

Commentary on Revelation chapter 2 by Chuck Smith 4.27.25

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April memory verse

1 Exodus 20:1&2

² I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

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Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev 2:1);

So the description of Jesus out of chapter one, "He holds the seven stars in his right hand and He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks". And you will find that His message is going to be relative to this description. It is going to come up again in the message to the church of Ephesus. It should be noted that each of these churches comprise a period of church history. And you can find that it fits very well to the periods of church history. And we will point out these periods of church history as we go through the seven messages.

These seven churches exist today. The conditions in this state you will find are relative to the church today. So they exist concurrently and they were addressed to the seven churches that existed, than dealing with situations that did exist within the churches, but they also have a historic application, which we will also see.

Now to the church of Ephesus, I know thy works (Rev 2:2),

He says that to each of the churches. and thy labour, and thy patience (Rev 2:2),

So the church has been patiently waiting for the kingdom. And because of our patient waiting for the kingdom, scoffers have come and said, "Ah, where is the promise of His coming? You know the world is going on as it was. There is nothing different. It has always been the fight of good against evil." And they can show you headlines in the papers of 1897 that read like today. It's been happening all the way along. Where is the promise of the kingdom? Since our fathers fell asleep all things have continued as they were from the beginning. So the patient waiting for the kingdom as the Lord is patiently waiting for the complete fruit of harvest.

I know thy works, thy labour, thy patience, and how you can not bear them which are evil (Rev 2:2):

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So they really had the gift of discernment going. One of the problems of the church is the evil that exists within it. And Jesus declared in the kingdom parables that it was going to happen. The seed is going to fall on various types of soil and there would be an abnormal growth to the church, like a mustard seed, a small seed, but it grows into a tree, abnormal growth. And the birds of the air, which are always a symbol of evil, will come and lodge in its branches. There have been a lot of evil birds lodged in the branches of the church and they exist today. There are a lot of dirty birds in the church.

"You can not bear those that are evil." They had the purging power within the church of Ephesus. And it is a healthy body that can purge the poisons from its system. It is when the church begins to tolerate the poison that it is going to die. If your body gets so weak it can't purge poisons anymore, than death is going to follow very soon. It is necessary that the healthy body purge itself of the poisons within it.

you have borne, you have patience, and for my name's sake you've laboured ([Rev 2:3](#)),

Their labor was done in the name of Jesus.

for his name's sake you've laboured, and have not fainted ([Rev 2:3](#)).

And they have got all these works and all of these efforts going. They are a tremendously active church. All the committees are functioning as they are designed to.

Nevertheless I have this against thee, because you have left your first love ([Rev 2:4](#)).

So what the Lord was really longing for is not so much works, but just a loving relationship with his people. That is what God longs to have with you tonight. The Lord is just looking for a loving relationship with you. We are so often trying to substitute our works, efforts, for just plain fellowship. And the Lord longs for just plain fellowship. Rather than busying yourself for Him, He would rather that you just sit, relax and share time and love and fellowship with Him.

"I have this against you that you have left your first love," that excitement, that thrill that you knew in the beginning. God said to Israel, "I remember the love that you had for Me when I was espoused to you in the wilderness. How that you were talking about Me all the time. What happened?" Jesus is saying I am missing the first love. That first bloom of love that you had.

So remember from whence you are fallen. And notice it is "fallen". It is backsliding. You have gone backwards. You should have a deeper relationship of love with the Lord tonight than ever before. "Remember from whence you have fallen". Remember those exciting days of following the Lord wherever He might lead. Hey, we were daring. We would do anything for Jesus. We would go anywhere for Jesus, our love.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent ([Rev 2:4](#)),

Change, turn, and then repent.

do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, unless you repent (Rev 2:5).

So the warning is that He will not stay in a loveless church. He will take that church away from His presence. For where was Jesus walking in the midst? "This sayeth he who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." So, it is relevant to the message of judgment that He announces. "If you don't repent, I am going to take and remove the church from the place of My presence. I won't stay", He is saying, "in a church that lacks love."

"You have left," He said, "your first love." Oh, what an indictment. "You better repent," He said, "or else the next thing that goes is My presence. I am not going to stay."

But this you do have, you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate (Rev 2:6).

What are the deeds of the Nicolaitans? The Greek words "Nicolaus" or "nikos" and "laos" are the words for Nicolaitanes. "Nikos" is priest or priesthood, and "laos" is the laody, the common people. So it is the establishing of a spiritual hierarchy, where a man would come between you and God. And would say, "No, you can't go directly to God. You come to me and I will go to God for you." That is exactly why Jesus died, to set aside-When Jesus died the veil of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom as God was signifying to all men that every one can now have direct access to the throne of God. And in Hebrews we read, "Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we might receive mercy in the time of need, or the throne of mercy to receive grace in the time of need"(Hebrews 4:16). But that entry has been made through Jesus Christ.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Rev 2:7).

Adam was banished from the garden of Eden, because he had the choice of all of the trees that are in the garden to eat, but the tree that is in the midst of the garden thou shalt not eat thereof. Adam had the choice. He could have eaten of the tree of life, which was in the Garden of Eden, but he chose rather to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And in a sense, each of us makes that same decision that Adam made. There is the tree of life available to each of us through the cross of Jesus Christ, but so many times people choose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They want to dabble in the evil things. They want to know about the evil.

Now to him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. God transplanted that tree. When Adam was driven from the Garden of Eden, God placed a cherubim at the gate of the garden to guard it, lest man should return and eat of the tree of life and live forever in a sinful state. That is the most

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horrible thing that could have happened to man. God was protecting man from his own folly. But one day we will eat of that tree of life.

He that overcometh (Rev 2:7)

"He that lives and believes in Me", Jesus said, "will never die." So He is the tree of life, really, and partaking of Him we have eternal life.

And unto the angel of the church of Smyrna write (Rev 2:8);

Now the church of Ephesus historically is your first period of church history, up unto the death of the apostles, the book of Acts. Towards the end, there was a growing cold as they began to formalize the religion. The church of Smyrna is the church of the second and third century that went through such tremendous suffering and persecution from the Roman government. It was estimated that six million Christians were martyred during this period of time. Some of them were fed to the lions, stretched on the racks, crucified by the hundreds, as the Roman emperors at various periods sought to stamp out Christianity. So to this church that was going to experience such tremendous suffering and persecution, the message of Jesus is one of a different nature. It is a message of comfort, a message of hope.

To the angel of the church of Smyrna write; these things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive (Rev 2:8);

Remember the description of Himself, "the first and the last"? "I was dead and I am alive again", because many, six million of this church are to be martyred for their faith.

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you art rich) (Rev 2:9)

Poor in material things, but rich in spiritual things.

I know the blasphemy of those that are Jews, and are not, they are the synagogue of Satan (Rev 2:9).

Paul the Apostle tells us that not all who have the Law are justified. For circumcision is not an outward ritual, it is really something of the heart. It is something that takes place within a person's heart. It is not an outward ritual that a person goes through. It is an inward work within the heart. And there were many who were trusting in the Law. We have the Law. And they were trusting in the outward observance of the Law, where in reality what really mattered was in the person's heart.

I know those-the blasphemy of those which say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan, because they are opposed to Jesus Christ. They are fighting against Jesus Christ, God's Son.

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Fear none of those things which you will suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; you are going to have tribulation for ten days: but be thou faithful unto death, and I will give to you a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches; He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death (Rev 2:10-11).

Don't fear those who are able to kill your body and after that have no power, but fear Him who after the body is killed has the power to cast your soul into Gehenna. "Ye, I say unto you, fear ye Him".

Now they may kill your body. Don't worry about that. You'll not be hurt of the second death. So the words of comfort and hope to these who were to be martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ. Notice no call to repentance. They are going to have enough just being martyred for their faith. Now I do recommend highly that you read Foxe's Book of Martyrs to get an insight to the church of Smyrna and the price that these people paid to believe in Jesus Christ.

Unto the angel of the church of Pergamos write (Rev 2:12);

This is the development now of the state church under Constantine.

These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges (Rev 2:12);

And out of His mouth there went a sword with two edges; the Word of God which cuts in judgment.

I know thy works, and I know where you dwell, even where Satan's throne is (Rev 2:13):

Where is Satan's throne? It is in the world. Here is a church that was trying to dwell in the world. It never worked, a church trying to join with the worldly system, a church state system, the legislating of righteousness, the legislating of religious issues. It can't be done. It has to come from the heart. It has to be within a person's heart to do it. You can't make laws that will make people righteous or cause people to live righteous lives. That has to be a work of God's Spirit within a person's heart. So, here is a church that is trying to dwell in the world. "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is."

But you hold fast my name, you have not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold to the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat the things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication (Rev 2:13-14).

So, the doctrine of Balaam was the introduction of idolatry to the people of God. And it was at this time in church history that they began to introduce representations of Jesus and Mary and of the Apostles and Saints and Moses and so forth. They began to introduce the arts and statues and so forth within the churches and it became part of the

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church structure, the introduction of idols in the worship of God, the doctrine of Balaam, worshipping God in unprescribed ways.

Jesus said, "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Someone said, "Hey, I go to the beach and I worship God at the beach." I believe you. I do too. "I go to the mountains and I worship God in the mountains." I do too. You see, God is a Spirit. They that worship Him, worship Him in Spirit and in truth, and we don't have to confine ourselves to a building to worship God, nor should we. We worship God everywhere. "God is a Spirit."

You also have those that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes (Rev 2:15),

And so, we find that in this period of church history there began to be the establishment of the professional ministry, the priesthood, the ruling over the laity. And here again the Lord says,

I hate these things. Repent; or else I will come to thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword in my mouth (Rev 2:15-16).

Jesus will come against them in judgment with His Word.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it (Rev 2:17).

The white stone was a stone of acceptance. The black stone was a stone of rejection, black-balled. I will give them a white stone. I will receive him. I will accept him and give him a name, which no man knows except him who receives it.

Now unto the angel of the church at Thyatira (Rev 2:18);

Now we have the development of the Roman Catholic system. And please, if you are a Roman Catholic or have a Catholic background, don't be angry with me, because we are going to lay it on the Protestants when we get to Sardis. At least the Lord has some good things to say about Thyatira and Pergamos. He doesn't have anything good to say about Sardis. So hang around. We'll get there. There is something in the messages of Jesus to the churches to offend everybody, so it is here.

I think it is wrong to just bury my head in the sand and say, "Oh, that doesn't exist, or that is terrible, or you shouldn't judge." If there is something wrong, I want the Lord to show us. If there is something wrong with what we are doing, with what I am doing, I want God to show me. I don't want to be blind. I don't want to be bigoted and say, "No, we have got the only way and we are it, and there is nothing to improve on." I can't believe that.

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David said, "Search me O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there is a way of wickedness in me and You lead me in Your way" (Psalm 139:23). That is what I want. I don't want to be headstrong and so set in my ways and in my traditions that I am not open to the voice of the Spirit. Let him that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying. I want to hear what the Lord is saying to me. And if there is something wrong or off in the way I am teaching or the way I am living or whatever, I want to be open so God can reveal it to my heart and show me. I don't want to be so dogmatic or narrow that I can't see the flaws that exist in my own life. That would be terrible.

To the church of Thyatira He writes,

These things saith the Son of God, who has his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass (Rev 2:18);

Whenever you come across brass in the scriptures, you are coming across a metal that is a symbol of judgment. The laver in which the priests would wash was made of brass. Moses made a serpent of brass and lifted it up in the wilderness. It is a metal that is symbolic of God's judgment.

So, eyes like a flame of fire. And fire is always looked at in the terms of judgment in purifying, the refining of the fire.

I know thy works, and your charity [love], your service, and your faith (Rev 2:19),

And these are the dominant issues of the Roman Catholic Church, their love and their service and their faith and,

patience and works (Rev 2:19);

And this they have a lot of, a lot of good works. And there are some marvelous, marvelous people in the Catholic Church that I highly admire. Mother Teresa is just an unusual person, marvelous. It is not saying things against those individuals, because God has His overcomers. It is just talking about a system.

Notwithstanding though you have these things, I have a few things against you, first of all because you allowed the woman Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit [which would be spiritual] fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols (Rev 2:20).

So again the introduction of idols in worship, relics to be worshipped; the idols to be kissed or prayed to.

I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those that commit adultery with her into the great tribulation (Rev 2:21-22),

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So, here is now first of all the indication that the Catholic Church would exist right up until the coming of Jesus Christ and the rapture of the church, because he talks of them being allowed to go into the Great Tribulation. So this church will exist. You see nothing was said of Ephesus. That church existed in the first century. Smyrna existed in the second and the third century, and the church system joined by Constantine became divided and you had the Eastern and Western. And now you have the development of this great system. And the threat that, unless they repent, they will be cast into the Great Tribulation.

What is the rationale there? If they do repent they can escape the Great Tribulation. You see the Great Tribulation will be judgment for their failure to repent, which means that repentance would bring you deliverance or escape from the Great Tribulation.

And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searches the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one according to your works (Rev 2:23).

Not so Lord, according to your mercy and grace deal with me.

But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you no other burden. But that which you have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Rev 2:24-29).

So, these glorious promises of Jesus to the overcomers in this system, reigning with Him upon the earth, ruling over the earth, receiving the morning star, even Jesus Himself.