



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

CLA – 2016

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Chapter Two

Day of Discovery Background Video

Chapter Two

- **From chapter #1 – we should not leave it too far behind without noting the great hope that John’s vision of the risen and glorified Christ gave to the church.**
- **Most place the time of John’s writing around the year AD 95 – by then:**
 - **Some 60 years had passed since Jesus’ ascension.**
 - **Many of the apostles had been martyred.**
 - **Jerusalem had been destroyed.**

Chapter Two

- **If ever the church needed to be reassured that their faith in Jesus was rightly placed, it was when John wrote.**
- **When we consider the conditions for Christians in 95 A.D., it becomes even easier to understand the promise of blessing for those who read, hear, and understand this book.**
- **So as we begin chapter 2 and the letters to the 7 churches, we now have an idea of what these early believers were facing and maybe we will not be so quick to judge their flaws. 😊**

Chapter Two

- **The messages to the 7 churches are all different and each addresses a different problem, but there are some similarities.**
- **Each begins with, “I know thy works”.**
- **Each offers a promise, “to him that overcometh”.**
- **Each has some form of, “he who has an ear”.**
- **Each introduces Jesus using some imagery from chapter one.**

Chapter Two

- **Archbishop Trench (the Church of England) lamented the fact that while nearly all other scriptures were mandated to be read in the church in a rotating basis, that chapters 2 and 3 of The Revelation of Jesus Christ were not.**
- **In our day, while a good number of even the unsaved have heard excerpts from Jesus' sermon on the mount, few have even a feint idea that these two chapters exist.**
- **Since these two chapters hold the remedy to many, if not all, the problems in the church, it is likely a work of the enemy that the church itself remains ignorant of these teachings.**

Chapter Two

- **Interestingly enough, the very first letter is to the Apostle John's home church where he had pastored.**
- **Ephesus was a port city on the Aegean Sea and was a place of affluence and influence.**
- **It was a cosmopolitan city populated by Jews and Gentiles of just about every persuasion. Think New York City like, with a robust market place, and a dark side of rampant immorality as well.**

Chapter Two

- **In order to enter the central market place (the Agora) of Ephesus, you were required to burn incense to the current Caesar as an act of worship as you entered.**
- **For the Christians, the challenge was that being shut out of the Agora, was to be cut-off from a lot of life and the things that made life comfortable, and to some extent, possible.**
- **In addition to a corrupt, and morally bankrupt marketplace, the Christians of Ephesus were inundated with the open presence of pagan worship – 14 pagan temples in their city to other gods.**

Chapter Two

- Of all the temples and shrines in Ephesus, the temple built for Artemis, the goddess of fertility stands out. (450' X 200')



Chapter Two

- **The temple of Artemis was one of the major centers of commerce – it was the place for financial transactions such as loans and banking.**
- **The temple was also filled with prostitutes, both male and female, and celebrations to Artemis turned into sexual orgies of every kind.**
- **On her birthday, men would actually castrate themselves and present their testicles as an offering to Artemis so they could become a temple Eunuch.**

Chapter Two

- **Ephesus was also hand selected by Domitian as the place for his temple – it was where he chose to be worshipped.**
- **Domitian's temple included a statue that showed all other gods of the empire lifting him up as their god.**



Chapter Two

- **There was statue of Domitian that stood 50' tall as you entered Ephesus to show his power and dominance.**
- **This was intimidating to the Christians of Ephesus and you have to wonder if one of the reasons John's vision of Jesus was so focused on His power was to counter balance what the believers of the day were facing.**
- **To hear of a Jesus that was like what John saw, had to give hope to the believers who were facing state persecution from what seemed like all-powerful gods.**

Chapter Two

- **One of the ways the Romans held the culture together was to make all subjects affirm there is just one god, and that god was Caesar.**
- **This was in fact an annual event where all were to declare their worship of the Roman god, the Caesar of their day.**
- **Not all Caesars took this seriously, but Domitian did and that led to the massive persecution that landed John on Patmos.**

Chapter Two

- **There was also widespread activities of demons in Ephesus – no wonder, given the nature of the culture.**
- **Remember what Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus – (Eph 6:10-20) regarding the whole armor of God.**
- **Eph 6:13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.**

Chapter Two

- **1** “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: **2** ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; **3** and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary. **4** But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. **5** Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. **6** Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. **7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’

Chapter Two

- **John writes to his home church regarding the One who had the seven stars in His hand – remember, Domitian’s son on the coin with the 7 stars?**
- **Jesus is saying, not so fast there Domitian, I am on the throne and I am the one who has the power and am worthy of worship.**
- **So Jesus is reminding them of the truth – and the truth always sets us free, even if some temporal consequences accompany that freedom.**

Chapter Two

- The apostle Paul spend almost 3 years in Ephesus teaching daily the truths of Christianity – this church, perhaps more than any other one, was well grounded in the truth.
- In fact, Paul’s ministry was so effective at Ephesus that the silversmiths union once rioted because there were so many converts to Christianity that their livelihoods were threatened.
- *Acts 19:27 “Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence.”*

Chapter Two

- Jesus has a lot of good things to say to the church at Ephesus – things we would all like said about our church.
- Verse #2 - I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.
- If Jesus were to say this about us, we would be thrilled, but it seems that just doing the right things is not so commendable if we forget why we are doing the right things.

Chapter Two

- *4 But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.*
- It seems they'd forgotten why they were so pursuant of good works, godliness, and sound doctrine?
- They had forgotten that everything they do as Christians was to be motivated by love for God or love for others.

Chapter Two

- **If we are not careful, our Christianity can become just as mechanical as the church at Ephesus.**
- **We can fall into the trap of having a form of righteousness while forgetting why it is that we pursue it.**
- **Perhaps said more succinctly, we can do a lot of good things and forget Jesus in our busyness. Jesus wants our works for sure, but He doesn't want only our works.**

Chapter Two

- **If we shoveled our neighbor's snow there would be difference in doing it so that the neighborhood looked better, versus doing it because we love our neighbor.**
- **If we do good works for the sake of doing good works, then we have all the reward we will ever get.**
- **Math 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**

Chapter Two

- **The church at Ephesus had not stopped loving Jesus, but they had stopped making Him their highest priority.**
- **It can happen to us – “Pastor, I want us to stop allowing just anyone come into our church because they could mess up the place”.**
- **Would we rather risk some mess in our beautiful facility for the chance to change lives, or have we done enough and should protect what we have?**

Chapter Two

- **One of the commendations Jesus had for the church at Ephesus was that they, like Him, hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans.**
- **So what were the deeds of the Nicolaitans? (BTW, Nicolas was one of the first deacons mentioned in Acts chapter 6)**
- **According to the writings of the Early Church leaders, Nicolas taught a doctrine of compromise, implying that total separation between Christianity and the practice of occult paganism was not essential.**

Chapter Two

- **If Nicolas' doctrine were applied at Ephesus, there would be at least some who were offering incense to Caesar to keep their business.**
- **And there would be some who were yielding to the immorality of the culture to fit in – everybody's doing it.**
- **And there would probably be some who would say, “don't get so carried away with this Jesus thing, because you can have your cake and eat it too”.**

Chapter Two

- **7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.**
- **Each of the letters ends with this ‘He who has an ear’ phrase. So what is meant by that?**
- **Perhaps it is as simple as “these messages are not just for these 7 churches, but for anyone for whom the shoe may fit”.**

Chapter Two

- **Finally, verse 7 refers to “he who overcomes” – so who is the one who overcomes?**
- **1st John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**



Questions / Comments