

10.5.17  
10.12.17

## The Revelation to John 1.9-2.7: The Church Addressed

### 1.9-11: Greetings to Seven Churches from Patmos

9 'your brother and partner' - Mark 10.29-30

they share in : tribulation, kingdom, and endurance

Christians in Asia Minor face exile, imprisonment, slander, poverty, exploitation, violence, and the constant threat of judicial action (Schussler Fiorenza)

The Christian response? Endurance (2.2-3, 19; 3.10; 13.10; 14.12)

'Through many hardships we enter the kingdom of God' (Mark 10.29-30; John 16.33; 1 Thess. 3.3; 2 Timothy 3.12; 1 Peter 2.21)

1 Peter 1.11: 'the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow' are our model

Patmos: Eusebius wrote that John was banished there in the 'fourteenth year of Domitian's reign' (AD 95); In 96, after Domitian's death, new emperor Nerva gave a general amnesty to all exiles (Aune 77)

Why was John banished? because of his preaching 'the word of God' and witnessing for Jesus

10-11 *en pneumati*: 'in the Spirit' (1.10; 4.2; 17.3; 21.10) [Acts 11.5; 22.17; 2 Cor. 12.2-4], also Ezekiel 2.2; 3.12; 11.1

*Pneumati* as source of prophetic inspiration in OT: Num. 24.2; 1 Kings 18.12; Joel 2.28; Ezekiel 3.12-14; 8.3; 11.1, 24; 37.1; 43.5

'on the Lord's Day' – Sunday (since 2C [Bauckham])

Trumpet - a harbinger of the Day of the Lord (Matthew 24.31; 1 Cor. 15.52; 1 Thess. 4.16)

7 cities: form the circular route of a letter carrier: Ephesus to Smyrna to Pergamum to Thyatira to Sardis to Philadelphia to Laodicea (W.M. Ramsay)

### 1.12-3.22: Vision of the Exalted Christ

lampstand – (Exodus 25, 37, Numbers 8, Zechariah 4) On which oil lamp with a wick was set. In Zechariah, they represent Israel. Used here to signify the Church as shining light for God in the midst of a hostile world. Also 11.1-13

Daniel 7.13-14: 'one like a son of man'; Daniel 10; 'Son of Man' sayings in the Gospels?

Christ Jesus is the prophesied Messianic Deliverer

1.13-16: Describe Jesus? (Do not) 'unweave the rainbow. John uses his allusions not as a code in which each symbol requires separate and exact translation, but rather for their evocative and emotive power. This is not photographic art' (Caird 26-26)

See Daniel 10.5-6

Daniel 7.9-12 describes the Ancient of Days: *'His clothing was white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool'*; also Christ on Mt. Transfiguration (Mark 9.3)

voice 'like the sound of roaring waters'

right hand - symbolizes power and authority (Ps. 110.1; Matt. 26.64)

seven stars - the seven churches identified in verse 20 (image found in Daniel 12.3, 6-7)

'sword from his mouth' - Isaiah 11.4: *the Messiah 'will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth; with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked'*; also Isaiah 49.2

2 Thessalonians 2.8: *Christ at the parousia will destroy the 'man of lawlessness' with the 'breath of His mouth.'*

18 phrase for God used in Deut. 32.40; Daniel 4.34; 12.7

20 lampstands and angels

## **2.1-3.22: Messages to Seven Churches**

Daniel 7.9-14; Daniel 10.1-9

### **2.1-7: A Message to the Church in Ephesus**

- Leading Church in Asia Minor
- The center of Paul's mission to Asia
- John's residence and base for ministry
- Church threatened from without and within (Acts 20.28-31)
- False prophets detected through examination of behavior and teaching (1 Thess. 5.19-21; 1 John 4)
- Center of worship for emperor and Artemis (Acts 19.23-41)

1 the *aggelos* of the *ecclesia*

'one who holds . . . and walks' = thus says the LORD (21 times in the Minor Prophets [including 12 times in Zechariah], and 100 times in Ezekiel and Jeremiah)

2-3 the church commended – for what??

4 BUT – you have left your first love

- Matthew 24.12-14: 'Most peoples' love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.'

5 'the deeds you did at first' – zeal for faithfulness and sharing Christ

What will happen if they do not repent?

Lampstand – those who are God's 'prophetic witnesses' (Rev. 11.3-7, 10); also Mark 4.23 and Luke 8.8

6 Nicolaitans (from *nikos* ['to conquer/subdue] and *laos* [people]) - likely named for Nicolas of Antioch (Acts 6.5). Some early Christian sources say that Nicolas was a convert from paganism who taught of Christian compromise with paganism

7 'one who has ears to hear' – Matt. 13.9-17; Mark 4.9, 23, etc.

'Tree of life' – Genesis 2-3, symbolizes the life-giving presence of God. Here the tree likely also represents the cross.

### THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

- City
- One of the "Seven Churches" (Rev. 2-3)
- Principal Roman roads

