

Revelation 1:9-3:22

Read “Central Focus”

Sing Hymn: 490 “Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won!”

Read “Reflection from Session 2 Pamphlet

Pray aloud the Prayer

Presentation:

“John...was in exile on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea because of his testimony for Jesus. Rather than deny the Lord and submit to the emperor’s command to honor him as a god, rather than cease preaching the Gospel of the Lord whom he knew and loved, John was willing to go into exile.” (Leaders Guide, 15-16)

Not his first rodeo. See Acts 5:17-41.

Thus, Revelation 1:9.

### **Vision of the Son of Man**

<sup>9</sup>I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Recall the meaning “in the tribulation” as ongoing.

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

The Lord’s Day (Sunday)...not random, Day of the Resurrection. Major apologetic on the validity of the Christian Church...Historical argument. Saturday WAS the day! Not anymore.

<sup>11</sup> saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

Introducing a series of visions for the purpose of comforting the Church.

Recall, real churches in Asia Minor and real historical circumstances, HOWEVER, these words have “parallels in every age, and the words are as relevant today as they were at that time...” (LG, 16)

The words are both warning and encouragement, or LAW and GOSPEL!

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

The Seven churches...lit on account of the Light of the World Jesus Christ who is in the midst of them. Soak in. True for us. John 8:12 and Matthew 5:14. Christ’s light upon and through us.

<sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

This is Jesus Christ. In the Gospels, He refers to Himself as “The Son of Man” = judge of all men/all people. His divine authority points to His divinity. Recall Daniel 7:13.

<sup>14</sup>The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup>his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. <sup>16</sup>In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

<sup>17</sup>When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup>and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. <sup>19</sup>Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. <sup>20</sup>As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Spiritual portrayal using physical imagery in the style of apocalyptic literature/genre. The style of His **robe** is like that of the high priest in Israel. See Exodus 28:4; 29:5.

**Golden sash** symbolizes the office of high priest. Hebrews refers to Christ this way. Hebrews 8:1; 9:11, 24.

**Hair** is a symbol of wisdom and purity.

In Daniel 7 it is the “Ancient of Days” whose hair is “like pure wool,” so we see the connection between Father and Son.

What is ascribed to Father is ascribed to Son.

**Eyes** indicate ability to penetrate – to see all things.

**Voice** describes God’s voice in Ezekiel 43:2.

Skip to Rev 1:20 for a moment: 7 stars are 7 what? And seven lampstands are 7 what?

Explain the centrality of the Word here.

Now, go back to verse 16: See Isaiah 49:2 and mention Ephesians 6:17. Also see Hebrews 4:12. Why describe it like a “two-edged sword”?

Face like the sun shining in full strength: Glory, power, dominion.

Verse 17: Seeing this, John has only one appropriate reaction. Soak this in. What does it say about the appropriateness of reverence before the Lord?

But what does the Lord say to John?

\*\*\* Here, Jesus has the title that was given to the Father at Revelation 1:8! Again, the unity of the Trinity.

Verse 18: Christ is ALREADY victorious! Again, beware of false timeline and WAITING for Satan to be bound. No! He is already!

<sup>19</sup> Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.

“The events to come (which Revelation will reveal in the following visions) show Satan’s last-ditch attempts to destroy the work of Christ, to turn the world away from Him. But in the resurrection of Christ it is made clear to us that the victory has already been won...”.  
(LG 17)

These cities are strategically placed for the dissemination of the Gospel; thus it is not surprising that Satan would attack them. See the shape of the churches in relation to each other’s locations on map.

Remember Law and Gospel approach, warning and encouragement.

They all have the same format for their letters:

Greeting

Title of Risen Christ

Word of Praise

Criticism

Warning

Exhortation

Promise

7 aspects!

### **To the Church in Ephesus**

**2** “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

<sup>2</sup> “ ‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup> I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup> But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. <sup>6</sup> Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Greatest city in Asia Minor at the time.

Goddess Artemis (Diana): temple to Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Started through Paul’s ministry (Acts 19)

Remember the riot...how the world reacts to the Gospel

2-3

Praise congregation for hard work

Perseverance

False teachers were not tolerated

That is, they had DISCERNMENT

Recall Bereans of Acts 17

Verse 6: Hating practices of Nicolaitans. First, why is word “hate” appropriate in this case?

Nicolaitans = sect that sought to compromise with pagan society, proclaiming Christian liberty allowed them to practice idolatry and immorality; thus allowing them to avoid suffering for the faith.

However, they are called to repent. Forsaking their FIRST LOVE. Galatians 5:22: Love the fruit of the Spirit. “The Ephesians were doing what was outwardly correct, but their hearts were not right, and they were again in danger of falling under God’s judgment.” (LG 18)

How much do we need this message today?

### **To the Church in Smyrna**

<sup>8</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.

<sup>9</sup>“ ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup>Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the

crown of life. <sup>11</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

A powerful and beautiful city.

Being persecuted with more to come.

They are admonished not to be afraid.

By being faithful, what will they receive?

Will be protected from "the second death"...eternal death/separation from God.

### **To the Church in Pergamum**

<sup>12</sup>"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

<sup>13</sup>" 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup>But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup>So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup>Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. <sup>17</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

Northernmost of the Seven Cities.

Administrative center of the province.

Emperor worship was strictly enforced.

Verse 13: "where Satan's throne is"

Verses 14-15: HOWEVER, warned against tolerating the teaching of Balaam and Nicolaitans = in the Old Testament when Balaam was unable to curse Israel, “he counseled Balak to entice Israel into immorality, thus bringing a curse upon themselves.” (LG 18) Both groups wanted to compromise with the surrounding culture.

Again, super applicable to our time.

Verse 17: “a white stone, with a new name”

“White stone” = in ancient world, such served as admission tickets to banquets

“New name” = beginning of new life, from death to life, conversion here on earth.

The new life represented in Romans 6

### **To the Church in Thyatira**

<sup>18</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

<sup>19</sup> “ ‘I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. <sup>20</sup> But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, <sup>23</sup> and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup> But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. <sup>25</sup> Only hold fast what you have until I come. <sup>26</sup> The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, <sup>27</sup> and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> And I will give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’



Smallest of the seven cities.

Acts 16:14 mentions it.

Home of Lydia, Paul's first convert in Philippi.

Verse 19: Praised for growing in love, faith, service, and perseverance.

Verse 20: Still, they were guilty of tolerating "Jezebel" = code name from the Old Testament given to a false prophetess active in the city. "Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, King of Israel, who had actively sought to destroy the worship of the true God among the Israelites and replace it with the worship of Baal. Perhaps the attitude of love being conveyed by the people became misguided and led to tolerance of an evil that should have been cast out from among God's people."

Again, so applicable today.

Verse 28: What is the "morning star" here?

### **To the Church in Sardis**

**3** "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

" 'I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup>Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. <sup>3</sup>Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. <sup>4</sup>Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup>The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. <sup>6</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

The problem here was spiritual lethargy.

Admonition is to wake up!

It may be that since there were no major problems, nothing challenging, nothing to keep them sharp...they had fallen into a stupor. Started to “go through the motions.”

We cannot get into “we have arrived” mode.

Verse 4: Not worthy for their own merits, but simply through faith which is always repenting, trusting in the Gospel, and living for God by loving and serving the neighbor while spreading the Gospel.

#### **To the Church in Philadelphia**

<sup>7</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

<sup>8</sup> “ ‘I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. <sup>9</sup> Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup> Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup> I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. <sup>12</sup> The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. <sup>13</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Much praise

They were perceived as weak, but they were faithful

“Synagogue of Satan” = those Jews who refused to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah.

“Their strength in their weakness was the grace of God, given them in His Word. God’s strength is indeed made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).” (LG 19)

### **To the Church in Laodicea**

<sup>14</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.

<sup>15</sup> “ ‘I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup> The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’ ”

Worst condition of all.

Lukewarm!

No zeal for the Lord at all.

At least those who are hostile show some passion about their beliefs.

Instead of concern about their spiritual welfare, they gloried in earthly things.

What is Christ’s warning?

The Lord had not abandoned them, but He was calling them to repentance.

Verse 20: GREAT love expressed (note: the way this verse is misused).