

Study Notes on Revelation 1-3

Christ Writes Hope to 7
Churches -Eric Blick

Theme - the “thread” that runs through this book by the Apostle John: This was written to encourage Christians to perseverance and hope while we wait.

Historical Context - what was going on when John wrote this? Christ had been killed, rose from the dead, then ascended into heaven. Followers of Christ organized into local churches throughout the region. What are they to do now while they await the return of the King? What are they to expect life to be like in this broken world while they wait? How do they live with deep, life-altering hope in expectation of the promised new heavens and new earth? John receives visions from God while exiled on the island of Patmos, visions that align with and fulfill Daniel 7 and the other Old Testament prophecies on how this all ends and then begins in Christ.

The one who conquers,

I will make him a pillar in the temple
of my God.

- Revelation 3:12



Photo: the Bristol in KC, January 2021

The Victory of the Kingdom

Christ's seven letters to the churches provide hope, correction, and encouragement while we wait.

- Sermon Series in 1Q2021,
Fremont Evangelical Free Church

Context of the book

When Christ came, people were expecting the full kingdom right then (i.e. Rome conquered, etc.). Then they learned that Christ would come back for the full manifestation of His kingdom and watched him ascend into heaven (Acts 1-2). Then the gospel spread all over the province of Asia and throughout the Roman empire and they thought NOW Christ will return. Instead, their lives got increasingly more difficult with persecution. So this letter was written to encourage their faith to endure to the end, whenever God said that would be.

“No other book of the New Testament is as permeated by the Old Testament as is Revelation. Although it's author seldom quotes the Old Testament directly, illusions and echoes are found in almost every verse of the book. Revelation's message remains thoroughly 'New Testament'. The Church Universal is called to maintain a faithful witness in the midst of persecution, following in the footsteps of the lamb, who died to free them from their sins. Having conquered through faith, they are promised the blessing of eternal life in the presence of God in the new heaven and new earth, all with the purpose that they worship him and that he receive the glory forever. However, the imagery is drawn almost exclusively from the Old Testament, thus reminding the reader that redemption in Christ is the fulfillment of God's eternal plans... John's vision is not attached to the cannon as a separate message to give us hope. Rather it is rooted in fulfilling the Old Testament thus grounding our hope even more in the grand redemption story of God pursuing fallen man” (Carson p 1,081).

Genre of literature: both apocalyptic and letter

This was written in the style of Daniel in the Old Testament. It was a circular letter to the actual seven churches (1:10-11). “What appears to the modern reader as strange visions and coded language was to the first century Jewish-Christian reader a familiar set of literary devices, many of which were drawn from the Old Testament. In that sense, apocalyptic literature is a kind of prophetic literature, talking about what will happen in the future. But while predictive prophecy in the OT generally uses realistic language, apocalyptic uses a specialized, symbolic, highly stylized language to talk about events, past, present and future. What that means is Revelation is to be interpreted figuratively unless the context forces us to interpret it literally” (Dever).

Purpose

“The book of Revelation was written to encourage Christians to perseverance and hope. For the message of Revelation is that Christ will return and Christ will win (Rev 11:15)” (Dever). Nothing thwarts God's purposes.

Consider the Source: Chapter 1 describes Him who wrote these Seven Letters

Pastor Jim, 1/31/21

Intro: In Revelation chapter 1 John bids us to “consider the source.” Who is this One telling us God’s truth and prophecy?

The Big Idea: Jesus is the one that gives these revelations to John, and chapter 1 is about Jesus.

When Jesus speaks as the SOURCE of God’s word, it is with authority.



What do we learn about this Source?

1. He is a trustworthy source. Vs 5 calls Jesus the faithful witness.
2. He is a powerful source. The seven stars that Jesus holds represents holding ALL power.
3. He is qualified to use the power as the source. He has both the power over death and hell and the authority to use that power. “and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I



have the keys of Death and Hades.” - Revelation 1:18

4. He is the Source who greatly cares for his own. “To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. - Revelation 1:5-6; In verse 17 the first words that Jesus gives Peter after seeing him in his glory is, “Fear not.”

So what do we do with this Source?

A. It builds a longing in us to see more and more of this good Source.

B. Hear the words of Jesus not just read them. It’s not just information. It is life changing and penetrates our heart changing our affections and how we live. To hear is a supernatural work (v3).

C. Also in vs 3, we are to keep the word and hold true to it.



Promises to Overcomers - ESV Study Notes

Promise	What Will Happen	Fulfillment
2:7	will eat from the tree of life	22:2
2:11	will not be hurt by the second death	20:6; 21:7-8
2:17	will be given a white stone	21:11, 18-21
2:26-27; 3:21	will reign with Christ on his throne	20:4
2:28	will be given the morning star	21:23; 22:5, 16
3:5	will be clothed in bright garments	19:7-8; 21:2, 9-10
3:5	name will be in the book of life	21:27
3:12	will be made a pillar in God’s temple	21:22-23
3:12	will participate in the new Jerusalem	21:10
3:12	will have God’s name written on them	22:4

Hope and Holiness:

What is the link?

Solid, real, grounded hope is life-giving and life-changing.

“How do the New Testament writers talk about Christ's return in relation to holy living? Why study the doctrine of the future? Answer: Like Moses in Heb 11, this future hope is the path to holiness - hope in future grace (Heb 11:24-26, 2 Cor 7:1, 2 Pet 1:4,); "if this is what God promises to be to His holy people, we should make every effort to be such holy people. If these are the riches that await me, let me walk on that path of holiness that leads to them. Here holiness is a direct result of living in the light of the divine promises” (Ferguson p. 142).

The Millennium: What is the Millennium? When does it occur?

There are three main views in church history of what Revelation 20 means for the 1,000 year reign of Christ (Figure 55.3, Grudem p. 1,111):

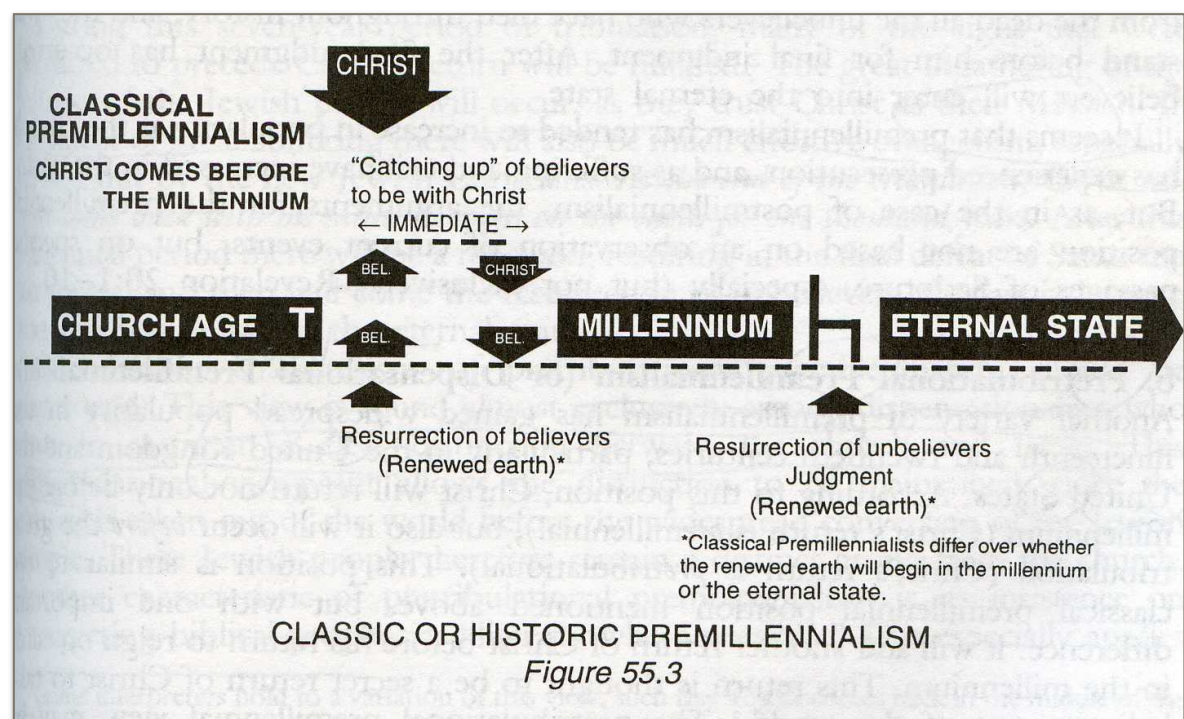
1. Historic Pre-Millennialism: Christ takes his followers out of the world before the 1,000 year reign of Christ, the “millennium.” This is seen in the graphic below.

2. Post-Millennialism: Christians help usher in Christ's Kingdom by spreading the gospel and making this a better place. Then Christ returns for his own after this 1,000 year reign. Wheaton College and other institutions founded in the

1800's had this as their motto: for Christ and His Kingdom, namely, we are here to usher it in. In the graphic below, the arrow for Christ's return is after the Church age and also the Millennium box.

3. Amillennialism: no future millennium yet to come. The 1,000 year reign of Christ in Rev 20 is a single reference to the church age, the “already-not-yet.” Christ returns then judgment then the eternal state. In the

graphic below, the Church Age box is the same box as the Millennium box and are not two separate time frames. This is the oldest view in Church history.



However, there is great commonality in the Creeds.

Regardless of which view Christians discuss as it relates to the timing of the return of Christ, the Creeds all affirm the main point of this doctrine on which we can all agree and build one another's hope:

“Christians confess that Jesus Christ ‘will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end’ (Nicene Creed). This hope includes ‘the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting’ (Apostles Creed). Given our propensity for disagreement over end-times scenarios, this represents a remarkable Christian consensus...

Where paths diverge among Christians today is on the question of a literal millennium – that is, a thousand year reign of Christ. The only biblical passage that speaks directly of such an era is Revelation 20” (Horton p. 919).

When will Christ return a second time, making all things right and causing evil to be undone?

The Three Views are Explained:

“Christ will return prior to the millennium according to the premillennialist and after this golden age according to the traditional post millennialist. Amillennialism, however, understands the reference to a 1000 year period as figurative for the era between Christ two advents [the “already-not yet



Chadron, NE, Photo taken September 2020

kingdom”]. Premillennialism anticipates increasing decadence in the condition of the world (including the visible church) until Christ returns at the end of history to establish his kingdom. Postmillennialism expects things to improve gradually through God’s gracious blessing on the church’s missionary endeavors until the nations officially recognize Christ as Messiah and wars, famine, disease, and other global disasters gradually cease. It is then expected that Christ will return to receive his kingdom, to judge the living and the dead, and to commence the everlasting state.

Amillennialism expects simultaneous growth and decline, suffering and success, witness and apostasy throughout this era between Christ’s two advents...

The only real difference between premillennialism and amillennialism with respect to the concrete and literal restoration of creation, therefore, is whether it is a 1000 year epoch followed by another fall (apostasy), resurrection, and judgment, or whether it is the final consummation that will characterize Christ’s kingdom of glory into eternity...

So how shall we then live?

The challenge to the contemporary church is to formulate the Christian hope in a way which (with the postmillennial tradition) promotes responsible and hopeful activity, but (with the

pre-millennial tradition) avoids the dangerous Utopianism of believing that humanity can design and build the kingdom of God itself.

Believers are neither simply waiting for Christ’s kingdom to dawn nor building his kingdom through their own efforts. Rather, it is descending from heaven (Revelation 21:2) as those who are spiritually dead are raised and receive a new birth from above that makes them citizens of the New Age (John 3, Ephesians 2). The writer to the Hebrews reminds us in chapter 12 that the whole system of world powers and kingdoms will be shaken when Christ returns. At the same time, the kingdom of Christ is a present reality: “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and our, for our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:27-28)” (Horton p. 920, 955-956).

What we believe about our future impacts how we live today:

The Story of Two Workers

Tim Keller has used an illustration about two workers going to the factory each day for one year doing identical and repetitive work. The one worker believes he is getting paid an hourly wage of \$20/hour and begrudgingly endures the work he feels in mundane and mind numbing. The other worker has been told, “At the end of one year, you will receive one million dollars.” He comes to work everyday doing the same work and whistles all the way through it. He interacts winsomely with all his fellow employees and encourages them as a team. He looks forward to each day of work, one day closer to the end. What we believe about our future has a tremendous impact on how we live and work everyday! If we believe that work has no meaning and life has no reason for joy, we will be discouraged and downhearted even if we have good things. A key to contentment includes knowing this is not all there is and restoration is a real

forth chapter to this grand narrative (see graphic below). If we understand that we have a treasure now promised to us in Christ with fellowship with God and restoration of all things, that is worth more than a million dollars and will radically impact how we live. This hope is real and rock-solid under our feet in a world of brokenness. Christ makes the wilderness of this world not something merely to be endured but brings us sustenance on the way to our everlasting home.

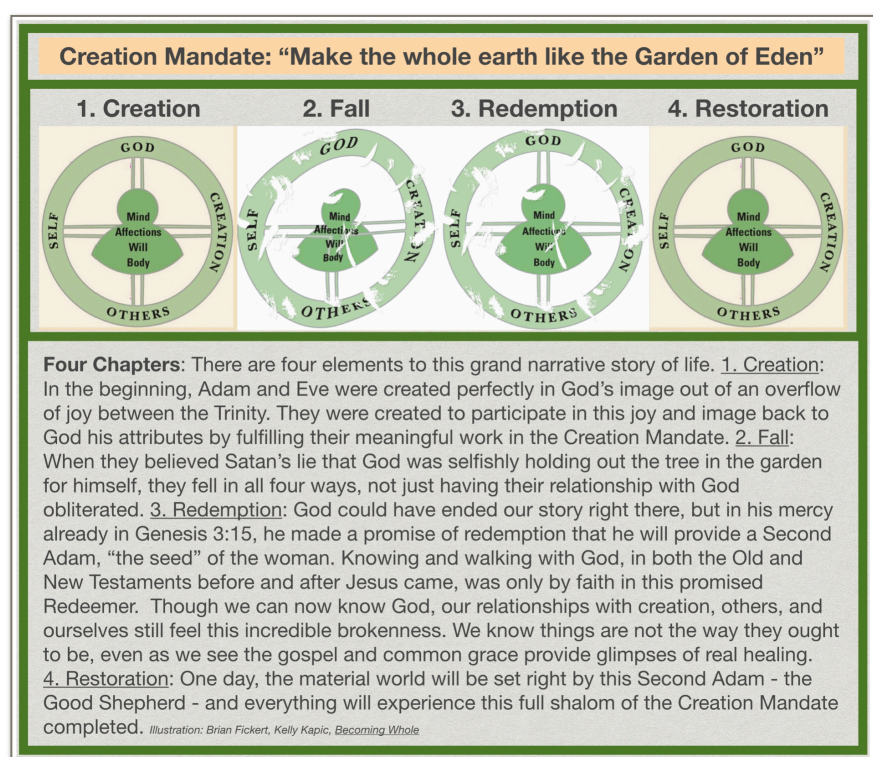
Our future is brighter in context with our past and present.

To understand how good it is where we are going as redeemed children of God, those who identify with Jesus, it is helpful to know from where we came. In the garden, mankind had compete “shalom”, all things were at peace and satisfaction and perfection. This included our relationship with God, creation, others, and with ourselves. When sin entered, it did

not just destroy our relation with God but each of the other three key relationships as well (see graphic on this page at the “2. Fall” chapter of the four chapters of history). In Christ we have redemption now (“3. Redemption”) and one day all the effects of the fall will be undone and reversed, placing us in heaven coming down to this earth in a place even better than the garden of Eden (“4. Restoration). That is why salvation is not merely striving to be good or obey a moral code because the world is more broken than we often admit - we need a Savior to not only reconcile us to God for fellowship with him but also set all the cosmos right, bringing true and lasting shalom.

Therefore, our work matters.

If God is passionate about us and his material world setting all things right at the “4-Restoration” one day (see graphic), then today our work matters. As we fulfill our vocational calling for work from him, we feel his pleasure over us as we image back to him the creative characteristic of our Father. Understanding this grand narrative to have four chapters and not just three is life changing. God certainly does have a passion for his world, not merely saving our souls to have fellowship with him. As one writer put it. “If our goal is to be liberated from creation rather than the liberation of creation, we will understandably display little concern for the world that God has made. If, however, we are looking forward to the “the restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21), and the participation of the whole world in our redemption, (Romans 8:18-21), then our actions here and now pertain to the same world that will one day be finally and fully renewed” (Horton p989-990). Amen, come Lord Jesus, come.



Arcing:			Passage: Revelation 2:1-7
Idea: This is a letter.			1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:
Explain: It's a letter from Jesus who is God, all-powerful and holy.		Series	The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand,
		Series	who walks among the seven golden lampstands.
Main: (+) You endure in good work, you detect evil untruths, and you endure persecution, but (-) you are not rooted in true love like you were.	Positive: You do three things well - Series 1-3;	Series 1: You endure in good work.	2 "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance,
		Series 2: You detect evil and untruths being taught.	Idea and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those
			Explain who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.
		Series 3: You endure persecution.	Positive 3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake,
			Negative and you have not grown weary.
	Negative: You abandoned the love you had.	Idea	4 But I have this against you,
		Explain	that you have abandoned the love
		Explain	you had at first.
Inference: Because your three good works are not done from love, remember, repent, and do 1st works, or I will leave.	Action 1: Remember		5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen;
	Action 2: repent		repent,
	Action 3: do 1st works	Idea	and do the works
		Explain	you did at first.
	Result		If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place,
			unless you repent.
Concessive: In contrast to loveless work, you DO hate sinful work.		Idea	6 Yet this you have:
	Explain	Main	you hate the works of the Nicolaitans,
		Comparison	which I also hate.
Action: You listen and conquer.	Series 1: Listen	If	7 He who has an ear,
		Then (Idea)	let him hear
		Explain	what the Spirit says to the churches.
	Series 2: conquer	If	To the one who conquers
Result: You will enjoy the presence of God fully.		Then (Idea)	I will grant to eat of the tree of life,
		Explain	which is in the paradise of God.'

Letter 1 of 7: You have diminished your first love.

HEADLINE SENTENCE: DO GOOD WORK OVERFLOWING FROM A DEEP LOVE WITH GOD.

Pastor Ryan, 2/7/21: “Seven Stars, Two Trees, and One Abandoned Love“

Intro: Jesus addresses each of these cities with actual churches with some specific instruction. However, the expectation is every church in every time period everywhere to hear and abide, v7, to the churches. Each letter follows the same six-fold pattern: Intro, commendation, rebuke, the prescription, the warning, and the promise. Acts 19 further explains Artemis’ temple in Ephesus with temple prostitutes. This is likely the mother church and established church in this are.

I. Where do we see the six-fold pattern in this letter? 1. The letter’s intro: Jesus oversees the church and is its strength (stars/lamp stands) and writes to the spiritual state of the church. 2. The commendation: you do three things well. 3. The rebuke: You lost your first love. 4. The prescription: remember, repent, repeat 1st acts. 5. The warning: repent or lamp stand removed; 6. The promise: the curse of the garden is reversed for you.

II. What do we learn from this letter? A. To follow Jesus requires perseverance and hard work. The Bible tells of the broken world and the call for faith and perseverance. Psalms and 1 Peter are a great couple of places that remind us how difficult this and to labor through it by the Spirit. B. Be on guard for false teaching. The Ephesians were able to identify it. Can we? C. We cannot lose sight of our first love. We are called to remember: WHO he is, WHY the gospel is good news not good advice, WHAT he has done, and you HAVE his approval now. Repent. Do what we did. Live for his glory and our joy.

Commentary notes: Carson (p1,093): To “eat of the tree of life”, which is “in the paradise of God” is alluded to again at the conclusion of the book as a picture of forgiveness and consequent experience of God’s intimate presence, Revelation 22:2-4. In Genesis 2-3, as here, the image of the tree of life together with the paradise of God symbolizes the life-giving presence of God, from which Adam and Eve are separated when they are cast out of the garden paradise.

Context: Tie to Previous Section	Flow: Summarize the flow in a few short sentences	Repeated, Key Words, Key Pronouns	Promises & Commands	What do we learn about God? How does Jesus fulfill this?
John is exiled to the island of Patmos and receives this revelation from Jesus. Jesus gives seven letters to the seven main churches in the region addressing their spirit or their spiritual health of each congregation. This is letter one.	Idea/Explain: The angel brings a letter from Jesus. Main: You in this church do three things well, but they are not being done out of love. Inference: Unless you change, I will leave. Concessive: In contrast, you do hate evil work. Action/Result: Listen and conquer and you get God.	-The Angel: personify the spiritual health of the churches -Tree of life (better than the tree the Artemis Temple had) / paradise of God:. -Nicolaitans’ work = Like the prophet Balaam, they seduced God’s people to participate in idolatry and sexual immorality (vv. 14–15), perhaps disguising antinomian license as freedom in Christ (see 1 Cor. 6:12–20; 8:1–11:1) (ESV Study Notes) -First love = Abandoning love for Christ and love for others (ESV notes & Ryan).	P(v7): tree of life is given to God’s people, the curse is reversed for them; C(v5): remember C(v5): repent C(v5): do first works in love C(v7): hear to listen to obey P(v5): remove your lamp-stand: “both in the near future and when Christ returns, they would lose their status as a church and Christ would treat them like apostate Israel” (ESV Study Bible notes).	V1-2: Jesus holds 7 stars and walks among lamp stands, meaning in 1:20, Jesus is sovereign over the church and the strength of the church; V2-4: God knows what we do. He sees. He knows all. V6 he hates evil deeds. V7: God grants food from the tree of life which is the paradise of God to those who hear him with conquering action.
Implied WHY question(s): ground, inference, action/purpose, action/result	Implied WHAT question(s): idea/explain, question/answer, positive/negative, series	Implied HOW question(s): action/manner, idea/explain	Confession: What do these verse say about my need or about me?	ACTS: Pray the verses back to God (Adore, Confess, Thank, Supplicate or Ask).
WHY should we listen and conquer? V7 we get to enjoy unbroken fellowship with our Creator and Friend. Jesus is worth it, he IS a real and lasting and enduring treasure.	WHAT are the works you did at first (v5) / what is deep love? Love for God and love for others. WHAT are good works we should do? V2-3,6 endure good toil, detect falsehood, bear up under persecution, hate evil deeds.	HOW are we supposed to overflow in good work from deep love? V5 remember, repent, and do what you used to do out of love. WHAT do we remember? WHO he is, WHY the gospel is good news not good advice, WHAT he has done, you HAVE his approval now.	We can be right and do right works and endure by sheer grit or personality, but not have it as an overflow of our love relationship with God to love for people. We forget and therefore need to remember (v5). We are hard to hear, really listen to obey.	Jesus over the church, your kingdom is over all, and we worship you. Forgive us for loveless-rightness. Thank you for pursuing us as the Chief Counsellor giving us exactly what we need to hear. Help us remember and obey and to overflow good work from your love as “joy for the world” because we get you, the paradise of God.

Arcing:				Passage: Revelation 2:8-11
Idea: Jesus writes.			Idea	8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:
			Explain	'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.
Explain: You have true wealth no matter what others say of you.		Idea		9 "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those
		Explain	Idea	who say
			Explain	that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.
Action: Don't fear imminent suffering.			Idea	10 Do not fear
			Explain	what you are about to suffer.
Result: It will result in your testing.			Action	Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison,
			Purpose	that you may be tested,
			Result	and for ten days you will have tribulation.
Action: Be faithful.			If	Be faithful unto death,
Result: You get eternal life.			Then	and I will give you the crown of life.
Action: Listen			Idea	11 He who has an ear, let him hear
			Explain	what the Spirit says to the churches.
Result: You will avoid the second death.				The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

Quote - one day this upside-down kingdom will be seen as right-side up:

But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you. (Luke 6:24–26) Biblical scholar Michael Wilcock, in his study of this text, observes that in the life of God's people there will be a remarkable reversal of values: "Christians will prize what the world calls pitiable and suspect what the world calls desirable."⁶⁶ The things the world puts at the bottom of its list are at the top of the kingdom of God's list. And the things that are suspect in the kingdom of God are prized by the kingdom of this world. What's at the top of the list of the kingdom of this world? Power and money ("you who are rich"); success and recognition ("when all men speak well of you"). But what's at the top of God's list? Weakness and poverty ("you who are poor"); suffering and rejection ("when men hate you"). The list is inverted in the kingdom of God. Tim Keller, King's Cross, p184

Letter 2 of 7: You are comforted in this upside-down kingdom.

HEADLINE SENTENCE: THERE IS REASON TO KEEP LIVING HOLY IN THE UPSIDE-DOWN KINGDOM.

Pastor Ryan, 2/14/21 - The Upside-Down Kingdom

Intro: He sees things differently than we do. His is the better kingdoms. Smyrna as a city is still in existence today is Izmir. It was loyal to the Roman emperor and had worship of him there. There was a significant Jewish population there, and they were hostile to Christians. Unlike the other five churches of the seven that get letters from Jesus, they receive no warning from Jesus like the church at Philadelphia.

There are three ways Jesus turns the conventional thinking on its head:

- 1. Success is not what you think it is (v9). How much money and respect and accomplishment and freedom have you obtained? I know your poverty but you have real riches is what Jesus says of this church. True success is measured by your connection to Christ - Jeremiah 9:23-24, boast that he knows me says the Lord.
- 2. Suffering does not have to be feared (v10). Christ did not die to relieve us of suffering, but that when we do suffer we would be brought closer to our Father. Ten days of trials means that it will be significant amount of suffering in this broken world but it will not last forever. There is an end. There is a purpose. This is good news because his disposition towards us is good and loving, or else why did he die (Romans 8:32)? Know his character.
- 3. Death is not the worst possible outcome (v11). Death is talked about all through this passage. Each time death is mentioned here is it countered by hope: v8 died to life, v10 death to crown of life, v11 death to avoid the second death. Free from the fear of death gives you freedom to live. Satan’s tool has been broken, bondage to this fear.

Context: Tie to Previous Section	Flow: Summarize the flow in a few short sentences	Repeated, Key Words, Key Pronouns	Promises & Commands	What do we learn about God? How does Jesus fulfill this?
This is letter 2 of 7 to the churches in this area from Jesus.	Idea: Jesus writes. Explain: You have true wealth no matter what others say of you. Action: Don’t fear imminent suffering. Result: It will result in your testing. Action: Be faithful. Result: You get eternal life. Action: Listen. Result: You will avoid the second death.	-Ten days (v10): allusion to Daniel 1 as Daniel and his friends had a fixed time of testing, so this church must endure in similar manner (Carson 1,093); -Second death (v11): unending judgement and punishment. - Synagogue of Satan: The NT defines God’s people in relation to Jesus, not their genealogy (ESV Study Notes)	C(v10): do not fear C(v10): be faithful unto death C(v11): listen P(v10): you will get the crown of life P(v11): you will not be judged to hell.	V8: Jesus is eternal, the first and the last who ironically died and came to life that we might live forever. V9: he knows our suffering and the real damage slander does. Both stick / stones and words break bones. V10: he limits tribulation and is sovereign even over that. V11: he gives life and he speaks and is the judge over the second death
Implied WHY question(s): ground, inference, action/ purpose, action/result	Implied WHAT question(s): idea/explain, question/answer, positive/negative, series	Implied HOW question(s): action/manner, idea/explain	Confession: What do these verse say about my need or about me?	ACTS: Pray the verses back to God (Adore, Confess, Thank, Supplicate or Ask).
WHY do we not fear prison, suffering and death (v10-12)? A. It is testing not punishment, B. You get the crown of life, C. You avoid the second death which is judgment to hell. WHY be faithful unto death (v10)? you get crown of life. WHY listen (v11)? Through hearing you conquer and avoid hell.	WHAT does faithful unto death mean (v10)? It’s the same as the one who conquers, who does not deny Christ but stays in relationship with him in worship. WHAT could there be to fear (v10)? Suffering, prison, prison then often led to death, tribulation, death. But we are given a command not to fear and reasons not to fear.	HOW are we to not fear but endure and conquer (v8-11)? Listen to the words of the chief Shepherd, you KNOW his voice. Know what he says about WHY you do not have to fear. Don’t be surprised about your suffering, expect it, otherwise you will be surprised you are surprised.	We know the world sees no riches in poverty but only riches are what matters. We know we don’t always listen well, remember the words of Christ, or give ear to him.	Holy, Eternal God who died and was raised to give me life, we worship you. We confess the values of this world of wealth-giving freedom seem like true riches and forgive us when we live that way. Thank you that you speak and you are a superior treasure. Thanks for giving us reasons to not live in fear of death. Help us endure faithfully to the end through deep hope in your words and where you promised we are going.

Arcing:				Passage: Revelation 2:12-17
Idea: Write to the spiritual state of this church; Explain: words from Christ the judge in truth.			Idea	12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:
			Explain	'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.
Pos (+): You hold fast my name AND keep the faith near Satan's temple and persecution.	Series 1:	Neg	Idea	13 "I know where you dwell,
			Explain	where Satan's throne is.
	Series 2:	Pos	Series	Yet you hold fast my name,
			Series (Idea Explain)	and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness,
				who was killed among you,
				where Satan dwells.
Neg (-): You believe false teaching, you worship falsely, and you think freedom in Christ is sexual freedom.	Idea:			14 But I have a few things against you:
	Series 1 (Explain):		Idea	you have some there
			Explain	who hold the teaching of Balaam,
		Action	Explain	who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel,
	Series 2 (Explain):	Result		so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.
	Series 3 (Explain):		Idea	15 So also you have some
			Explain	who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
Action: Repent	Series 1 (Action 1)		Action	16 Therefore repent.
Result: If not, I will be against you.			Result	If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.
Action: Listen	Series 2 (Action 2)		Action	17 He who has an ear, let him hear
Manner: the HS speaks.			Manner	what the Spirit says to the churches.
Action: Conquer-give up the pagan, sexual, worship feast	Series 3 (Action 3)		Action	To the one who conquers
Result: receive Christ's end-time feast, fellowship with God personally.	Idea: Manna		Result	I will give some of the hidden manna,
	Explain: is the same as the white stone = fellowship with God		Idea	and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone
		Idea	Explain	that no one knows except the one
		Explain	Explain	who receives it.'

Notes:

Who is Balaam? Israel was led to worship idols and commit immorality as a result of [Balaam's] deceitful counsel, and the church was being led in the same direction by the Nicolaitans. Balaam became proverbial for the false teacher who for financial gain influences believers to enter into relationships of compromising unfaithfulness. Number 22- 25, 31 (Carson p1,094).

What is this manna and white stone v17? Those who refuse to participate in the pagan feast will be rewarded with the participation in Christ's end-time feast, represented by the "manna", which presently is "hidden" but then will be revealed...The white stone also enforces the idea of the manna as a heavenly salvific and end-time reward, since the Old Testament describes the heavenly manna as white bdellium stone in appearance (Exodus 16)... This reward probably had already begun to be enjoyed, but it's consummation was yet to come. The white color of the stone portrays the righteousness of the saints in not compromising and "soiling" themselves (Carson 1094).

Letter 3 of 7: You have compromised your worship with the worship of the world.

HEADLINE SENTENCE: WORSHIP OF GOD SATISFIES NOW AND ONE DAY RECEIVES A FEAST.

Pastor Ryan, 2/21/21 - Sharp Swords, White Stones, and the Enduring Truth of God’s Word

There are three enduring truths to highlight today written to this church and also to our church:

- 1. Spiritual warfare is a reality in this broken world (vs13). The imperial cult was the worship of the Roman Empire and Emperor. It was subversive to the empire not to worship it. Antipas died by being roasted alive according to tradition for his faithful witness to Christ, and it is commendable that the church saw this and still worshiped God.
- 2. Cristians should pay careful attention to their life and doctrine (vs14-15). 1 Timothy 4 has the same charge, to keep a watchful eye on your life and doctrine. May our lives match what we believe.
- 3. Repentance is a vital part of the Christian life (vs16). Repentance is an internal change where we see the horror of our sin and turn the other way and want to glorify him with our lives. It is not a hallow apology. This is regular and often just like weeding the yard and not doing it once a year - you don’t wait until your life is overrun with sin to do something about it. Let’s be known as quick “repenters”, listening to the Holy Spirit’s work in our life to make us more like Christ.

Quote: How can we define modern day idol worship described in this and similar passages? “Modern forms of idolatry are different, of course. Most of us have not been caught mourning for Tammuz. But do our hearts pursue things that rightly make God jealous? Do we love dirty and forbidden things? Do we ascribe success to everything but God? We may not succumb to fertility cults, but doesn’t our culture make sex itself a god?” (DA Carson, For the Love of God part 2), Sept 5th devotional.

Vs17 What is the name no on knows? “To know someone’s name...often meant to enter into an intimate relationship with that person and to share in that person’s character or power. To be given a new name was indication of a new status... [It] represents the eschatological new identity of the redeemed in the new heaven and new earth (Isaiah 62:2, 15) (Carson p1,094-1,095).

Context: Tie to Previous Section	Flow: Summarize the flow in a few short sentences	Repeated, Key Words, Key Pronouns	Promises & Commands	What do we learn about God? How does Jesus fulfill this?
Flow: This is letter 3 of 7 to churches here from Jesus. Idea: Write to the spiritual state of this church; Explain: words from Christ the judge in truth. Pos (+): You hold fast my name AND keep the faith near Satan’s temple and persecution. Neg (-): You believe false teaching, you worship falsely, and you think freedom in Christ is sexual freedom. Action: Repent Result: If not, I will be against you. Action: Listen Manner: the HS speaks. Action: Conquer-give up the pagan, sexual, worship feast Result: receive Christ’s end-time feast, fellowship with God personally.	Satan dwells: reference to the center of empire worship of the day. Balaam- Gentile prophet who compromised with the world and Israel followed (Numbers 22-25, 31). Hidden manna/white stone: Christ’s end-time feast (see Carson note facing page). Nicolaitans-see note above in 2:6 - likely disguised sexual freedom as freedom in Christ	C(v16): Repent P(v16): You get judgment if no repentance. C(v17): Hear P(v17): the conquer, the one who does not compromise with the worlds, receives hidden manna/stone.	V12&17: Jesus pursues us with his words as he reveals himself to us. V12&16: He is THE judge (two-edged sword mouth). V13: He is understood by faith. V17: He rewards those who seek him, in this case here, with the marriage supper of the Lamb (manna/stone).	Implied WHY question(s): ground, inference, action/purpose, action/result
Implied WHY question(s): ground, inference, action/purpose, action/result	Implied WHAT question(s): idea/explain, question/answer, positive/negative, series	Implied HOW question(s): action/manner, idea/explain	Confession: What do these verse say about my need or about me?	ACTS: Pray the verses back to God (Adore, Confess, Thank, Supplicate or Ask).
WHY repent? V16 or Christ will be against you. WHY Conquer? V17 You get the end-time feast of Christ, a seat at the marriage supper of the lamp, eternal fellowship and friendship with God almighty. You don’t get a truth only but a feast with the God who made all.	WHAT did the people in the church do when Antipas was killed? V13 They continued in the faith and did not deny Christ putting them at risk of death too. WHAT do we listen to? V17 the words of God through Jesus illuminated by his Spirit.	HOW combat sexual promiscuity: repent, listen and conquer with future hope - v16, be continually repenting in the Christian life not just sorry; Listen to the Holy Spirit’s work on the work of Christ v17; conquer v17, looking for the true, lasting, satisfying feast of knowing Christ forever vs the sexual feast that the world offers now in its temple worship.	We are susceptible v14-15 to false teaching, wrong worship, and sexual promiscuity masked as freedom on Christ. We are slow or reluctant to repent v16-17, hard of hearing, and slothful in zeal to fight and conquer sin.	Oh, Righteous Judge, who speaks words of truth pursuing us, we praise your name. Forgive us for making peace with lies and being slow to repent, hard of hearing, and slothful in zeal for holiness. Thank you that your end-time feast is better than anything this world tries to satisfy us. We ask that you would help repent, listen to your Holy Spirt brining us your word, and have deep hope for your true feast one day.

Arcing:		Passage: Revelation 2: Revelation 2:8-29	
Action: Write to the spiritual state of this church.			18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:
Manner: In contrast to Apollos son of Zeus worshipped in this town, Jesus is THE Son of God and sees ALL and splendorous strength.	Series 1		'The words of the Son of God, (Psalm 2:9,18) who has eyes like a flame of fire,
	Series 2		and whose feet are like burnished bronze.
Positive: They are doing good works in serving others AND growing.	Progressive		19 "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance,
	Progressive		and that your latter works exceed the first.
Negative: But they did not have doctrine and tolerated worship of pagan gods to get ahead in business and blend in / fit in to make a good living.	Idea		20 But I have this against you,
	Explain / Idea		that you tolerate that woman Jezebel,
	Explain		who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.
Action: Jezebel did not repent of spiritual and physical fornication. You repent.	Pos		21 I gave her time to repent,
	Neg		but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.
Result: Her followers are full of 1. sickness as judgment, 2. experience great tribulation, 3. offspring is dead like her 70 children, 4. and the all-seeing God repays according to their works.	Series 1	Idea	22 Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those
		Explain	who commit adultery with her
	Series 2	Main	I will throw into great tribulation,
		Concessive	unless they repent of her works,
	Series 3		23 and I will strike her children dead.
	Series 4	Idea	And all the churches will know
		Explain 1	that I am he
		Action	who searches mind and heart,
		Result	and I will give to each of you according to your works.
Positive (Main): Not everyone in this church has given in to this Jezebel-type sin of physical and / or spiritual adultery.	Idea		24 But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching,
	Explain/Idea		who have not learned what
	Explain		some call the deep things of Satan,
Inference: Because you have not tolerated this sin, nothing new to do, keep holding fast to Jesus.	Neg	Idea	to you I say,
		Explain	I do not lay on you any other burden.
	Pos	Idea	25 Only hold fast what
		Explain	you have until I come.
Action: Conquer and keep obeying.			26 The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end,
Result: And you will be co-heirs, co-rulers with Christ (Psalm 2 extended to Christ and his followers), AND you get him, your highest Treasure!	Series	Action	to him I will give authority over the nations,
		Result	27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron,
		Comparison	as when earthen pots are broken in pieces,
		Comparison	even as I myself have received authority from my Father.
	Series		28 And I will give him the morning star.
Action: Listen.			29 He who has an ear, let him hear
Manner: The HS speaks and illuminates Jesus' words.			what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Letter 4 of 7: Like in letter 3, do not compromise your worship of God for economic gain.

HEADLINE SENTENCE: BE STEADFAST IN TRUTH AND GENTLE IN OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

Pastor Ryan, 2/28/21 - Head and Heart. Intro: We are to be a church full of head and heart, both love and truth not either/or.

1. The background: Good works but no doctrine. This church was doing good works to one another, but their poor doctrine said it was okay to compromise with their guild's worship of their patron god in sexual and spiritual fornication to go along to make a living.
2. The alternative: Don't retreat, keep loving Jesus. They are called not to retreat from the world but keep holding fast to Jesus.
3. The promises: Christ's inheritance is our inheritance - vs26-29. Sacrificing money or social status or anything pales in comparison to being heirs with God and co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8). You get Jesus. He is no fool to give what he can't keep to gain what he can't lose - Jim Elliot.

Context: Tie to Previous Section	Flow: Summarize the flow in a few short sentences	Repeated, Key Words, Key Pronouns	Promises & Commands	What do we learn about God? How does Jesus fulfill this?
<p>Context: This is letter 4 of 7 to churches here from Jesus.</p> <p>Flow: Action: Write to the spiritual state of this church.</p> <p>Manner: In contrast to Apollos son of Zeus worshipped in this town, Jesus is THE Son of God and sees ALL and splendid strength.</p> <p>Positive: They are doing good works in serving others AND growing.</p> <p>Negative: But they did not have doctrine and tolerated worship of pagan gods to get ahead in business and blend in / fit in to make a good living.</p> <p>Action: Jezebel did not repent of spiritual and physical fornication. You repent.</p> <p>Result: Her followers are full of 1. sickness as judgment, 2. experience great tribulation, 3. offspring is dead like her 70 children, 4. and the all-seeing God repays according to their works.</p> <p>Positive (Main): Not everyone in this church has given in to this Jezebel-type sin of physical and / or spiritual adultery.</p> <p>Inference: Because you have not tolerated this sin, nothing new to do, keep holding fast to Jesus.</p> <p>Action: Conquer and keep obeying.</p> <p>Result: And you will be co-heirs, co-rulers with Christ (Psalm 2 extended to Christ and his followers), AND you get him, your highest Treasure!</p> <p>Action: Listen.</p> <p>Manner: The HS speaks and illuminates Jesus’ words.</p>	<p>The point of Jezebel: she incited Israel’s King Ahab her husband to physical and spiritual fornication worshipping Baal. Their 70 sons died in judgment of this v23 reference (1 Kings 16, 21, 2 Kings 8, 9, Carson p1,095).</p> <p>V20 Tolerate: to participate in sin with others instead of knowing and holding fast to the truth.</p>	<p>C(v25): hold fast to Christ until he comes</p> <p>P(22-23): destruction is for the unrepentant</p> <p>P(26-28): the conquerers will be co-rulers with Christ AND they get Christ.</p> <p>C(26, 29): conquer, obey, and listen</p>	<p>V18, 29: Jesus pursues us with his words as he reveals himself to us - he is ALL-seeing (fire) and ALL-glorious in power (feet).</p> <p>V21: He is patient for us to repent (Romans 2:6).</p> <p>V22: He is perfect in justice.</p> <p>V23: He searches mind and heart (Romans 8:27) means he is a perfect judge.</p> <p>V18, 26-27: Jesus fulfills Psalm 2 which fulfills Balaam’s prophecy in Numbers 24:14-20.</p> <p>V26: he has all authority and is able to give it.</p> <p>V28: he is the morning star, The one who fulfills the messianic rule prophecies</p>	
Implied WHY question(s): ground, inference, action/ purpose, action/result	Implied WHAT question(s): idea/explain, question/answer, positive/negative, series	Implied HOW question(s): action/manner, idea/explain	Confession: What do these verse say about my need or about me?	ACTS: Pray the verses back to God (Adore, Confess, Thank, Supplicate or Ask).
<p>WHY overcome and obey (v26-27)? As Christ receives his office in Psalm 2, we reign and rule with him, executing his perfect justice, AND we get him who is THE morning star.</p>	<p>WHAT sexual immorality and eating is in mind (v20)? “Believers in the province of Asia may have been tempted to worship idols to maintain their status in the local guilds, which often had pagan gods as patrons (Jer. 17:10, Carson p1,095). If you were not part of these guilds, you were likely destined to poverty and loss and social ostracism.</p>	<p>HOW do we not do this church’s sin (loving works with no doctrine)? We must stand firm and be for people and love them. We have a better Treasure - we get the morning star v28.</p> <p>HOW continued: v24 don’t tolerate sin, v25 hold fast to Christ, v26 conquer by keeping and knowing his words, v27 build your hope as co-heirs with Christ, v28 be satisfied in Christ, v29 listen.</p>	<p>V20: we can tolerate sin(s) to get ahead in life even while doing kind deeds to others.</p> <p>V21-22: we are slow to repent.</p>	<p>All glorious God in power and All seeing in truth, worthy are you, Lord. We confess we tolerate sin by participating in it with others. Forgive us. Thank you for adopting us as your own to be co-heirs and co-rulers with Christ, and thank you that NOW he is a better Treasure. Please help us to continue to hold fast to you in your word in deep hope and satisfaction.</p>

Arcing:				Passage: Revelation 3:1-6
Action: Jesus speaks			Action	1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:
Manner: words through the HS to the church.			Manner	'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.
Negative: You are dead inside though you show your reputation to be alive spiritually.			Idea	"I know your works.
			Pos (Explain)	You have the reputation of being alive,
			Neg (Explain)	but you are dead.
Action: Do five things: wake up - pay attention (unlike they did not do when this city was sacked 2x), strengthen, remember God’s words, obey them, and repent.	Series 1	Main	Series 1	2 Wake up,
	Series 2		Series 2 (Idea)	and strengthen
			Explain	what remains and is about to die,
		Ground		for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.
	Series 3		Idea	3 Remember, then,
			Explain	what you received and heard.
	Series 4		Series	Keep it,
Series 5		Series	and repent.	
Result: If not, Jesus comes against you when you least expect it.			If	If you will not wake up,
			Then (Series 1)	I will come like a thief,
			Then (Series 2 Idea)	and you will not know
			Then (Explain)	at what hour I will come against you.
Positive: Some in this church still walk with God.		Main	Idea	4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis,
			Explain (Series 1)	people who have not soiled their garments,
			Explain (Series 2)	and they will walk with me in white,
		Ground		for they are worthy.
Action: You conquer.			Action	5 The one who conquers
Result: You get four things: full holiness, guaranteed salvation, Jesus being behind you to his father, and Jesus endorsing you before all the angels.			Result (Series 1)	[The one] will be clothed thus in white garments,
			Result (Series 2)	and I will never blot his name out of the book of life.
			Result (Series 3-4)	I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.
Action: You listen			Action	6 He who has an ear, let him hear
Manner: to the HS’s unpack God’s words.			Manner	what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Quote

They are in spiritual danger to repeat what happened in history: “The command to “wake up” is a reminder that twice in its history Sardis had been sacked (in 547/546 b.c. by Cyrus II, and in 214 b.c. by Antiochus III) when the watchmen on the walls failed to detect an enemy army sneaking up its supposedly impregnable cliffs and walls” (ESV Study Notes).

There are two books - one listing the deeds of unbelievers, and one with names of believers: “[v5 and Revelation’s books] have been modeled more on the Danielic notion of two books, one in which only believers’ names are written and one in which the deeds of all are written, which becomes the basis of judgment for unbelievers (cf. Daniel 7:10; 12:1-2). John’s use of the ‘book of life’ elsewhere suggests that the promises here not to erase a name from the book of life DOES NOT IMPLY the opposite [i.e. that he does wipe out names]” (Carson p1,096).

Letter 5 of 7: You risk failing to persevere, and this could lead to sudden trouble.

HEADLINE SENTENCE: THE DANGER FROM APATHY IS REAL - COMPLACENCY IS THE ENEMY OF INTIMACY.

Pastor Ryan, 3/7/21 - Reputation or Reality?

Intro: It is hard to see a long list of religious leaders who have fallen and been hard hearted really, dead, for years. Does that description describe us? Me? It is one thing to know about Jesus, and another to trust him personally with your sin and life. This is a warning to the saved and unsaved to be genuinely alive.

HOW can we fight apathy and not be a spiritual zombie?

- 1. Wake up. You are asleep and apathetic in your love for God.
- 2. Remember. That is what the prodigal son did at rock-bottom. In the pigpen he “remembered.”
- 3. Keep what you have heard and repent. Obey his word and repent where you are not. When I do the spiritual disciplines from faith, there I find joy.

WHY should we avoid living off our reputation? What is the danger?

- 1. The negative motive mentioned is because Christ would be coming against you.
- 2. The positive motivation is great in vs4-6. We get full holiness, guaranteed salvation, Jesus being behind you to his father, and Jesus endorsing you before all the angels.

Context: Tie to Previous Section	Flow: Summarize the flow in a few short sentences	Repeated, Key Words, Key Pronouns	Promises & Commands	What do we learn about God? How does Jesus fulfill this?
<p>Context: This is letter 5 of 7 to churches here from Jesus.</p> <p>Flow: Action: Jesus speaks</p> <p>Manner: words through the HS to the church.</p> <p>Negative: You are dead inside though you show your reputation to be alive spiritually.</p> <p>Action: Do five things: wake up - pay attention (unlike they did not do when this city was sacked 2x), strengthen, remember God’s words, obey them, and repent.</p> <p>Result: If not, Jesus comes against you when you least expect it.</p> <p>Positive: Some in this church still walk with God.</p> <p>Action: You conquer.</p> <p>Result: You get four things: full holiness, salvation, Jesus being behind you to his father, and Jesus endorsing you before all the angels.</p> <p>Action: You listen</p> <p>Manner: to the HS’s unpack God’s words.</p>	<p>V2 incomplete works = failure to persevere in the faith. Internal change had not occurred to do these complete works. Vs2-3 shows this is also an exhortation to Christians to wake up (Pastor Ryan).</p> <p>V4 not soiled garments = obedience</p> <p>V4 walk with me in white = intimate fellowship with God</p>	<p>Cv2: wake up</p> <p>Cv2 strengthen what you know</p> <p>Cv3: remember, obey and repent</p> <p>Pv3: if not wake up, Christ is against you.</p> <p>Pv5: conquerors get full holiness, guaranteed salvation, Jesus being behind you to his father, and Jesus endorsing you before all the angels.</p>	<p>V1 - he pursues with words</p> <p>V1 - he knows reputations and motives both</p> <p>V2 - he judges = he says when works are not complete</p> <p>V3 - he judges with the timing of a thief; he stands against those who do not repent</p> <p>V4 - he welcomes fellowship like Adam to walk with him in the cool of the day</p> <p>V5 - he gives righteousness / white garments</p>	
Implied WHY question(s): ground, inference, action/purpose, action/result	Implied WHAT question(s): idea/explain, question/answer, positive/negative, series	Implied HOW question(s): action/manner, idea/explain	Confession: What do these verse say about my need or about me?	ACTS: Pray the verses back to God (Adore, Confess, Thank, Supplicate or Ask).
<p>V2 WHY wake up and strengthen? Because your works are incomplete</p> <p>V3 WHY wake up? So Christ not against you.</p> <p>V4 WHY do they walk with Christ in fellowship? They are worthy. WHY are they worthy? They are alive and thus obey v1,4.</p> <p>V5 WHY conquer? You get 4 things (see flow).</p>	<p>V1: WHAT is Jesus’ main message? Stop being a hypocrite and be alive.</p> <p>V6 WHAT are we supposed to hear from God? The HS unpacking God’s words to us.</p>	<p>HOW not to be a hypocrite (show alive but dead spiritually)? V2-3: Do five things: wake up - pay attention, build on what has started, remember God’s words, obey them, and repent.</p>	<p>V1 - we can love reputation over substance, true life from the inside out.</p> <p>V2 - we are not vigilant and have incomplete works for God as our worship</p> <p>V3 - we forget; we have reason to be judged justly and it will not turn out well</p> <p>V4 - we have soiled garments of unrepentant disobedience</p>	<p>Dear Lord who still walks with mankind in the cool of the day through Christ as you did Adam, we worship you. Forgive us for loving reputation over the substance of being alive and not apathetic, Thank you that you give us life, white garments of obedience, changing our affections and making us overflow from the inside out. Please give us endurance in joyful obedience and intimacy with you.</p>

Arcing:			Passage: Revelation 3:7-13
Idea: Write these words:		Idea	7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one,
Explain: These words are from the one who holds the keys to eternal life.		Explain (Series)	who has the key of David,
		Explain (Series)	who opens and no one will shut,
		Explain (Series)	who shuts and no one opens.
Action: Jesus has the final say on you getting eternal life, AND you have obeyed him while having no societal or political clout.	Series	Idea	8 "I know your works.
		Explain (Idea)	Behold, I have set before you an open door,
		Explain	which no one is able to shut.
	Series	Idea	I know that
		Explain (neg)	you have but little power,
		Explain (pos)	and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.
Result: It is three-fold: A. Ironically the Jews who slander you now will submit to you Gentiles who believe and are thus true-Jews (fulfilling Psalm 86). B. They will see how much you are loved by God. C. Trials will purify you but will be judgment for them.	Series	Idea	9 Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan
		Explain (Series)	who say that
		Explain (Series)	they are Jews and are not, but lie
		Action	-behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet,
	Series	Result (idea)	and they will learn that
		Result (explain)	I have loved you.
	Series	Ground	10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance,
		Main (Idea)	I will keep you from the hour of trial
		Explain (Series)	that is coming on the whole world, to try those
		Explain (Series)	who dwell on the earth.
Action: Because I am coming soon (inference), hold fast to the truth you have.		Main	11 I am coming soon.
	Inference	Action (Idea)	Hold fast what
		Action (Explain)	you have,
Result: No one takes your crown.		Result	so that no one may seize your crown.
Action: Conquer		Action	12 The one who conquers,
Result: You will be made a pillar - permanent resident fellowshipping with God with an everlasting name (Is. 56:3, 5). You are his and belong to him! A. It's permanent. B. God's name on you. C. God's city written on you. D. Jesus' new name written on you.		Result (Idea)	I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.
		Explain (Series)	Never shall he go out of it,
		Explain (Series)	and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, ,
		Explain (Series)	the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.
Action: Listen		Action	13 He who has an ear,
Manner: to the words the Spirit brings from Jesus to the Churches.		Manner (Idea)	let him hear
		Manner (Explain)	what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Notes: Conquerors get an everlasting name that counts now: Isaiah 56:3, 5 - Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off (Carson p. 1,097 makes this connection of fulfillment between Isaiah and v12 in this passage). I shared this Isaiah passage at Jackson's burial.

Letter 6 of 7: You have continued to endure slander and provide faithful witness.

HEADLINE SENTENCE: ENDURE HARDSHIP BECAUSE JESUS’ WORD OVER YOU IS FINAL.

Pastor Ryan, 3/14/21 - The Great Reversal is Coming. Intro: This church receives no correction from Jesus but encouragement to keep going, steadfast in faith.

- 1. The present struggle: they are weak but not spiritually, that is how they are enduring. They are weak in society and powerless to stop the slander and mistreatment. This is the normal Christian experience throughout most of history. Power in this world has never been the goal.
- 2. The great reversal: three types of rewards they will possess if they remain faithful. A. They will be vindicated before their enemies v9. The powerless church will have the nations bow before them, fulfilling Isaiah 60, etc. Would you rather spend a one day vacation to southern Iowa tomorrow, or wait 6 months and be given one month free to travel world wide? That seems crazy to pick Iowa, and that is what Jesus is reminding them that this great reversal is near. B. He will deliver the church from future trial v10. He protects his people through trials, bringing them safely to the kingdom. Therefore, despite real danger and even loss of life, we will be brought home so no reason to fear. C. Believers have security in the ages to come. He writes his name on them - that is real security. This place is not meant to be our home.

Application: Jesus is pleading with them to see these facts so that they live differently. So how live now? A. Endure patiently v10. Following Jesus does mean patient endurance. It is a marathon not a series of short sprints. He brings honey in the wilderness so this is not just to be endured but can be done in joy. B. Hold fast v11. When the troubles of life come, do you hold Christ or your own natural abilities, other people, self-medicate, etc. Hold to Christ.

Notes: V9 references Psalm 86 and is fulfilled now: Psalm 86:9 says, “All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.” Isaiah 45:14, 49:23, 60:14 are all in view here like Psalm 86. “These OT texts predict that the unbelieving Gentiles would come and bow down at Israel’s feet and to Israel’s God in the last days. This prophecy has been fulfilled in an apparent ironic fashion in the Gentile church, which as become true Israel by virtue of its faith in Christ. In contrast, the ethnic Israelites in Philadelphia fulfill the role of the Gentiles” (Carson p1,097). The irony is that the roles are reversed largely today, and one day many Jews will believe and worship Jesus with the Gentiles who are the true Jews who believe in Christ.

Context: Tie to Previous Section	Flow: Summarize the flow in a few short sentences	Repeated, Key Words, Key Pronouns	Promises & Commands	What do we learn about God? How does Jesus fulfill this?
Context: This is letter 6 of 7 to churches here from Jesus. Flow: Idea: Write these words: Explain: These words are from the one who holds the keys to eternal life. Action: Jesus has the final say on you getting eternal life (not the Jews), AND you have obeyed him while having no societal or political clout. Result: It is three-fold: see detail Action: Because I am coming soon (inference), hold fast to the truth you have.Result: No one takes your crown. Action: Conquer; Result: You will be made a pillar - permanent resident fellowshiping with God with an everlasting name (Is. 56:3, 5). You are his and belong to him! Four pillar attributes - see detail. Action: Listen; Manner: to the words the Spirit brings from Jesus to the Churches.	V10 hour of trial - testing: “This suggests that the ‘testing’ here in 3:10 has the double effect of purifying and strengthening believers while being at the same time a divine punishment on unbelievers” (Carson p1,097). V7-8 Door: eternal life V12 Pillar: permanent resident fellowshiping with God.	Pv9: God will make the Jews / non-believing Gentiles come and worship and also bring homage to you. Pv10: Jesus will keep his own through trial. Pv11: he is coming soon. Cv11: hold fast to Christ. Pv12: conquerors get fellowship now and eternally Cv13: listen	V7: he is in control - Jews are telling believers they are not the people of God. But Jesus holds the keys to the door of heaven. “If I say you are good, you are good.” V8: he is all seeing/known - he sees, knows, and cares for us when we are slandered V9: he values justice in irony; he loves his own. V11: he gives crowns V12: he grants everlasting names, fellowship with him	
Implied WHY question(s): ground, inference, action/ purpose, action/result	Implied WHAT question(s): idea/explain, question/answer, positive/negative, series	Implied HOW question(s): action/manner, idea/explain	Confession: What do these verse say about my need or about me?	ACTS: Pray the verses back to God (Adore, Confess, Thank, Supplicate or Ask).
V11 WHY hold fast to what you have in Christ? So no one may seize your crown. V12 WHY conquer? We get an everlasting name, “The Philadelphians are promised a permanent place in God’s temple. This is likely an evocation of Isa. 56:3-5” (Carson p1,097).	V12 WHAT defines a person who is made a pillar in God’s temple? You are his permanently, AND you get three names written on you: God’s name, God’s city’s name, and Jesus’ new name - you get identity and place. V13: WHAT are we supposed to hear? The HS illuminating God’s words.	V7, 10, 13 HOW are we supposed to endure slander and thus to the command (v12) to conquer, namely sin and bitterness and despair? Listen to the One who speaks words to you and over you who knows you. Obey (v10). Let the Spirit teach you from these words (v13). Rest in these promises - you are made a pillar in the house of God with his name on you as his, that is my everlasting name.	V8-9: Having little influence and/or being marginalized and slandered can lead to disobedience, bitterness, or despondency done out of futility.	O God, who alone holds the keys to death and is all powerful where none can thwart your will, we praise you. We acknowledge that we do not have inside ourselves what we need to walk patiently and faithfully through hardship and slander. Thank you for speaking to us, for speaking words of love over us making us pillars in your house. Help us to hold fast in love to your words as life.

Arcing:			Passage: Revelation 3:14-22
Idea / Explain: Write these words: these words are from Jesus as the true Israel.		Idea / Explain	14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea [you] write: 'The words of the Amen, (Isa. 65:15-16) the faithful and true witness, (witness = Isa. 65:15-16) the beginning of God's creation.(Isa 43:10-12 Jesus as true Israel)
Action: I know you are not useful for the kingdom.	Main	Idea	15 "'I know your works:
		Explain (Series)	you are neither cold nor hot.
		Explain (Series)	Would that you were either cold or hot!
Result: So I will not use you because you say you are self-sufficiently rich when actually you are broke and don't know it.	Inference	Action	16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold,
		Result	I will spit you out of my mouth.
	Ground	Ground	17 For you say,
		Positive (Series)	I am rich,
		Positive (Series)	I have prospered,
		Positive (Series)	and I need nothing,
		Negative	not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.
Action: In brokenness, go buy from Christ true wealth.		Action	18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire,
Result: You will have true wealth, righteousness, and vision.		Result (Series)	so that you may be rich,
		Result (Series)	and white garments so that you may clothe yourself
		Result (Series)	and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen,
		Result (Series)	and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.
Main: Jesus disciplines those he loves.		Action	19 Those whom I love,
		Manner	I reprove and discipline,
Inference: So be useful and repent.		Series	so be zealous
		Series	and repent.
Action: Jesus pursues his own so listen and respond.		Idea	20 Behold,
		Explain	I stand at the door and knock.
		If	If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,
Result: He will have deep fellowship with you.		Then	I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.
Action: Conquer.		Action	21 The one who conquers,
Result: You will sit together with Christ on his throne.		Result (Main)	I will grant him to sit with me on my throne,
		Comparison	as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.
Action: Listen.		Action	22 He who has an ear, let him hear
Manner: The Spirit speaks.		Manner	what the Spirit says to the churches."

Letter 7 of 7: You have a pitiable spiritual state in the midst of apparent prosperity.

HEADLINE SENTENCE: ITS A CALL TO BE IN DEEP FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS WHILE BEING USEFUL FOR HIS GLORY, SERVING GOD AND OTHERS.

Pastor Ryan, 3/21/21 (via Jodi’s notes, in Boulder snowboarding with grace) - Title: Lukewarm in Laodicea.

Intro: What was this city known for? Eye cream medical therapy, banking, and the wool trade - ironically then the critique is you actually have nothing without Christ you are actually blind, poor, and naked.

What were they doing in the church that was bad?

- 1. Not zealous for Christ and his kingdom. If you are lukewarm you are of no use for the kingdom. What comes out of you when you get cut? The water temperature issue was usefulness: hot water they could use to cook, cold was refreshing, lukewarm was useless. It is a call to this church to be useful for the glory of God.
- 2. Self-reliant on their resources blocking their need for their savior. They did not see their true need for God. Riches can distract us from our real needs. How do you know if you are too self-reliant? Look at your prayer life. Lack of prayer in your life is likely lukewarm
- 3. They were blind to their own weaknesses. They did not know they were living in a way where Christ was their hope and functional savior. Community helps blind spots in us which is called a blind spot for a reason.

What are good responses here in this passage?

- A. Buy from Jesus - Isaiah 55, true wealth is in him, come broken and buy without money, you have to know you are broke.
- B. Be zealous and repent (v19).
- C. Respond - open the door, the reward is sitting on his throne with him. I stand at the door and knock is to believers in this church for fellowship and relationship and intimacy, not a general call to salvation to the lost.

Context: Tie to Previous Section	Flow: Summarize the flow in a few short sentences	Repeated, Key Words, Key Pronouns	Promises & Commands	What do we learn about God? How does Jesus fulfill this?
Context: This is letter 6 of 7 to churches here from Jesus. Flow: Idea / Explain: Write these words: these words are from Jesus as the true Israel. Action: I know you are not useful for the kingdom. Result: So I will not use you because you say you are self-sufficiently rich when actually you are broke and don't know it. Action: In brokenness, go buy from Christ true wealth. Result: You will have true wealth, righteousness, and vision. Main: Jesus disciplines those he loves. Inference: So be useful and repent. Action: Jesus pursues his own so listen and respond. Result: He will have deep fellowship with you. Action: Conquer. Result: You will sit together with Christ on his throne. Action: Listen. Manner: The Spirit speaks.	V16 lukewarm water was not useful: both hot and cold water were useful in this town but warm carried bacteria / impurities and was not useful. V20 door / eat: a scene of deep fellowship.	Cv15: be useful (hot or cold) Pv18: those who come to Christ to buy being broke will be truly rich, righteous, and see truth. Cv19: be zealous and repent Pv20: fellowship awaits those who submit to Christ Pv21: the conqueror will rule with Christ Cv22: listen to the HS	-v14 He is the long awaited one fulfilling Isa. 65, THE true Israel. -v15 He sees all and knows all we do (including into our blind spots) AND pursues with compassion not shuts down and runs away -v18 He alone provides true wealth, removes shame, and gives vision -v19 He disciplines those he loves -v20 He stands ready today and now for fellowship -v21 He conquered as he bids us to and rules	
Implied WHY question(s): ground, inference, action/ purpose, action/result	Implied WHAT question(s): idea/explain, question/answer, positive/negative, series	Implied HOW question(s): action/manner, idea/explain	Confession: What do these verse say about my need or about me?	ACTS: Pray the verses back to God (Adore, Confess, Thank, Supplicate or Ask).
V16 WHY does Christ not use people in this church? V15 they are not useful AND v17 they are self-deceived thinking to be rich but are broke. V19 WHY be zealous/ useful and repent too? Jesus reproved and disciplines his own who are deeply loved.	V17 WHAT is in your blind spot? Self-reliance from wealth hiding that you are actually wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. V18 WHAT happens when we come to him in our brokenness which is not self-reliant? We get true gold, we get clothed in real righteousness fixing our shame and sense of meaninglessness, peace from seeing truth, and v20 deep fellowship with him.	V18 HOW be useful to God? Come in realized and true brokenness to Jesus the only one who can save and satisfy. V19 repent. V20 respond to him bidding to have deep fellowship with him. V14, 18, 22, etc. HOW do you see what is in your blind spot and change? Jesus will speak lovingly into it, listen to him, and repent, and be content in deep fellowship with him.	We get duped by our riches to think we need nothing spiritually either when, in fact, self-reliance in our blind spot renders us not useful to God's work in his kingdom now. We are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. We need true, lasting wealth bought from Christ without money but brokenness.	O, Holy One and True Israel of God, we worship you. Forgive us for relying on our fleeting wealth in the ways we should be satisfied and reliant on you. We thank you for pursuing us and correcting us in love, bringing us deep fellowship with you for whom we were made. Help us to serve others by being useful in the kingdom for your glory and our joy. Grow our hope in you and thus our endurance to conquer.

Hard Conversations, Encouraging Truths: a thematic approach to the Seven Letters

Pastor Ryan, 3/28/21 - Intro:

Not all hard conversations are to be dreaded but can be redemptive. Jesus speaks hard truths to these seven churches, but it proves to be right what they need and encourages them.

There are four encouragements as themes in these letters:

1. There is no one like Jesus. He starts each letter reminding them who he is, and who is speaking, and who is bringing these words. He is very God, and he is the one speaking and pursuing.

2. He knows the situations of his people, AND he cares. In each letter it says I know, I understand. In every circumstance which is different in each church, Jesus knows. He sees. And he cares, that is why he is speaking over them and pursuing them. In knowing everything he does not give up on them but the result is he pursues them! That is what he does for us. How do we know he knows and cares both? Look no further than the cross. He died knowing our sin AND still did it out of deep compassion.

3. Repentance is a pathway to joy. Eight times in five different letters Jesus tells them to repent. Repentance is not the same as worldly sorry or regret that we could take something back.

Repentance is out of our heart, and repenting that I am the type of person that would do something like that, not just sorry it turned out bad. For example 3:19 is a contrast to 3:20. The opposite of making peace with sin is Christ knocking at the door for fellowship. That is repentance: leave the sin and run to the joy and fellowship. That is how we beat sin by the Spirit: don't just run from something, run to Someone better and more satisfying and more free and more lasting.

4. Those who are in Christ have a glorious future that awaits. Even the joy we have now in him in this broken world where things are not as they are meant to be, it will be even more glorious when the broken will be undone ultimately. These promises to these churches are staggering and they are for us: access to the tree of life, fellowship, hidden manna, as white stones, his name on us as pillars in his house, sitting on the throne with Jesus, to name a few. Can the world offer anything at all in comparison to these? You may have to give up things here and now, but they will absolutely be pale in comparison to what you are guaranteed to have and taste that today.

Conclusion: The book of revelation is not confusing about dragons as much as it is very clearly about Jesus. He is worth it. Conquer. Run to him.



Photo: El Dora trip 4, March 2021



The Cottonwood Hotel, Omaha, NE: Jodi's 50th birthday



Eric Blick, April 2021

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- Photography: pictures by Eric in Roosevelt National Forest, Nederland, CO, El Dora ski resort, and other noted locations.

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