bore the honorable title of the first and greatest metropolis of Asia. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- O. To signify that he is the great support of his ministering servants, and directs their several situations and motions in the churches. Such is his favour to them, and care over them, that they may indeed shine as stars, both by purity of doctrine and holiness of life. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- P. The Church at Ephesus needed to remember their Lord as such. The first love had gone out of their religion; there was a tendency to fall into a mechanical faith, - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

2:2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

#### I. Context

- A. John is writing to the church of Ephesus
  - 1. From Jesus who protects, uses, and walks among them.
- B. Jesus tells them that
  - 1. He is aware of everything going on at that church.
  - 2. He knows that they work hard and hold strong for their faith.
  - 3. He knows that they have tested their leaders and expelled those that did not have true credentials.

#### II. Notes

- A. John 6:6 **But He was asking this to test him, for He knew what He was about to do.**
- B. 1 John 4:1 **Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world.**
- C. 2 Corinthians 11:13 **For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ.**

- D. Jesus knows all the good and all the evil which his servants and his enemies suffer and do. Weighty words, I know! How dreadful will it one day sound to the wicked, how sweet to the righteous! - [Benson Commentary](#)
- E. It is designed to impress upon them deeply the conviction that he was intimately acquainted with all that they did, good and bad, and that therefore he was abundantly qualified to dispense rewards or administer punishments according to truth and justice. It may be observed that, as many of the things referred to in these epistles were things pertaining to the heart - the feelings, the state of the mind - it is implied that he who speaks here has an intimate acquaintance with the heart of man, a prerogative which is always attributed to the Saviour. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- F. Christ, as the omniscient God, knows all the works of his people, - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- G. Of love, thy endeavours to promote the glory of God, and the present and everlasting good of mankind; - [Benson Commentary](#)
- H. In bearing persecution, opposition, and the various trials to which thou hast been exposed. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- I. evil men are a burden which the Ephesian Church regarded as intolerable. We are to "bear (the same Greek, Ga 6:2) one another's burdens" in the case of weak brethren; but not to bear false brethren. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- J. their zeal for church discipline is here taken notice of to their commendation, - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- K. There were never any apostles of Jesus Christ but the original twelve whom he chose, Matthias, who was chosen in the place of Judas Acts 1:26, and Paul, who was specially called to the office by the Saviour after his resurrection. On this point, see my work on the Apostolic Church - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- L. in the primitive church there were some that falsely pretended an immediate call or mission from Christ, to preach what they did, but this church would not endure them. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

2:3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.

- I. Context
  - A. Jesus is aware that the church of Ephesus is working hard to remain pure by testing its leaders and expelling those without real credentials.
  - B. The church has faced persecution and has held strong for Jesus.
- II. Notes
  - A. Isaiah 40:31 - *Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.*
  - B. Luke 5:5 "Master," Simon replied, "we have worked through the night without catching anything. But because You say so, I will let down the nets."
  - C. Luke 8:15 *But the seeds on good soil are those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, cling to it, and by persevering produce a crop.*
  - D. John 15:21 *But they will treat you like this on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me.*
  - E. Galatians 6:9 - *Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.*
  - F. Hebrews 12:3 *Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*
  - G. here the expression is more general, denoting a patient spirit in regard to all forms of trial.- [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
  - H. They had toiled on to very weariness without wearying of their toil - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

2:4 But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

I. Context

- A. Ephesus has stood strong against false teachers and persecution.
- B. But they have missed the boat when it came to loving others - which should be their first priority.

II. Notes

- A. Jeremiah 2:2 "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem that this is what the LORD says: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.
- B. Matthew 24:12 Because of the multiplication of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.
- C. The love of many in this church, both toward God and their brethren, probably was cooled, though not wholly extinguished. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

2:5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

I. Context

- A. The church of Ephesus has held its own against false teachers and persecution, but has put a wall up and forgotten that they are meant to love people in the world around them.
- B. Jesus suggests that they remember who they were when they first became Christians.
  - 1. They should do the things they did when they were trying to form the church — reaching out to the community and caring for the lost.
  - 2. If they do not do this, they are not doing what Jesus would do - and this would mean that His light is not shining through them.
  - 3. They need to change their path (repent)

II. Notes

- A. Jeremiah 2:2 - Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth, The love of your betrothals, Your following after Me in the wilderness, Through a land not sown.
- B. Jeremiah 8:6 - "I have listened and heard, They have spoken what is not right; No man repented of his wickedness, Saying, 'What have I done?' Everyone turned to his course, Like a horse charging into the battle.
- C. Ezekiel 18:32 - For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord God. "Therefore, repent and live."
- D. Ezekiel 34:10 - 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth, so that they will not be food for them.'"
- E. Matthew 3:2 - "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- F. Matthew 3:11 - "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- G. Matthew 3:8 - Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;
- H. Matthew 5:14 You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.
- I. Matthew 24:42 - Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming
- J. Matthew 25:13 - Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.
- K. Luke 13:3 - I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.
- L. Luke 15:7 - I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

- M. Luke 17:3 - Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.
- N. Acts 2:38 - Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- O. Acts 17:30 - Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,
- P. Philippians 2:15 - so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine as lights in the world
- Q. Hebrews 10:32 - Remember the early days that you were in the light, when you endured a great conflict in the face of suffering.
- R. Hebrews 12:17 - For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.
- S. 2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
- T. 2 Peter 3:17 - Therefore, beloved, since you already know these things, be on your guard so that you will not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure standing.
- U. Revelation 3:3 - So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.
- V. Nothing is better adapted to affect a backsliding Christian, or a backsliding church, than to call to distinct recollection the former condition - the happier days of piety. The joy then experienced, the good done, the honor reflected on the cause of religion, the peace of mind of that period, will contrast strongly with the present, and nothing will be better suited to recall an erring church, or an erring individual, from their wanderings than such a reminiscence of the past. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- W. Have a deep and lively conviction of thy fall, be humbled and truly sorry for it before God, earnestly desiring to be pardoned and renewed, and bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance in all respects; - [Benson Commentary](#)
- X. The word used here means "to change one's mind and purposes," and, along with that, "to change one's conduct or demeanor." The duty of repentance here urged would extend to all the points in which they had erred. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- Y. Repentance in man, signifieth both the change of the heart and of the actions. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- Z. Remember, but also repent, and repent in true practical fashion; for Love will recognise no repentance but that which is confirmed in the doing of the first works. It must be a repentance whereby we forsake sin. "Christ does not say, 'Feel thy first feelings,' but, 'Do the first works.'" "An ounce of reality," says a modern novelist, "is worth a pound of romance." - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- AA. Often such persons, sensible that they have erred, and that they have not the enjoyment in religion which they once had, profess to be willing and desirous to return, but they know not how to do it - how to revive their ardor, how to rekindle in their bosom the flame of extinguished love. They suppose it must be by silent meditation, or by some supernatural influence, and they wait for some visitation from above to call them back, and to restore to them their former joy. The counsel of the Saviour to all such, however, is to do their first works. It is to engage at once in doing what they did in the first and best days of their piety, the days of their "espousals" Jeremiah 2:2 to God. Let them read the Bible as they did then; let them pray as they did then; let them go forth in the duties of active benevolence as they did then; let them engage in teaching a Sunday school as they did then; let them relieve the distressed, instruct the ignorant,

- raise up the fallen, as they did then; let them open their heart, their purse, and their hand, to bless a dying world. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- BB. He does not say, "Love with the first love," though the works were only valuable as proceeding from love: for to love, though depending on the state of the will, is not a directly voluntary act. But He says "do the first works," for that is in thy power. Do again what love made thee do, that thou mayest learn to love again. - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- CC. In some awful dispensations of providence. By this word is the warning sharpened to those five churches which are called to repent, this admonition belonging equally to them; (for if Ephesus was threatened, how much more shall Sardis and Laodicea be afraid!) and according as they obey the call or not, there is a promise or a threatening, - [Benson Commentary](#)
- DD. The meaning is, that he would come as a Judge, at no distant period, to inflict punishment in the manner specified - by removing the candle-stick out of its place. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- EE. Literally, I am coming—the verb having, from its own nature, the sense of future time: - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- FF. This threatening, considered as addressed to the angel or pastor of the church, meant, Unless thou repent, I will remove the flock now under thy care to another place, and put it under the care of another pastor, where it shall be better taken care of. Considered as addressed to the church, it implies that it should no longer continue to be a church, if the members of it did not endeavour to recover their lost ground, and to shine at least with their former lustre; but that the hedge of discipline should be broken down, and the light of the gospel removed from them. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- GG. The meaning is, that the church gave light in Ephesus; and that what he would do in regard to that place would be like removing a lamp, and leaving a place in darkness. The expression is equivalent to saying that the church there would cease to exist. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- HH. and unchurch thee, and say unto thee, Lo-ammi, You are not my people. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- II. unless the change shall have come before the day of visitation - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- JJ. This repetition drives home the charge given above; repentance is the thing absolutely necessary, and at once. This shows that what Christ has against them cannot be a mere "somewhat". It is nothing less than this - that with all their discernment of evil, and zeal against it, they lacked reality. Their light still burned, but in a dull, lifeless way; their service had become mechanical. - [Pulpit Commentary](#)

2:6 **Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

I. Context

- A. Ephesus is a church that has stood its ground against false teachers and persecution, but because of these things, have created a wall that keeps people out - there is a loss of love for the world around them. Their Jesus light is growing dim.
- B. The Ephesians have done a good job guarding against the Nicolaitans
1. These are people who teach the doctrine of "God loves me the way I am, so I do not need to change." They teach that a can do everything they want to do because God has to forgive them. They also teach that since God gets glory from forgiving us, the more reason we give Him to forgive us, the greater His glory - so do everything that you want.
  2. These are lies that have crept into many churches and God hates them.

II. Notes

- A. Acts 6:5 - The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.
- B. Romans 6:1-2 - What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
- C. 2 Corinthians 6:14 - Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?
- D. This thou hast that I approve of, or that I can commend.- Barnes' Notes on the Bible
- E. We should hate men's evil deeds, not hate the men themselves.- Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary
- F. The life and conduct were little thought of, and the faith professed was everything. Some have thought that they were a sect who derived their name, under some colourable pretext, from Nicolas the Proselyte; others hold that the name is purely symbolical, signifying "destroyer of the people," and that it is no more than the Greek form of Balaam. - Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers
- G. A sect so called, it is thought, from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons mentioned Acts 6:5; according to ancient writers, their doctrine and their lives were equally corrupt. They allowed the practice of the most abominable lewdness and adulteries, as well as sacrificing to idols; all which they placed among things indifferent, and pleaded for as branches of Christian liberty. - Benson Commentary
- H. From the reference in the latter place it is clear that the doctrines which they held prevailed at Pergamos as well as at Ephesus; but from neither place can anything now be inferred in regard to the nature of their doctrines or their practices, unless it be supposed that they held the same doctrine that was taught by Balaam. - Barnes' Notes on the Bible
- I. they are not a sect, but professing Christians who, like Balaam of old. tried to introduce into the Church a false freedom, that is, licentiousness; this was a reaction in the opposite direction from Judaism, the first danger to the Church combated in the council of Jerusalem, and by Paul in the Epistle to Galatians. These symbolical Nicolaitanes, or followers of Balaam, abused Paul's doctrine of the grace of God into a plea for lasciviousness - Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary
- J. God, as a lover of his own order, and of human society, hateth such doctrines and practices as are contrary to the rule of his word, and tend to the confusion of human societies. - Matthew Poole's Commentary

2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

I. Context

- A. Ephesus is told to create a balance between protecting the purity of the church and protecting the mission of the church. They need to set strong and high standards, but not exclude people that are seeking God.
- B. Jesus promises that everyone (not just this church) that lives this teaching will receive eternal life.
  - 1. They will switch from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (the tree that brought death because it followed paths that were not God's will - which the Nicolaitans are doing) to the tree of Life (which brings them back into perfect harmony with God.)

II. Notes

- A. Genesis 2:9 -Out of the ground the LORD God gave growth to every tree that is pleasing to the eye and good for food. And in the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- B. Genesis 3:22 - Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. And now, lest he reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever..."
- C. Proverbs 3:18 - She is a tree of life to those who embrace her, and those who lay hold of her are blessed.
- D. Proverbs 11:30 - The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.
- E. Proverbs 13:12 - Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.
- F. Proverbs 15:4 - A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.
- G. Jeremiah 6:10 - To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.
- H. Ezekiel 28:13 - You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every kind of precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald. Your mountings and settings were crafted in gold, prepared on the day of your creation.
- I. Ezekiel 31:8 - The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it; the pine trees could not compare with its branches, nor the plane trees match its boughs. No tree in the garden of God could compare with its beauty.
- J. Matthew 11:15 - He who has ears, let him hear.
- K. Mark 4:9 - Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
- L. Luke 8:8 - Still other seed fell on good soil, where it sprang up and produced a crop--a hundredfold." As Jesus said this, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
- M. Luke 23:43 - And Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."
- N. John 12:37-40 - But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. *This was* to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them."
- O. John 16:33 - These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
- P. Romans 8:37 - But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.
- Q. 1 John 2:13 - I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.
- R. Revelation 2:26 - And to the one who is victorious and continues in My work until the end, I will give authority over the nations.
- S. Revelation 3:5 - Like them, the one who is victorious will be dressed in white. And I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and His angels.
- T. Revelation 3:12 - The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will never again leave it. Upon him I will write the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God (the new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from My God), and My new name.
- U. Revelation 3:21 - To the one who is victorious, I will grant the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
- V. Revelation 21:7 - The one who is victorious will inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son.

- W. Revelation 22:2 - *in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*
- X. These words—an echo from the Gospels—recur in all the seven epistles. In the first three, however, they are placed before the promise; in the remaining four they follow it. The heart which is hardened is the precursor of the ear that is deaf. The “spiritual truth” needs a spiritual organ for its discernment. These are truths, then, only heard “When the soul seeks to hear; when all is hushed, And the heart listens.” — *Coleridge, - Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- Y. Every man, whoever can hear at all, ought carefully to hear this - *Benson Commentary*
- Z. This expression occurs at the close of each of the epistles addressed to the seven churches, and is substantially a mode of address often employed by the Saviour in his personal ministry, and quite characteristic of him - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- AA. It is very noteworthy that, although the epistle is addressed in each case to a Church in the person of its angel, yet the concluding exhortation and promise are always addressed to the individual Christian. - *Pulpit Commentary*
- BB. To him who overcomes
- CC. Greek, "To him that gains the victory, or is a conqueror" - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- DD. that is, a conqueror in fighting the good fight of faith, against the world, the flesh, and the devil. - *Matthew Poole's Commentary*
- EE. the false apostles, false teachers, and their doctrines; coldness, lukewarmness, and remissness in love; the impure tenets and practices of the Nicolaitans: - *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*
- FF. the promise of a restored paradise - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- GG. The meaning is, that he would admit him to heaven, represented as paradise, and permit him to enjoy its pleasures - represented by being permitted to partake of its fruits. - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- HH. They who refrain from Nicolaitane indulgences (Re 2:6) and idol-meats (Re 2:14, 15), shall eat of meat infinitely superior, namely, the fruit of the tree of life, and the hidden manna (Re 2:17). - *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*
- II. is meant Jesus Christ himself, in allusion to the tree of life in the garden of Eden; and is so called, because he is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; - *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*
- JJ. Heaven, represented as paradise. - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- KK. Paradise (a Persian, or else Semitic word), originally used of any garden of delight; then specially of Eden; then the temporary abode of separate souls in bliss; then "the Paradise of God," the third heaven, the immediate presence of God - *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

## Message to Smyrna

2:8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

- I. Context
  - A. Ephesus is told to make a balance between pure faith and loving outreach.
  - B. The second church is Smyrna
    - 1. Jesus reminds the church that He understands life and death because He has conquered it.
    - 2. This may have been a message about the “god” of this town - Dionysius.
      - a) Who annually was said to die and be reborn with the harvest.
- II. Notes
  - A. Isaiah 44:6 - *Thus says the LORD, the King and Redeemer of Israel, the LORD of Hosts: "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God but Me.*

- B. Isaiah 48:12 - "Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I have called: I am He; I am the first, and I am the last.
- C. Romans 14:9 - For this reason Christ died and returned to life, so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.
- D. Revelation 1:13 - the Living One. I was dead, and behold, now I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of Death and of Hades.
- E. Revelation 1:17 - When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. But He placed His right hand on me and said, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last,
- F. Revelation 22:18 - I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."
- G. We have no means of determining certainly who was the person here addressed. Many who accept the Domitian date of the Apocalypse argue that Polycarp was at this time the bishop or presiding minister at Smyrna. Polycarp is the living example of the language of the epistle, - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- H. Polycarp, martyred in A.D. 168, eighty-six years after his conversion, was bishop, and probably "the angel of the Church in Smyrna" meant here. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- I. Many, especially the Catholic expositors, regard Polycarp the angel of the church mentioned in this epistle; which, however, is in a chronological respect untenable, - [Meyer's NT Commentary](#)
- J. [Polycarp] Tradition has it that he was personally discipled by the apostle John and that he was appointed as bishop of Smyrna (in modern Izmir in Turkey) by some of the original apostles. - [Christianity Today](#). <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/martyrs/polycarp.html>
- K. Smyrna, the modern Ismir, now possessing a population of about 150,000. It has always been considered one of the most beautiful cities in Asia. It was situated in the ancient province of Ionia, a little north of Ephesus Its position was favourable for commerce. In olden times, as now, it commanded the trade of the Levant, besides being the natural outlet for the produce of the Hermus valley. The neighbourhood was peculiarly fertile; the vines are said to have been so productive as to have yielded two crops In one of their temples the inscription declared Nero to be "the Saviour of the whole human race." The city was specially famed for its worship of Dionysos. Games and mysteries were held yearly in his honour. Its public buildings were handsome, and its streets regular. One of its edifices used as a museum proclaimed, in its consecration to Homer, that Smyrna contested with six or seven other cities the honour of being the birthplace of the poet. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- L. eight geographical miles north of Ephesus - [Meyer's NT Commentary](#)
- M. and as he was the first, so he will be the last, surviving all his enemies, and be at last a conqueror over them. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- N. it was appropriate that he should promise to his true friends the same protection from the second death. He who was wholly beyond the reach of death could give the assurance that they who put their trust in him should come off victorious. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- O. suggesting, that though they were called to undergo the bitterest deaths for his sake, they should be raised again as he was, and live with him for ever. - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- P. Dionysus represented the mysteriously productive and intoxicating powers of nature - powers which are exhibited most abundantly in the vine, which in the neighbourhood of Smyrna is said to have borne fruit twice in a year. He was regarded as the dispenser of joy and fertility, the disperser of sorrow and care. Hence the myth of his death and resurrection, which was frequently rehearsed and acted at Smyrna - a fact which gives special point to the greeting in this epistle - "From him who became dead, and lived." - [Pulpit Commentar](#)

2:9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

I. Context

- A. The second letter goes to Smyrna, from Jesus - who conquered and controls death.
- B. Jesus lets them know that he understands their condition
  - 1. They are poor by cultural standards, but rich in His eyes.
  - 2. The reason for their poverty is that the Jewish leaders (that claims to be speaking from God) are actually opposing God's work (like Satan).

II. Notes

- A. 2 Corinthians 6:10 - *sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.*
- B. 2 Corinthians 8:9 - *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*
- C. James 2:5 - *Listen, my beloved brothers: Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him?*
- D. Revelation 1:9 - *I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance that are in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and my testimony about Jesus.*
- E. Matthew 4:10 - *"Away from me, Satan!" Jesus declared. "For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"*
- F. whatever their state it was known to Him whose eyes were as a flame of fire. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- G. implying a most intimate acquaintance with all that pertained to the church. - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- H. This word is of a general signification, and probably includes all that they suffered in any form, whether from persecution, poverty, or the blasphemy of opposers. - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- I. this is Christ's legacy to his people, and which lies in their way to heaven; - *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*
- J. persecution brought upon them poverty, - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- K. in a literal sense, through the spoiling of their goods, to which they were exposed for the profession of Christ: - *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*
- L. deprived of their property when put out of the synagogue on their conversion. Or perhaps rather the cause of the persecution being more intense here—the Christians being people of no dignity or influence, it was safe to attack them. - *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*
- M. Contrast Laodicea, rich in the world's eyes and her own, poor before God. - *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*
- N. The word here does not seem to refer to blasphemy against God, but to bitter reproaches against themselves. The reason of these reproaches is not stated, but it was doubtless on account of their religion. - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- O. The Jews blaspheme Christ as "the hanged one." - *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*
- P. It is interesting to notice that this characteristic hostility of the Jews was illustrated in the martyrdom of Polycarp. The Jews, "as was their wont," were foremost in bringing logs for the pile. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- Q. The idea seems to be that though they were of Jewish extraction, and professed to be Jews, they were not true Jews; they indulged in a bitterness of reproach, and a severity of language, which showed that they had not the spirit of the Jewish religion; they had nothing which became those who were under the guidance of the spirit of their own Scriptures. That would have inculcated and fostered a milder temper; and the meaning here is, that although they were of Jewish origin, they were not worthy of the name.

- R. in the time of the martyrdom of Polycarp - the Jews of Smyrna were among the most bitter of the enemies of Christians, and among the most violent in demanding the death of Polycarp. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- S. The meaning here is plain, that though they worshipped in a synagogue, and professed to be the worshippers of God, yet they were not worthy of the name, and deserved rather to be regarded as in the service of Satan. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- T. were the children of the devil, imitated him, and were influenced by him - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

**2:10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

I. Context

- A. The church of Smyrna is being persecuted by the Jewish leaders - who think they are speaking for God, but are actually acting for Satan.
- B. Many of the people of Smyrna will suffer because of the Jewish leaders
  - 1. But Jesus reminds the church that their enemy is not the Jewish leaders, but the devil.
  - 2. and that this is a time of testing. They need to hold their faith, even if they are killed - and they will find true life with God.

II. Notes

- A. Genesis 24:55 - *But her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go."*
- B. Psalm 31:23 - *Love the LORD, all His saints. The LORD preserves the faithful, but fully repays the arrogant.*
- C. Daniel 1:12 - *Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given only vegetables to eat and water to drink.*
- D. Matthew 10:16-31 - *Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to *the* courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish *going through* the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they malign* the members of his household! Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear *whispered* in *your* ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.*
- E. Matthew 10:28 - *Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

- F. John 11:25 - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies
- G. John 16:33 - These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.
- H. Acts 9:16 - for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.
- I. Acts 14:22 - strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."
- J. Romans 5:3 - And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;
- K. Romans 12:2 - rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,
- L. I Corinthians 9:25 - Everyone who competes in the games trains with strict discipline. They do it for a crown that is perishable, but we do it for a crown that is imperishable.
- M. Philippians 2:8 - Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- N. James 1:12 - Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
- O. 1 Peter 4:12 - Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;
- P. 1 Peter 4:14 - If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you
- Q. Revelation 12:11 - They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they did not love their lives so as to shy away from death.
- R. He never conceals the difficulties or dangers of His service. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- S. We need not dread suffering if we can hear the voice of the Redeemer encouraging us, - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- T. Though Christ proclaimed His yoke to be easy, He also said that His followers must expect tribulation. He never conceals the difficulties or dangers of His service. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- U. He did not promise them exemption from suffering. He saw that they were about to suffer, and he specifies the manner in which their affliction would occur. But he entreats and commands them not to be afraid. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- V. God's people undergo sufferings of various sorts, as the Christians of those times did, scourgings, imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and death itself in various shapes; and these are certain, they shall suffer them; they are all known beforehand to Christ, and he sometimes gives his people previous notice of them, nor should they indulge a slavish fear about them. - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- W. [The Devil] Who sets all persecutors to work, and those more particularly who persecute the followers of Christ, to imprisonment, torture, and death - [Benson Commentary](#)
- X. He here represents Satan, or the devil - another name of the same being - as about to throw them into prison. This would be done undoubtedly by the hands of men, but still Satan was the prime mover, or the instigator in doing it. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- Y. "the accuser." He acted, through Jewish accusers against Christ and His people. The conflict of the latter was not with mere flesh and blood, but with the rulers of the darkness of this world. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- Z. your fight is with the common enemy of mankind, and teach you to pity and pray for your persecutors, who are but the devil's instruments, whose hearts he hath filled with malice against you. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- AA. Satan had an hand, instigating their enemies to prevent and stop the progress of the Gospel, and deter others both from preaching and professing it: the end was in the permission of it, that ye may be tried; that their graces might be tried, their faith, love, zeal, courage, faithfulness, and constancy. - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

- BB. The devil, who inspires the "synagogue of Satan," is to be allowed to afflict them, as he afflicted Job. - [Pulpit Commentary](#)
- CC. Christians at Smyrna, where, in the first ages, the blood of many martyrs was shed - [Benson Commentary](#)
- DD. It was common to cast those who were persecuted into prison. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- EE. On the part of the adversary, the intention was that they might be tempted from their allegiance to Christ. The real effect would be that they who endured would come forth tested and approved. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- FF. That the reality of your faith may be subjected to a test to show whether it is genuine. The design in the case is that of the Saviour, though Satan is allowed to do it. It was common in the early periods of the church to suffer religion to be subjected to trial amidst persecutions, in order to show that it was of heavenly origin, and to demonstrate its value in view of the world. This is, indeed, one of the designs of trial at all times, but this seemed eminently desirable when a new system of religion was about to be given to mankind. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- GG. The same event is often both a temptation from the devil, and a trial from God—God sifting and winnowing the man to separate his chaff from his wheat, the devil sifting him in the hope that nothing but chaff will be found in him - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- HH. Suffering times are trying times, whether men are real Christians or not; whether they have the true grace of God or not; and whether the principles they hold are right and true, and are worth, and will bear suffering for: - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- II. The persecution of the Christians is thus traced to the direct agency of Satan, and not to the offended passions or prejudices of men. Trench observes: "There is nothing more remarkable in the records which have come down to us of the early persecutions, than the sense which the confessors and martyrs and those who afterwards narrate their sufferings and their triumphs entertain and utter, that these great fights of affliction through which they were called to pass, were the immediate work of the Devil." - [Vincent's Word Studies](#)
- JJ. [10 days] That is, a considerable time: for, as Lowman observes, It is not to be understood literally, which would have been a short time of affliction indeed, and hardly agreeable to such a description of that tribulation as this prophecy seems to have been intended to prepare the church for. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- KK. while the mention of "ten days" was, perhaps, designed to remind them that the period of trial was limited by Him who knew what they could bear, and would be but a little while when compared with the life with which they would be crowned. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- LL. Bishop Newton supposes that these ten days mean ten years, according to the usual style of prophecy; and that the persecution of Dioclesian is referred to, which lasted that time, and was the greatest persecution that the primitive church ever endured, most grievously afflicting all the Asian, and indeed all the eastern churches. This persecution, he thinks, and none of the other general persecutions, answers the character here given, none of the others lasting so long as ten years. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- MM. A short time; a brief period; a few days. It is possible, indeed, that this might have been literally ten days, but it is much more in accordance with the general character of this book, in regard to numbers, to suppose that the word "ten" here is used to denote a few. We are wholly ignorant how long the trial actually lasted; but the assurance was that it would not be long, and they were to allow this thought to cheer and sustain them in their sorrows.- [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- NN. meaning it may be the ten persecutions under the Roman emperors;
1. the "first" was under Nero, in the year 64 or 66;
  2. the "second" was under Domitian, about the year 93;

3. the "third" was under Trojan, in the year 104;
4. the "fourth" was under Hadrian, in the year 125;
5. the "fifth" was under Marcus Antoninus, in the year 151;
6. the "sixth" was under Septimius Severus, in the year 197;
7. the "seventh" was under Maximinus, in the years 235, 236, 237;
8. the "eighth" was under Decius, in the year 250;
9. the "ninth" was under Valerianus, in the year 257;
10. and the "tenth" was under Dioclesian, in the year 303 - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

OO. Signifying that the angel of the church should quickly after seal his testimony with his blood - [Benson Commentary](#)

PP. Implying, perhaps, that though, in regard to the church, the affliction would be brief, yet that it might be fatal to some of them, and they who were thus about to die should remain faithful to their Saviour until the hour of death. In relation to all, whether they were to suffer a violent death or not, the same injunction and the same promise was applicable. It is true of everyone who is a Christian, in whatever manner he is to die, that if he is faithful unto death, a crown of life awaits him. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

QQ. A crown was given to the priest who presided at the Dionysian Mysteries, which were celebrated with great pomp at Smyrna. A crown was also given at the Olympian Games, which were held at Smyrna. If there is any allusion to either of these, the latter would be the most natural. Some hold, however, the crown—though the word is Stephanos, not diadema—is rather that of royalty than of victory. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

RR. to dead men is promised a crown of life, in allusion to the Gentiles, who crowned their dead - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

SS. Tables provided that he who had won a crown might have it placed on his head when his dead body was carried in the funeral procession. St. John, both at Rome and in the East, would have seen this ceremony, possibly in the case of a crowned priest at Smyrna. "The crown of life" would be the exact opposite of that. - [Pulpit Commentary](#)

2:11 **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'**

I. Context

- A. The church of Smyrna is reminded that through the troubles that they face - some will die - they need to hold onto their faith and remember that the real enemy is the Devil, not the people that hurt them.
- B. Those that hold strong to the end (even death), will not have to worry about judgement and hell.

II. Notes

- A. Matthew 13:9 - **He who has ears, let him hear."**
- B. Mark 4:9 - **Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."**
- C. Luke 8:8 - **Still other seed fell on good soil, where it sprang up and produced a crop--a hundredfold." As Jesus said this, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."**
- D. John 17:3 - **This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**
- E. Revelation 13:9 - **He who has an ear, let him hear:**
- F. Revelation 20:6 - **Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years.**
- G. Revelation 20:14 - **Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death--the lake of fire.**

- H. Revelation 21:8 - **But to the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and sexually immoral and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death.**"
- I. The particular promise here is made to him that should "overcome"; that is, that would gain the victory in the persecutions which were to come upon them. The reference is to him who would show the sustaining power of religion in times of persecution; who would not yield his principles when opposed and persecuted; who would be triumphant when so many efforts were made to induce him to apostatize and abandon the cause. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- J. is not intimidated by poverty, confiscation of goods, tribulation, persecution, and death itself - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- K. [the second death] This phrase is a new one in Bible language. It is said that Jews were familiar with it through its use in the Chaldee Paraphrase. It clearly points to a death which is other than that of the body; it stands in contrast with the crown of life. The life of the spirit is the knowledge of God (John 17:3); the death of the spirit, or the second death, is the decay or paralysis of the powers by which such a knowledge was possible, and the experience of the awfulness of a life which is "without God." - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- L. By a second death. That is, he will have nothing to fear in the future world. The punishment of hell is often called death, not in the sense that the soul will cease to exist, but: because death is the most fearful thing of which we have any knowledge, and because there is a striking similarity, in many respects, between death and future punishment. Death cuts off from life - and so the second death cuts off from eternal life; death puts an end to all our hopes here, and the second death to all our hopes forever; death is attended with terrors and alarms - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- M. What matter about the first death, which sooner or later must pass over us, if we escape the second death? - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- N. lies in a destruction of both body and soul in hell, and in an everlasting separation from God, and a continual sense of divine wrath; - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

## Message to Pergamum

2:12 **"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:**

- I. Context
  - A. The church of Ephesus is reminded to stay pure and keep loving others. The church of Smyrna is told to hold onto our faith (even to death) and fight the real enemy - the devil, not man.
  - B. The third church is Pergamum. This message starts by reminding the church that Jesus speaks the truth that cuts through all lies and destroys those that try to deceive.
- II. Notes
  - A. Isaiah 49:2 - **He made my mouth like a sharp sword; He hid me in the shadow of His hand. He made me like a polished arrow; He hid me in His quiver.**
  - B. Revelation 1:16 - **He held in His right hand seven stars, and a sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth. His face was like the sun shining at its brightest.**
  - C. Revelation 1:11 - **saying, "Write in a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."**
  - D. Revelation 2:16 - **Therefore repent! Otherwise I will come to you shortly and wage war against them with the sword of My mouth.**
  - E. Caius was the first bishop of it; - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
  - F. In Pergamum, Unlike Ephesus and Smyrna, Pergamos was not distinguished as a commercial city. Its importance was due to other causes. A striking coneshaped hill

rose from the plain which bordered the northern banks of the Caicus. The hill was considered sacred. Its value as a strong natural fortress was early recognised, and it was used as a keep and treasury where local chieftains deposited their wealth. Its greatness as a city dated from Eumenes II., who was given by the Romans a large surrounding territory, and who fixed Pergamos as his royal residence. Under his auspices a splendid city—rich in public buildings, temples, art galleries, and with a library which rivalled that of Alexandria—rose into being. It has been described as a city of temples, “a sort of union of a pagan cathedral city, a university town, and a royal residence.” It retained its splendour even after it passed by bequest to the Roman Republic, and was declared by Pliny to be a city unrivalled in the province of Asia. -

[Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

- G. by the Turks, with some little variation, still called Bergamo, and hath its situation about sixty-four miles to the north of Smyrna. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- H. famous for the magnificent temple of Æsculapius, the healing god - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- I. It contained a celebrated and much-frequented temple of Aesculapius, who was worshipped in the form of a living serpent fed in the temple. Hence Aesculapius was called the God of Pergamum, and on the coins struck by the town he often appears with a rod encircled by a serpent - [Vincent's Word Studies](#)
- J. His words cut and penetrate deep, and it was easy to picture him as having a sword proceeding from his mouth; that is, his words were as piercing as a sharp sword. As he was about to reprove the church at Pergamos, there was a propriety in referring to this power of the Saviour. Reproof cuts deep; and this is the idea represented here - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

2:13 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

#### I. Context

- A. The church of Pergamum is reminded that Jesus speaks truth that cuts through lies and destroys those that want to deceive.
- B. The church is surrounded by many temptations - and they have held strong.
  - 1. The town of Pergamum is covered with the deception of the “god” Aesculapius (who has a temple on the hill which looks like a throne). He is called the “savior” of the people and uses the figure of a serpent to adorn his temple.
  - 2. The followers of these pagan gods have been persecuting the church of Smyrna and have even killed Antipas for standing his ground in his faith of Jesus.
    - a) Antipas is not a person of note (who know only his name) - which shows that God notices the sacrifices of all His followers - not just those that stand out in History.

#### II. Notes

- A. Matthew 4:10 - "Away from me, Satan!" Jesus declared. "For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"
- B. Acts 22:20 - And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and watching over the garments of those who killed him.'
- C. 1 Peter 4:14 - If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.
- D. Revelation 1:5 - and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood,
- E. Revelation 11:3 - and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood,

- F. Revelation 12:11 - They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they did not love their lives so as to shy away from death.
- G. Revelation 14:12 - Here is a call for the endurance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.
- H. Revelation 17:6 - I could see that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and of the witnesses for Jesus. And I was greatly astonished at the sight of her.
- I. Revelation 17:14 - They will make war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will triumph over them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and He will be accompanied by His called and chosen and faithful ones.”
- J. The sense of the passage is, that it does much to enable us to judge of character to know where people live. It is much more easy to be virtuous and pious in some circumstances than in others; - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- K. God knows all his people's circumstances, where they dwell, as well as what they do, and how they behave themselves in their habitations. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- L. But why should this pre-eminence in evil be assigned to Pergamos? The answer is difficult. Some leave it unsolved, saying that in the absence of any historical notice, it must remain one of the unsolved riddles of these epistles. Prof. Plumptre suggests that the general character of the city, its worship and customs, in addition to the persecutions which the Christians had encountered, may well account for the description. Æsculapius was worshipped as the “Preserver,” or “Saviour.” The symbol of the serpent must have been conspicuous among the objects of adoration in his temple. Curious arts were practiced; lying wonders were claimed; persecution had extended to death. Such evil in such a city may have led to its being regarded as the very head-quarters of the enemy. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- M. Satan, in impious mimicry of God's heavenly throne, sets up his earthly throne - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- N. was an old centre of emperor-worship in Asia Minor; in 29 B.C. a temple had been erected to the divine Augustus and the goddess Roma, and a special priesthood had been formed. In addition to these fashionable cults, a magnificent throne-like altar to Zeus Soter towered on the Acropolis commemorating the defeat of the barbarian Gauls by Attalus two centuries earlier, and decorated by a famous frieze of the gods warring against the giants (the latter, a brood of vigorous opponents, having often human bodies and serpentine tails - [Expositor's Greek Testament](#)
- O. It probably refers to the infamous idolatry practised at Pergamum, which had a cluster of temples to Zeus, Apollo, Athene, Dionysus, Aphrodite, and Æsculapius. These all lay together in a beautiful grove called the Nicephorium, Some have thought that the mention of Satan points to the serpent, which is so prominent in the cultus of Æsculapius. - [Pulpit Commentary](#)
- P. they had professed to be his followers, and they had steadfastly adhered to him and his cause in all the opposition made to him. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- Q. neither by the words of thy mouth, nor by any apostacy from this profession, notwithstanding the temptations thou hast had from suducers and from persecutors, and the sight of those who have been put to death for their profession. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- R. even in the days of Antipas - Short for Antipater. (Comp. Lucas and Silas, short for Lucanus and Silvanus.) Nothing is known of Antipas. There are later traditions respecting him, but these are probably fancy-drawn. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- S. it is much no ecclesiastical history makes mention of this martyr Antipas, which argueth him to have been a person but of an obscure note in the world; but Christ seeth and taketh notice of those little ones who belong to him, though the world overlooks them - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- T. A legend is given of the martyrdom under Domitian of Antipas Bishop of Pergamum: it can probably be traced up to the fifth or sixth century.

- U. Perhaps it is presumable that he was a Jew by birth: the name is a shortened form of Antipater. - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- V. The Menologia say, that Antipas was slain under Domitian: the Martyrologia, that he was cast into a heated brazen bull. - [Bengel's Gnomen](#)

2:14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.

#### I. Context

- A. Jesus tells the church of Pergamum that He speaks truth and cuts through lies - and He is aware they have held strong against many temptations.
- B. But they have been infected by the teaching of Balaam (the Nicolaitans)
  - 1. with the ideas that they can do whatever they want and still be saved.
    - a) Specifically to eat whatever they want and have sexual relations outside of marriage — in order to fit into the culture.

#### II. Notes

- A. Numbers 22:4 - Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field.” And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time.
- B. Numbers 22:5-6 - So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River, in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, “Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me. “Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”
- C. Numbers 25:1 - While Israel was staying in Acacia Grove, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with the daughters of Moab,
- D. Numbers 31:6 - Look, these women caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to turn unfaithfully against the LORD at Peor, so that the plague struck the congregation of the LORD.
- E. Acts 15:20 - Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood.
- F. 1 Corinthians 8:7-13 - However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat *food* as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But food will not [c]commend us to God; we are neither [d]the worse if we do not eat, nor [e]the better if we do eat. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.
- G. 1 Corinthians 10:20 - No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be participants with demons.
- H. Galatians 5:13 - For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
- I. 2 Peter 2:15 - They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness.
- J. Jude 1:4 - For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

- K. Jude 1:11 - *Woe to them! They have traveled the path of Cain; they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam; they have perished in Korah's rebellion*
- L. Here the charge is, that they tolerated that sect among them, and that they had among them also those who held the doctrine of Balaam. - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- M. by the doctrine of Balaam, he means the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, - *Matthew Poole's Commentary*
- N. Balak, king of Moab, when the children of Israel approached his borders, felt that he could not contend successfully against so great a host, for his people were dispirited and disheartened at their numbers, - *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*
- O. being sent for by Balak the king of Moab to come and curse Israel, and finding that God restrained him, and turned his tongue from cursing them to pronounce blessings to them, instructed Balak at last how to lay a stumblingblock before them, to make them to fall, viz. to set the Moabitish women to tempt them to commit uncleanness with them, and so to feast with them in their idols' temples, and eat of their meat first offered unto their idols. - *Matthew Poole's Commentary*
- P. Israel could not be cursed, but they might be made to bring a curse upon themselves by yielding to sin; so the counsel of Balaam was to tempt them through the women of Midian - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- Q. the act common to the Israelites of old, and the Nicolaitanes in John's day; he does not add what was peculiar to the Israelites, namely, that they sacrificed to idols. The temptation to eat idol-meats was a peculiarly strong one to the Gentile converts. For not to do so involved almost a withdrawal from partaking of any social meal with the heathen around. For idol-meats, after a part had been offered in sacrifice, were nearly sure to be on the heathen entertainer's table; so much so, that the Greek "to kill" (thuein) meant originally "to sacrifice." Hence arose the decree of the council of Jerusalem forbidding to eat such meats; subsequently some at Corinth ate unscrupulously and knowingly of such meats, on the ground that the idol is nothing; others needlessly tortured themselves with scruples, lest unknowingly they should eat of them when they got meat from the market or in a heathen friend's house. - *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*

2:15 *So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.*

I. Context

- A. Pergamum is surrounded by temptations to be like the culture around it - doing whatever it wants and still expecting God to accept them.
- B. This is the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
  - 1. The idea that God accepts you just as you are and that you do not have to make any effort to change. This is a lie that God hates.

II. Notes

- A. Galatians 5:13 - *For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*
- B. Jude 1:4 - *For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*
- C. Revelation 2:6 - *But you have this to your credit: You hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*
- D. The simplest meaning of the passage seems to be that the temptation to which the Israelites were exposed, is used to illustrate the temptations of the Pergamene Church, through the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- E. "which thing I hate" Instead of these words read "in like manner." - *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*

- F. the speaker means to say that the Nicolaitanes taught the same things which Balaam did - to wit, that they led the people into corrupt and licentious practices - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- G. namely, to tempt God's people to idolatry. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

2: 16 **Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.**

I. Context

- A. The church of Pergamum is trying to be God's people, but living like the culture around them at the same time. This does not work.
- B. Jesus warns them to wake up and live different, or Jesus arrive with the message of truth - which will cut this church apart.

II. Notes

- A. Numbers 22:23 - *When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the way.*
- B. Isaiah 49:2- *He made my mouth like a sharp sword; He hid me in the shadow of His hand. He made me like a polished arrow; He hid me in His quiver.*
- C. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 - *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of His mouth and abolish by the majesty of His arrival.*
- D. Revelation 22:7 - *"Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of prophecy in this book."*
- E. Revelation 22:20 - *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*
- F. Not only the Nicolaitanes, but the whole Church of Pergamos is called on to repent of not having hated the Nicolaitane teaching and practice - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- G. but with an allusion to the drawn sword with which the angel of the Lord confronted Balaam on his way to curse Israel: an earnest of the sword by which he and the seduced Israelites fell at last. The spiritual Balaamites of John's day are to be smitten with the Lord's spiritual sword, the word or "rod of His mouth." - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

2:17 **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'**

I. Context.

- A. The church of Pergamum is looking like the culture around them and Jesus warns them that this is in opposition to His teachings and will destroy the church if they do not change direction and embrace the Truth.
- B. Those that do seek this truth will find a victory.
  1. They will receive the "hidden Manna" - which is the manna from the Ark of the covenant, which legend says Jeremiah buried on his way to Egypt and would be found by the Messiah. In other words, they will be able to taste the bread of Life - Jesus.
  2. They will get a white stone - which refers to the stone of acceptance. They will be accepted by God.
  3. They will receive a new name that only they know - means that they will have control of their own lives since no one will have power to control them (by knowing their name).

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 16:33 - So Moses told Aaron, "Take a jar and fill it with an omer of manna. Then place it before the LORD to be preserved for the generations to come."
- B. Isaiah 56:5 - I will give them, in My house and within My walls, a memorial and a name better than that of sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.
- C. Isaiah 62:2 - Nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.
- D. Isaiah 65:15 - You will leave behind your name as a curse for My chosen ones, and the Lord GOD will slay you, but to His servants He will give another name.
- E. John 6:35 - Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.
- F. John 6:49 - Your forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died.
- G. John 6:57 - "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.
- H. Revelation 19:12 - He has eyes like blazing fire, and many royal crowns on His head. He has a name written on Him that only He Himself knows.
- I. To him that overcometh; the Balaamites and Nicolaitans, and do not give in to the doctrines and practices of the one, or of the other, whatever persecution and trouble he meets with, and endures on that account: - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- J. those who refused to indulge the fleshly appetite are promised gratifications far higher, and hidden from the gaze of sense; - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- K. Israel ate manna in the wilderness, and died; the Father gives the true bread from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. The Son is that Bread of Life. He that eateth Him, even he shall live by Him - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- L. There was a fondly-held tradition that they had been buried by Jeremiah in a safe and secret spot on "the mountain where Moses climbed and saw the heritage of God, until the time that God shall gather His people again together, and show them His mercy". - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- M. The true spiritual food; the food that nourishes the soul. The idea is, that the souls of those who "overcame," or who gained the victory in their conflict with sin, and in the persecutions and trials of the world, would be permitted to partake of that spiritual food which is laid up for the people of God, and by which they will be nourished forever. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- N. will I give to eat of the hidden manna; in opposition to eating things sacrificed to idols, refused by him. - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- O. They made use of them (as we since of counters) to count; they used them also in judgments, acquitting persons by white stones, on which their names were written, as they condemned others by black stones; they also used them in giving suffrages in elections, &c.; they also used them to mark happy or lucky days, and they used other stones to mark such days as they counted unlucky; and finally, they used them as rewards to those who conquered in their games. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- P. The Grecians used them to mark good or lucky days with them, as they called them; and could the allusion be thought to be to this custom, the sense would be, that Christ promises, to his people that overcome, happy days, after the times of Popish darkness and persecution were over: white stones were also given to the conquerors in the Olympic games, with their names upon them, and the value of the prize they won; - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- Q. This alludes to the mysterious power attached in the ancient mind to amulets, stones - [Expositor's Greek Testament](#)

[Message to Thyatira](#)

2:18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

I. Context

- A. Ephesus is told to hold pure, but reach out. Smyrna is told stand strong in persecution, but don't attack the people hurting them (they are not the enemy). Pergamum is told to be like Christ, not the culture around us.
- B. Thyatira is reminded that Jesus is the Son of God, who has been refined by fire (the cross) and who has eyes that penetrate lies.
  - 1. These images challenge Thyatira's' worship of Apollos, the son of Zeus and the god of the sun.

II. Notes

- A. Daniel 10:6 - His body was like beryl, his face like the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.
- B. Matthew 4:3 - The tempter came to Him and said, "If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."
- C. Acts 16:14 - Among those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.
- D. Revelation 1:14 - The hair of His head was white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like a blazing fire.
- E. Revelation 1:15 - His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the roar of many waters.
- F. [Thyatira] situated between Pergamos and Sardis, a little off the main road which connected these two cities. It was a Macedonian colony, founded by Alexander the Great after the overthrow of the Persian empire. The Macedonian colonists appear to have introduced the worship of Apollo, honoured as the Sun-god, under the name of Tyrimnas. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- G. Next to Pergamos is Thyatira situated, at the distance of about forty-eight miles to the south-east. At present the city is called by the Turks Akhisar, or The White Castle, from the great quantities of white marble there abounding. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- H. It has been thought by some that the description here given of Christ—“the eyes of flame”—was selected in allusion to this worship of the Sun-god, under the form of some dazzlingly ornamented image. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- I. Before the glance of his eye all is light, and nothing can be concealed from his view - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- J. seemeth to signify both the purity and holiness of his ways and methods of providence, and also his firmness and steadiness in them. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

2:19 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

I. Context

- A. Thyatira is reminded that Jesus is charge (the Son of God), He has eyes that penetrate lies, and who has been refined by fire (the cross).
- B. Jesus knows that this church is trying to do good things, and have been getting better and better.

II. Notes

- A. Romans 2:7 - to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;
- B. 1 Corinthians 13:1 - If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
- C. Hebrews 6:10 - For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

- D. We have the Christian community commended for charity and service, the outward ministrations which manifest the inner principle of love - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- E. Besides their faith and love, they are commended for their progress in good works—the last are more than the first. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

2:20 *But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.*

I. Context

- A. Thyatira is trying to be a good church and have been growing stronger.
  - B. But they have a problem
    - 1. Their leader is being influenced by his wife (as symbolized by Jezebel who corrupted her husband King Abed)
    - 2. She is teaching the doctrines of the Nicolaitans.
      - a) Mainly to eat whatever they want
      - b) and to have sex with whoever they want
- (1) so that they fit into the culture around them

II. Notes

- A. 1 Kings 16:31 - *And as if it were not enough for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, he even married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and then he proceeded to serve and worship Baal.*
- B. 1 Kings 21:25 - *Surely there was never one like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, incited by his wife Jezebel.*
- C. 2 Kings 9:22 - *When Joram saw Jehu, he asked, "Have you come in peace, Jehu?" "How can there be peace," he replied, "as long as the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel abound?"*
- D. Ezekiel 13:17 - *Now, O son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their own imagination. Prophesy against them*
- E. Acts 15:20 - *Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood.*
- F. 1 Corinthians 10:20 - *No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be participants with demons.*
- G. Revelations 2:14 - *But I have a few things against you, because some of you hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to place a stumbling block before the Israelites so they would eat food sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality.*
- H. Some adopt the reading, “thy wife Jezebel.” - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- I. It seems best to view the name as symbolical, always remembering that the Jezebel spirit of proud, self-constituted authority, vaunting claims of superior holiness, or higher knowledge, linked with a disregard of—and perhaps a proud contempt for—“legalism,” and followed by open immorality, has again and again run riot in the churches of God. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- J. Jezebel was the wife of Ahab; a woman of vast influence over her husband - an influence which was uniformly exerted for evil. She was a daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and Sidon, and lived about 918 years before Christ. She was an idolater, and induced her weak husband not only to connive at her introducing the worship of her native idols, but to become an idolater himself, and to use all the means in his power to establish the worship of idols instead of the worship of the true God. She was highly gifted, persuasive, and artful; was resolute in the accomplishment of her purposes; ambitious of extending and perpetuating her power, and unscrupulous in the means which she employed to execute her designs. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

- K. regarded by her followers as a prophetess, as one with a real message from God; but viewed by the Lord of the churches as a very Jezebel, teaching and seducing the servants of God. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- L. The sin alleged against her is the same for which the Nicolaitanes are condemned— fornication, and the eating of things sacrificed to idols. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

2:21 I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

I. Context

- A. The church of Thyatira is trying to do good, but they have been influenced by the teachings of the wife of the church leader - who leads people to be like the culture around them
- B. She has been warned, but she does not want to change her path (repent).

II. Notes

- A. Romans 2:4 - *Or do you disregard the riches of His kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance?*
- B. 2 Peter 3:9 - *The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.*
- C. Revelation 9:20 - *The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the works of their hands. They did not stop worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk.*

2:22 Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

I. Context

- A. The church of Thyatira is being influenced by the wife of the leader - who wants to be like the culture. She has been warned, but does not want to change.
- B. Her choices are making her sick - and her followers are in danger of getting sick also.

II. Notes

- A. The chamber of voluptuousness will become the chamber of sickness. The spot of the sin shall be the scene of punishment - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- B. The harlot's bed and a sick-bed are thus brought together, as they are often, in fact, in the dispensations of Providence and the righteous judgments of God. One cannot be indulged without leading on, sooner or later, to the horrid sufferings of the other: and how soon no one knows. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- C. This is another indication that this is possibly a sexually transmitted disease. I will severely punish these seducers for their evil principles and practices; and this punishment shall reach all who have been partakers in such acts of wickedness: - [Benson Commentary](#)
- D. either they who commit it with her literally, or who are led into the same kind of life.- [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- E. Great suffering; disease of body or tortures of the soul. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- F. It is only by repentance that we can avoid the consequences of sin. The word "repent" here evidently includes both sorrow for the past, and abandonment of the evil course of life. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

2:23 And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

I. Context

- A. The church of Thyatira is being influenced by a woman that wants them to live like the culture, but her choices are making her sick. Her followers are in danger of getting sick also.

- B. This sickness effects those around her - such as her children (the innocent ones).
- C. This sickness also shows that there is a difference between those that follow her example and those that follow Christ. The effects of our choices are seen by everyone.

## II. Notes

- A. Psalm 7:9 - Put an end to the evil of the wicked, but establish the righteous, O righteous God who searches hearts and minds.
- B. Psalm 26:2 - Test me, O LORD, and try me; examine my heart and mind.
- C. Psalm 62:12 - and loving devotion to You, O Lord. For You will repay each man according to his deeds.
- D. Psalm 139:1 - O LORD, You have searched me and known me.
- E. Jeremiah 11:20 - But, O LORD of Hosts, who judges righteously, who tests the heart and mind, let me see Your vengeance upon them, for I have committed my cause to You.
- F. Jeremiah 17:10 - I, the LORD, search the heart; I test the mind to reward a man according to his way, by what his deeds deserve.
- G. Matthew 16:27 - For the Son of Man will come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will repay each one according to what he has done.
- H. Luke 16:15 - So He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is prized among men is detestable before God.
- I. Acts 1:24 - And they prayed, "Lord, You know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two You have chosen
- J. Romans 5:19 - For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous
- K. Romans 8:27 - And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
- L. Revelation 20:12 - And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And there were open books, and one of them was the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their deeds, as recorded in the books.
- M. Revelation 22:12 - Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to each one according to what he has done.
- N. This is to be understood of her followers. The so-called prophetess led the way in looseness of morals, under the pretence of some deeper knowledge. She had her associates and their disciples; the evil and the evil consequences would grow; the disciples outran their teachers, and more than tribulation—death—is their penalty. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- O. If it is to be taken literally, it is in accordance with what is often threatened in the Scriptures, that children shall be visited with calamity for the sins of parents, and with what often occurs in fact, that they do thus suffer. For it is no uncommon thing that whole families are made desolate on account of the sin and folly of the parent - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- P. That is, the design of this judgment will be so apparent that it will convince all that I know what is in the hearts of people, even the secret acts of wickedness that are concealed from human view. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- Q. it means not merely all the seven Churches of Asia but 'all the churches in the world,' - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- R. This is clearly a claim to omniscience; and as it is the Lord Jesus who speaks in all these epistles, it is a full proof that he claims this for himself. There is nothing which more clearly pertains to God than the power of searching the heart, and nothing that is more constantly claimed by him as his special prerogative - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- S. God's peculiar attribute is given to Christ. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

2:24 But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you.

I. context

- A. Thyatira is being influenced by a woman who teaches them to live like the culture around them - but this is making her and her followers sick.
- B. To those that are staying focused on Jesus (and not following her teachings, which she claims to hold secrets that only she knows), Jesus says that is enough. To hold onto the basics of Scripture is all they need to do. They do not need to seek answers anywhere else.

II. Notes

- A. Matthew 11:30 - "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
- B. Acts 15:28 - It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond these essential requirements:
- C. 1 Corinthians 2:10 - But God has revealed it to us by the Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.
- D. James 3:15 - Such wisdom does not come from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.
- E. To all who have not embraced it, or been contaminated with it. It may be presumed that there was a considerable portion of the church which had not. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- F. These teachers, as was the case with the Gnostics, professed to have a deeper insight into mysteries, the deep things of God. and may have even boasted of their knowledge of Satan - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- G. Deep things are those which are hidden from view - as of things which are far underground; and hence the word is used to denote mysteries, or profound designs and purposes. The allusion here is not to any trials or sufferings that Satan might bring upon anyone, or to any temptations of which he might be the author, but to his profound art in inculcating error and leading people astray. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- H. These false prophets boasted peculiarly of their knowledge of mysteries and the deep things of God; pretensions subsequently expressed by their arrogant title, Gnostics ("full of knowledge"). The Spirit here declares their so-called "depths," (namely, of knowledge of divine things) to be really "depths of Satan"; - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- I. That is, no other than that which you now experience from having these persons with you, and that which must attend the effort to purify the church. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- J. save abstinence from, and protestation against, these abominations; no "depths" beyond your reach, such as they teach, no new doctrine, but the old faith and rule of practice once for all delivered to the saints. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

2:25 Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

I. Context

- A. Jesus says that we need to focus on Him and His teachings - the basics of our faith - nothing else. That is enough. Anything else is a burden.
- B. And just do that until He gets back.

II. Notes

- A. John 14:3 - If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.
- B. John 21:22 - Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain until I return, what is that to you? You follow Me!"
- C. Philippians 3:16 - however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

- D. Revelation 3:11 - *I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*
- E. no other precepts than what you have had from the apostles - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- F. Which was something good, even the faithful word, the form of sound words, the mystery and doctrine of faith; this they had received from Christ and his apostles; they had it in their hearts, and a comfortable experience of the truth and power of it, and had made a profession of it, which they now held, and are here exhorted to hold fast: - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- G. do not let go from your grasp, however false teachers may wish to wrest it from you. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

2:26 *He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;*

I. Context

- A. We need to hold onto the basics of our faith until Jesus returns.
- B. This is how we gain victory
  1. And this is how you gain victory over this world.

II. Notes

- A. Psalm 2:8 - *Ask Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance, the ends of the earth Your possession.*
- B. Psalm 49:14 - *Like sheep they are destined for Sheol. Death will be their shepherd. The upright will rule them in the morning, and their form will decay in Sheol, far from their lofty abode.*
- C. Daniel 7:18 - *But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever--yes, forever and ever.'*
- D. Matthew 10:22 - *You will be hated by everyone on account of My name, but the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.*
- E. It is not said that they would have exclusive power over the nations, or that they would hold offices of trust under him during a personal reign on the earth; but the meaning is, that they would be associated with him in his future glory. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

2:27 *and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father;*

I. Context

- A. By living simply for God (and knowing what we believe), we can control the world.
- B. We shall have a strength to stand when the world hits us - because we stand with Jesus, who rules the world.

II. Notes

- A. Daniel 7:18 - *But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever--yes, forever and ever.'*
- B. Psalm 2:9 - *You will break them an iron sceptor; You will shatter them like pottery."*
- C. Isaiah 30:14 - *It will break in pieces like a potter's jar, shattered so that no fragment can be found. Not a shard will be found in the dust large enough to scoop the coals from a hearth or to skim the water from a cistern."*
- D. Jeremiah 19:11 - *and you are to proclaim to them that this is what the LORD of Hosts says: I will shatter this nation and this city, like one shatters a potter's jar that can never again be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth since there is nowhere else to bury them*
- E. to particular saints here, who rule the nations either in Christ their Head, or with Christ as their Chieftain, with the word of God powerfully convincing the world of sin and righteousness. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- F. Lit., shall shepherd - [Vincent's Word Studies](#)

- G. To rule with a scepter of iron, is not to rule with a harsh and tyrannical sway, but with power that is firm and invincible. It denotes a government of strength, or one that cannot be successfully opposed; one in which the subjects are effectually subdued. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- H. The allusion in the Psalm is to the Messiah as reigning triumphant over the nations, or subduing them under him; and the idea here, as in the previous verse, is, that his redeemed people will be associated with him in this dominion - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- I. which may be expressive either of the breaking of rocky hearts in pieces at conversion, and of making souls humble and contrite; or of the irreparable ruin and destruction of antichrist, when the saints shall consume and destroy him: - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

## 2:28 and I will give him the morning star.

### I. Context

- A. When we stand with Jesus, and know what we believe, we are unmovable.
- B. And we will receive the morning star - Jesus, the one that shines brighter than the sun and brings a new hope.

### II. Notes

- A. Isaiah 14:12 - [How you have fallen from heaven, O Morning Star, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the ground, O destroyer of nations.](#)
- B. Daniel 12:3 - ["Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.](#)
- C. 2 Peter 1:19 - [So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.](#)
- D. Revelation 22:16 - ["I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star."](#)
- E. Note: Jesus is the morning star - the hope of a new day. The overcomer would share in the brightness and hope of Jesus because they have shown a light on the dark lies of the Gnostics and the Nicolations within the church.
- F. The pledge of the coming day, both for the waiting witnesses, and for the ungodly, who loved darkness because their deeds were evil: the earnest of the sovereignty of light over darkness, when the children of the day would be manifest, and shine as the stars for ever and ever - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- G. The "morning star" is that bright planet - Venus - which at some seasons of the year appears so beautifully in the east, leading on the morning - the harbinger of the day. It is one of the most beautiful objects in nature, and is susceptible of a great variety of uses for illustration. It appears as the darkness passes away; it is an indication that the morning comes; it is intermingled with the first rays of the light of the sun; it seems to be a herald to announce the coming of that glorious luminary; it is a pledge of the faithfulness of God. In which of these senses, if any, it is referred to here, is not stated; nor is it said what is implied by its being given to him that overcomes. It would seem to be used here to denote a bright and brilliant ornament; something with which he who "overcame" would be adorned, resembling the bright star of the morning. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- H. so that reflecting My perfect brightness, he shall shine like Me, the morning star, and share My kingly glory - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- I. he excelleth all other stars in glory, and scattereth the darkness of ignorance and error by the light of his gospel: I will make him partaker of myself. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- J. The star was the ancient emblem of sovereignty. - [Vincent's Word Studies](#)

2:29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

I. Context

A. Review the first four churches

1. Ephesus - Balance pure teaching with loving outreach.
2. Smyrna - Hold strong in tough times and fight the enemy (Satan) not people.
3. Pergamum - Live like Christ, not the culture around us.
4. Thyatira - Know what you believe so that you can never be moved.