

Revelation: An Exegetical Study of the Greek Text

I. Purpose: An examination of the Greek text of the book of Revelation designed to supply the student with a general knowledge of the book and its interpretive questions.

II. Course Requirements: To accomplish the above mentioned goal the student will be required to read a commentary on Revelation, as well as the attached notes. These notes are based on A.T. Robertson's **Word Pictures in the New Testament**. Then the student will be required to answer, in essay form, the questions found at the end of the lectures. A working knowledge of Greek is also a prerequisite for the course.

III. Textbooks: Select a commentary on Revelation for your textbook. Possibilities would be the two volumes by Robert L. Thomas: *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary* and *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary*, or the two volumes in the International Critical Commentary by R.H. Charles, *Revelation I and II*. Single volume commentaries include J.M. Ford's *Revelation*, which is part of the Anchor Bible Commentary or Leon Morris' *Revelation*, part of the Tyndale New Testament Commentary. There are many others. It is to your advantage as a student to get more than one commentary, preferably from several theological perspectives. These commentaries can be ordered from [The Campus Bookstore](#).

Introduction

The book of Revelation is perhaps the most misunderstood, and misused of all Biblical books. It has been ignored or misapplied by thousands of Christians for thousands of years. It has been interpreted (or perhaps better, misinterpreted) and made to say things that would, no doubt, horrify John the Seer.

The book has suffered such misunderstanding for a variety of reasons. The primary reason is that many interpreters have failed to take seriously the first verse of the book. This verse is the key to the entire text.

The second reason that the book has been misunderstood is that interpreters have failed to take into account the historical situation of the text. One cannot rightly interpret any material if one does not know why and when it was written.

Now it is an understatement to say that Revelation can be interpreted in a variety of ways; some interpret it as a map of the distant future. Others see it as a description of the whole of human history. There are premillennial interpretations, post millennial, and amillennial. All of these views compete for followers. The problem, in my view, with all these attempts, is that they fail to take seriously the first verse, which, as I have already said, is the key to the whole book. That is, in short; the book is an unveiling of Jesus. The book is about Jesus! Who is he, and what has he done? That is what the book is about. That is what the first verse says!

Now we must discover the historical situation which gave birth to the book. At the end of the first century the Church (in certain areas) was suffering persecution. The emperor was demanding worship and the Christians were refusing to do so. In consequence the emperor was killing some and seizing the property of others. Here is

how it worked:

In each village and town, as well as the larger cities, a representative of the emperor made an appearance each year. The citizens of the region were required to bring their taxes and present them as an offering to the emperor. They were also asked to swear an oath to the emperor and vow to pray to him yearly. This the Christians could not do. So, as punishment, they were made to forfeit their property. If they continued to refuse they could be (and some were) killed.

In the midst of this dreadful situation the Church was asking, where is Jesus. Has he abandoned us? Does he no longer care for us? John gives answer. As we make progress in discussing the text of the book the historical situation will be brought to bear in order to enlighten the text.

Thus the book was written at the end of the first century in Asia Minor by an exiled Christian who had lost his property and his citizenship for refusing to worship the emperor.

1:1 Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ,

Apokalupsis, from *apokalupto*, old verb, to uncover, to unveil. In the Epistles *apokalupsis* is used for insight into truth (Eph_1:17) or for the revelation of God or Christ at the second coming of Christ (2Th_1:7; 1Pe_1:7). It is interesting to compare *apokalupsis* with *epiphaneia* (2Th_2:8) and *phanerosis* (1Co_12:7). The precise meaning here turns on the genitive following. Hort takes it as objective genitive (revelation about Jesus Christ) and in this he is most certainly correct. The Revelation is about Jesus, not about the future or the past apart from Him. *dei genesthai en tachei*. Second aorist middle infinitive of *ginomai* with *dei*. See this same adjunct (*en tachei*) in Luk_18:8; Rom_16:20; Rev_22:6. It is a relative term to be judged in the light of 2Pe_3:8 according to God's clock, not ours. As one commentator notes, rightly, "Jesus is the medium of all revelation" (Moffatt).

2 ὃς ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅσα εἶδεν.

Emarturesen is an epistolary aorist here, referring to this book. *ton logon tou theou* Subjective genitive, given by God. The prophetic word as in Rev_1:9; Rev_6:9; Rev_20:4, not the personal Word as in Rev_19:14.

3 Μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα, ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς.

ho anaginōskōn. Present active singular articular participle of *anaginōskō* (as in Luk_4:16). Christians in their public worship followed the Jewish custom of public reading of the Scriptures (2Co_3:14.). The church reader (*anagnōstēs*, lector) gradually acquired an official position. John expects this book to be read in each of the seven churches mentioned (Rev_1:4) and elsewhere. *kai tērountes*. Present active participle of

tēreō, a common Johannine word (1Jo_2:4, etc.). Cf. Mat_7:24. “The content of the Apocalypse is not merely prediction; moral counsel and religious instruction are the primary burdens of its pages” (Moffatt). *ho gar kairos eggus*. Reason for listening and keeping. On *kairos* see Mat_12:1, time of crisis as in 1Co_7:29. How near *eggus* (at hand) is we do not know any more than we do about *en tachei* (shortly) in Rev_1:1. See also Mark 13:31ff.

4 Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἦν καὶ τοῦ ἐρχόμενου καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ

These seven cities were the best points of communication with seven districts (Ramsay). There is the one Holy Spirit with seven manifestations here to the seven churches. There are not 7 Holy Spirits!

5 καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς, ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλείων τῆς γῆς. Τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λύσαντι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ,

The use of *martus* of Jesus here is probably to the witness (Rev_1:1) in this book (Rev_22:16.), not to the witness of Jesus before Pilate (1Ti_6:13). *ho prototokos ton nekron*. A Jewish Messianic title (Psa_89:27). This indicates that John is addressing a Jewish audience- or at least a congregation very familiar with Jewish Scripture. *lusanti*. First aorist active participle of *luo* (Aleph A C), though some MSS. (P Q) read *lousanti* (washed), a manifest correction. Note the change of tense. Christ loosed us once for all, but loves us always.

6 καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων]· ἀμήν.

The idea here is that Christians are the true spiritual Israel in God’s promise to Abraham as explained by Paul in Gal 3; Rom 9.

7 Ἴδου ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ οἱ ὄτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν, καὶ κόψονται ἐπ’ αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς· ναί, ἀμήν.

Compare the manifestation of God in the clouds at Sinai, in the cloudy pillar, the Shekinah, at the transfiguration” (Vincent). *exekentesan*. First aorist active indicative of *ekkenteo*, late compound (Aristotle, Polybius, lxx), from *ek* and *kenteo* (to stab, to pierce), in N.T., only here and Joh_19:37, in both cases from Zec_12:10, but not the lxx text (apparently proof that John used the original Hebrew or the translation of Theodotion and Aquila). *kopsontai*. Future middle (direct) of *kopto*, old verb, to cut, “they shall cut themselves,” as was common for mourners.

8 Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

Only here and Rev_21:5. is God introduced as the speaker.

9 Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης, ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνὸς ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ βασιλείᾳ καὶ ὑπομονῇ ἐν Ἰησοῦ, ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ.

Patmos is a rocky sparsely settled island some ten miles long and half that wide, one of the Sporades group in the Aegean Sea, south of Miletus. The present condition of the island is well described by W. E. Geil in *The Isle That Is Called Patmos* (1905). Here John saw the visions described in the book, apparently written while still a prisoner there in exile.

10 ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος

Deissmann has proven (*Bible Studies*, p. 217f.; *Light*, etc., p. 357ff.) from inscriptions and papyri that the word *kuriakos* was in common use for the sense “imperial” as imperial finance and imperial treasury and from papyri and ostraca that *hēmera Sebastē* (Augustus Day) was the first day of each month, Emperor’s Day on which money payments were made (cf. 1Co_16:1). It was easy, therefore, for the Christians to take this term, already in use, and apply it to the first day of the week in honour of the Lord Jesus Christ’s resurrection on that day (*Didache* 14, *Ignatius Magn.* 9).

11 λεγούσης· ὁ βλέπεις γράψον εἰς βιβλίον καὶ πέμψον ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις, εἰς Ἔφεσον καὶ εἰς Σμύρναν καὶ εἰς Πέργαμον καὶ εἰς Θυάτειρα καὶ εἰς Σάρδεις καὶ εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν καὶ εἰς Λαοδίκειαν.

12 Καὶ ἐπέστρεψα βλέπειν τὴν φωνὴν ἣτις ἐλάλει μετ’ ἐμοῦ, καὶ ἐπιστρέψας εἶδον ἑπτὰ λυχνίας χρυσᾶς

13 καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν λυχνιῶν ὅμοιον υἷὸν ἀνθρώπου ἐνδεδυμένον ποδήρη καὶ περιεζωσμένον πρὸς τοῖς μαστοῖς ζώνην χρυσᾶν.

pros tois mastois. Old word for breasts of a woman (Luk_11:27; Luk_23:29) and nipples of a man, as here. High girding like this was a mark of dignity as of the high priest (Josephus, *Ant.* III. 7. 2).

14 ἡ δὲ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τρίχες λευκαὶ ὡς ἔριον λευκόν ὡς χιῶν καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόξ πυρὸς

15 καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπυρωμένης καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ ὡς φωνὴ ὑδάτων πολλῶν,

chalkolibanōi. This word has so far been found nowhere else save here and Rev_2:18. Suidas defines it as an *ēlektion* (amber) or a compound of copper and gold and silver (*aurichalcum* in the Latin Vulgate). It is in reality an unknown metal.

16 καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ ἀστέρας ἑπτὰ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ῥομφαία δίστομος ὀξεῖα ἐκπορευομένη καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ.

Romphaia (as distinct from *machaira*) is a long sword, properly a Thracian javelin.

17 Καὶ ὅτε εἶδον αὐτόν, ἔπεσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὡς νεκρός, καὶ ἔθηκεν τὴν δεξιάν αὐτοῦ ἐπ’ ἐμὲ λέγων· μὴ φοβοῦ· ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος
18 καὶ ὁ ζῶν, καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρός καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶν εἰμι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἔχω τὰς κλεῖς τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ᾄδου.

tu thanatou kai tou haïdou. Conceived as in Mat_16:18 as a prison house or walled city. The keys are the symbol of authority, as we speak of honouring one by giving him the keys of the city. Hades here means the unseen world to which death is the portal. Jesus has the keys because of his victory over death.

19 γράψον οὖν ἃ εἶδες καὶ ἃ εἰσὶν καὶ ἃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα.
20 τὸ μυστήριον τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων οὗς εἶδες ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς μου καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ λυχνίας τὰς χρυσᾶς· οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀστέρες ἄγγελοι τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησιῶν εἰσὶν καὶ αἱ λυχνίαι αἱ ἑπτὰ ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαι εἰσὶν.

to mustērion tôn hepta asterōn. *mustērion* means the inner meaning (the secret symbol) of a symbolic vision. Various views of *aggelos* here exist. The simplest is the etymological meaning of the word as messenger from *aggellō* (Mat_11:10) as messengers from the seven churches to Patmos or by John from Patmos to the churches (or both). Another view is that *aggelos* is the pastor of the church, the reading *tēn gunaika sou* (thy wife) in Rev_2:20 (if genuine) confirming this view. Some would even take it to be the bishop over the elders as *episcopos* in Ignatius, but a separate *aggelos* in each church is against this idea. Some take it to be a symbol for the church itself or the spirit and genius of the church, though distinguished in this very verse from the churches themselves (the lampstands). Others take it to be the guardian angel of each church assuming angelic patrons to be taught in Mat_18:10; Act_12:15. Each view is encompassed with difficulties, perhaps fewer belonging to the view that the “angel” is the pastor.

2:1 Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ κρατῶν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχνιῶν τῶν χρυσῶν·

en Ephesō. Near the sea on the river Cayster, the foremost city of Asia Minor, the temple-keeper of Artemis and her wonderful temple (Act_19:35), the home of the magic arts (Ephesian letters, Act_19:19) and of the mystery-cults, place of Paul’s three years’ stay (Act_19:1-10; 20:17-38), where Aquila and Priscilla and Apollos laboured (Act_18:24-28), where Timothy wrought (1 Tim. and 2 Tim.), where the Apostle John preached in his old age.

2 οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ τὸν κόπον καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου καὶ ὅτι οὐ δύνη βασιτάσαι κακοῦς, καὶ ἐπείρασας τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν καὶ εὗρες αὐτοὺς ψευδεῖς,

oida. Rather than *ginōskō* and so “emphasizes better the absolute clearness of mental vision which photographs all the facts of life as they pass” (Swete). See Rev_14:13 for sharp distinction between *erga* (activities) and *kopoi* (toils, with weariness). Endurance (*hupomone*) in hard toil (*kopos*).

3 καὶ ὑπομονὴν ἔχεις καὶ ἐβάστασας διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου καὶ οὐ κεκοπίακες.

“Tired in loyalty, not of it. The Ephesian church can bear anything except the presence of impostors in her membership” (Moffatt).

4 ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφῆκες.

5 μνημόνευε οὖν πόθεν πέπτωκας καὶ μετανόησον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποίησον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι καὶ κινήσω τὴν λυχνίαν σου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτῆς, ἐὰν μὴ μετανόησῃς.

ei de mē. Elliptical condition, the verb not expressed (*metanoēis*), a common idiom.

6 ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔχεις, ὅτι μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν ἃ καγὼ μισῶ.

Trench tells of the words used in ancient Greek for hatred of evil (*misoponēria*) and *misoponēros* (hater of evil), neither of which occurs in the N.T. Irenaeus and Hippolytus take this sect to be followers of Nicolaus of Antioch, one of the seven deacons (Act_6:5), a Jewish proselyte, who is said to have apostatized. There was such a sect in the second century (Tertullian), but whether descended from Nicolaus of Antioch is not certain, though possible (Lightfoot). It is even possible that the Balaamites of Rev_2:14 were a variety of this same sect (Rev_2:15).

7 Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ.

en tōi paradeisōi tou theou. Persian word, for which see Luk_23:43; 2Co_12:4. The abode of God and the home of the redeemed with Christ, not a mere intermediate state. It was originally a garden of delight and finally heaven itself (Trench), as here.

8 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν·

en Smurnēi. North of Ephesus, on a gulf of the Aegean, one of the great cities of Asia (province), a seat of emperor-worship with temple to Tiberius, with many Jews hostile to Christianity who later join in the martyrdom of Polycarp, poor church (rich in grace) which receives only praise from Christ, scene of the recent massacre of Greeks by the

Turks. Ramsay (*op. cit.*, p. 251) terms Smyrna “the City of Life.” Christianity has held on here better than in any city of Asia.

9 οἶδά σου τὴν θλίψιν καὶ τὴν πτωχείαν, ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ, καὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίουσ ἐῖναι ἑαυτοῦσ καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ.

10 μηδὲν φοβοῦ ἃ μέλλεισ πάσχειν. ἰδοὺ μέλλει βάλλειν ὁ διάβολοσ ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰσ φυλακὴν ἵνα πειρασθῆτε καὶ ἔξετε θλίψιν ἡμερῶν δέκα. γίνου πιστόσ ἀχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆσ ζωῆσ.

hina peirasthēte. Purpose clause with *hina* and the first aorist passive subjunctive of *peirazō*. John himself is in exile. Peter and John had often been in prison together. James the brother of John, Paul, and Peter had all suffered martyrdom. *ginou pistos*. “Keep on becoming faithful” (present middle imperative of *ginomai*), “keep on proving faithful unto death”.

11 Ὁ ἔχων οὐσ ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖσ ἐκκλησίαισ. Ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῆ ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.

12 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆσ ἐν Περγᾶμῳ ἐκκλησίασ γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὴν ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξειαν·

en Pergamōi. In a north-easterly direction from Smyrna in the Caicus Valley, some fifty-five miles away, in Mysia, on a lofty hill, a great political and religious centre. Ramsay (*Op. cit.*, p. 281) calls it “the royal city, the city of authority.” Eumenes II (b.c. 197-159) extended it and embellished it with many great buildings, including a library with 200,000 volumes, second only to Alexandria. The Kingdom of Pergamum became a Roman province b.c. 130. Pliny termed it the most illustrious city of Asia. Parchment (*charta Pergamena*) derived its name from Pergamum. It was a rival of Ephesus in the temples to Zeus, Athena, Dionysos, in the great grove Nicephorium (the glory of the city). Next to this was the grove and temple of Asklepios, the god of healing, called the god of Pergamum, with a university for medical study. Pergamum was the first city in Asia (a.d. 29) with a temple for the worship of Augustus (Octavius Caesar).

13 οἶδα ποῦ κατοικεῖσ, ὅπου ὁ θρόνοσ τοῦ σατανᾶ, καὶ κρατεῖσ τὸ ὄνομά μου καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου καὶ ἐν ταῖσ ἡμέραισ Ἀντιπᾶσ ὁ μάρτυσ μου ὁ πιστόσ μου, ὃσ ἀπεκτάνθη παρ’ ὑμῖν, ὅπου ὁ σατανᾶσ κατοικεῖ.

Satan not simply resided in Pergamum, but his “throne” or seat of power of king or judge (Mat_19:28; Luk_1:32, Luk_1:52). The symbol of Asklepios was the serpent as it is of Satan (Rev_12:9; Rev_20:2). There was, besides, a great throne altar to Zeus cut on the Acropolis rock, symbol of “rampant paganism” (Swete) and the new Caesar-worship with the recent martyrdom of Antipas made Pergamum indeed a very throne of Satan. *Antipas* Nothing is really known of this early martyr in Pergamum before the writing of the Apocalypse. One legend is that he was burnt to death in a brazen bull. Other martyrs followed him at Pergamum (Agathonice, Attalus, Carpus, Polybus).

14 ἀλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὀλίγα ὅτι ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ, ὃς ἐδίδασκεν τῷ Βαλάκ βαλεῖν σκάνδαλον ἐνώπιον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ πορνεῦσαι.

Balaam, as Josephus and Philo also say, showed Balak how to set a trap for the Israelites by beguiling them into the double sin of idolatry and fornication, which often went together (and do so still).

15 οὕτως ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν [τῶν] Νικολαίτων ὁμοίως.

16 μετανόησον οὖν· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι ταχὺ καὶ πολεμήσω μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου.

17 Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκὴν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.

psēphon leukēn. This old word for pebble (from *psaō*, to rub) was used in courts of justice, black pebbles for condemning, white pebbles for acquitting. The only other use of the word in the N.T. is in Act_26:10, where Paul speaks of “depositing his pebble” (*katēnegka psēphon*) or casting his vote. The white stone with one’s name on it was used to admit one to entertainments and also as an amulet or charm.

18 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Θουατείροις ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃ ἔχων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόγα πυρὸς καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ·

en Thuateirois. Some forty miles south-east of Pergamum, a Lydian city on the edge of Mysia, under Rome since b.c. 190, a centre of trade, especially for the royal purple, home of Lydia of Philippi (Act_16:14.), shown by inscriptions to be full of trade guilds, Apollo the chief deity with no emperor-worship, centre of activity by the Nicolaitans with their idolatry and licentiousness under a “prophetess” who defied the church there.

19 οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν διακονίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου, καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου τὰ ἔσχατα πλείονα τῶν πρώτων.

20 ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἡ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφῆτιν καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἐμοὺς δούλους πορνεῦσαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα.

tēn gunaiika Iezabel. Symbolical name for some prominent woman in the church in Thyatira, like the infamous wife of Ahab who was guilty of whoredom and witchcraft (1Ki_16:31; 2Ki_9:22) and who sought to drive out the worship of God from Israel. Some MSS. here (A Q 40 min.s) have *sou* (thy wife, thy woman Ramsay makes it), which if correct means she is the pastor’s wife!

21 καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

22 ἰδοὺ βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετ' αὐτῆς εἰς θλίψιν μεγάλην, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς,

23 καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ. καὶ γνώσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ἐραυνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν.

ta tekna autees). “Her spiritual progeny” who have completely accepted her Nicolaitan practices.

24 ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς ἐν Θουατείροις, ὅσοι οὐκ ἔχουσιν τὴν διδαχὴν ταύτην, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βαθέα τοῦ σατανᾶ ὡς λέγουσιν· οὐ βάλλω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἄλλο βάρος,

ta bathea tou Satanaa. The Ophites (worshippers of the serpent) and other later Gnostics (Cainites, Carpocratians, Naassenes) boasted of their knowledge of “the deep things,” some claiming this very language about Satan (the serpent) as Paul did of God (1Co_2:10). It is not clear whether the words here quoted are a boast of the Nicolaitans or a reproach on the other Christians for not knowing the depths of sin. Some even claimed that they could indulge in immorality without sinning (1Jo_1:10; 1Jo_3:10). Perhaps both ideas are involved.

25 πλὴν ὃ ἔχετε κρατήσατε ἄχρι[ς] οὗ ἂν ἦξω.

26 Καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἄχρι τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν

27 καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾶ ὡς τὰ σκεύη τὰ κεραμικὰ συντρίβεται,

28 ὡς κἀγὼ εἶληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωϊνόν.

29 Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

3:1 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας· οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ.

en Sardesin. Some thirty miles south-east of Thyatira, old capital of Lydia, wealthy and the home of Croesus, conquered by Cyrus and then by Alexander the Great, in b.c. 214 by Antiochus the Great, at the crossing of Roman roads, in a plain watered by the river Pactolus, according to Pliny the place where the dyeing of wool was discovered, seat of the licentious worship of Cybele and the ruins of the temple still there, called by Ramsay (*op. cit.*, p. 354) “the city of Death,” city of softness and luxury, of apathy and immorality, “a contrast of past splendour and present unrelenting decline” (Charles). Along with Laodicea it was blamed most of all the seven churches.

2 γίνου γρηγορῶν καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἔμελλον ἀποθανεῖν, οὐ γὰρ εὐ ῥηκά σου τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ μου.

ginou gregorōn. Periphrastic imperative with present middle of *ginomai* (keep on becoming).

3 μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς εἴληφας καὶ ἤκουσας καὶ τήρει καὶ μετανόησον. ἐὰν οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσης, ἦξω ὡς κλέπτης, καὶ οὐ μὴ γνῶς ποίαν ὥραν ἦξω ἐπὶ σέ.

hōs kleptēs. As Jesus had already said (Mat_24:43; Luk_12:39), as Paul had said (1Th_5:2), as Peter had said (2Pe_3:10), as Jesus will say again (Rev_16:15).

4 ἀλλὰ ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ περιπατήσουσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς, ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσιν.

5 Ὁ νικῶν οὕτως περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ὁμολογήσω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρὸς μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ.

ek tēs biblou tēs zōēs. Ablative case with *ek*. This divine register first occurs in Exo_32:32. and often in the O.T. See Luk_10:20; Phi_4:3; Rev_13:8; Rev_20:15; Rev_21:27. The book is in Christ's hands (Rev_13:8; Rev_21:27).

6 Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

7 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Φιλαδελφείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖν Δαυίδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείσει καὶ κλείων καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει·

en Philadelphiā. Some twenty-eight miles south-east of Sardis, in Lydia, subject to earthquakes, rebuilt by Tiberius after the great earthquake of a.d. 17, for a time called in coins Neo-Caesarea, in a wine-growing district with Bacchus (Dionysos) as the chief deity, on fine Roman roads and of commercial importance, though not a large city, called by Ramsay (*op. cit.*, p. 392) “the Missionary City” to promote the spread of the Graeco-Roman civilization and then of Christianity, later offering stubborn resistance to the Turks (1379-90 a.d.) and now called Ala-Sheher (reddish city, Charles, from the red hills behind it). The chief opposition to the faithful little church is from the Jews (cf. Rom 9-11). There are some 1,000 Christians there today. *ho echōn tēn klein Daueid.* This epithet comes from Isa_22:22, where Eliakim as the chief steward of the royal household holds the keys of power.

8 οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ἐνώπιόν σου θύραν ἠνεωγμένην, ἣν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλεῖσαι αὐτήν, ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου.

hina hēxousin kai proskunēsousin. “That they come and worship” (final clause, like *facio ut* in Latin, with *hina* and the future active of *hēkō* and *proskuneō*). The language is based on Isa_45:14; Isa_60:14. The Jews expected homage (not worship in the strict sense) from the Gentiles, but it will come to the Christians at last (1Co_14:24). Later Ignatius (*Philad.* 6) warns this church against Judaizing Christians, perhaps one result of an influx of Jews.

9 ἰδοὺ διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται. ἰδοὺ ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἦξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου καὶ γνῶσιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε.

10 ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, κἀγὼ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

11 ἔρχομαι ταχύ· κράτει ὃ ἔχεις, ἵνα μηδεὶς λάβῃ τὸν στέφανόν σου.

12 Ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ ἔξω οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ ἔτι καὶ γράψω ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἡ καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καινόν.

stulon. Old word for column, in N.T. only here, Rev_10:1; Gal_2:9; 1Ti_3:15.

Metaphorical and personal use with a double significance of being firmly fixed and giving stability to the building. Philadelphia was a city of earthquakes. *tēs kainēs Ierousalēm*). Not *neās* (young), but *kainēs* (fresh).

13 Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

14 Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἀμήν, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ·

en Laodikiā. Forty miles south-east of Philadelphia and some forty miles east of Ephesus, the last of the seven churches addressed with special messages, on the river Lycus on the border of Phrygia, near Colossae and Hierapolis, recipient of two letters by Paul (Col_4:16), on the great trade-route from Ephesus to the east and seat of large manufacturing and banking operations (especially of woollen carpets and clothing, Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, p. 40ff.), centre of the worship of Asklepios and seat of a medical school, home of many Jews, called by Ramsay (*op. cit.*, p. 413) “the City of Compromise,” the church here founded apparently by Epaphras (Col_1:7; Col_4:12.), now a deserted ruin, one of six cities with this name (meaning justice of the people). No praise is bestowed on this church, but only blame for its lukewarmness.

15 οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα ὅτι οὔτε ψυχρὸς εἶ οὔτε ζεστός. ὄφελον ψυχρὸς ἢ ἢ ζεστός.

oute psuchros. Old word from *psuchō*, to grow cold (Mat_24:12), in N.T. only Mat_10:42 and this passage. *oute zestos*. Late verbal from *zeō*, to boil, (Rom_12:11), boiling hot, here only in N.T.

16 οὕτως ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ καὶ οὔτε ζεστός οὔτε ψυχρός, μέλλω σε ἐμέσαι ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου.

chliaros). Tepid. Old adjective from *chliō*, to liquefy, to melt, here alone in N.T. *melloō*. “I am about to,” on the point of. *se emesai*. First aorist active infinitive of *emeō*, old verb to vomit, to reject with extreme disgust, here alone in N.T.

17 ὅτι λέγεις ὅτι πλούσιός εἰμι καὶ πεπλούτηκα καὶ οὐδὲν χρεῖαν ἔχω, καὶ οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ἐλεεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός,

18 συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ' ἐμοῦ χρυσίον πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρὸς ἵνα πλουτήσης, καὶ ἱμάτια λευκὰ ἵνα περιβάλῃ καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχύνη τῆς γυμνότητός σου, καὶ κολλοῦριον ἐγχεῖσαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου ἵνα βλέπῃς.
19 ἐγὼ ὅσους ἐὰν φιλῶ ἐλέγχω καὶ παιδεύω· ζήλευε οὖν καὶ μετανόησον.

See Ps 89:31-34

20 Ἴδου ἔστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· ἐάν τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν, [καὶ] εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ δειπνήσω μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ' ἐμοῦ.

21 Ὁ νικῶν δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσει μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ μου, ὡς καὶ ἐνίκησα καὶ ἐκάθισα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ.

Each of these seven messages begins alike and ends alike. Each is the message of the Christ and of the Holy Spirit to the angel of the church. Each has a special message suited to the actual condition of each church. In each case the individual who overcomes has a promise of blessing. Christ the Shepherd knows his sheep and lays bare the particular peril in each case.

22 Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.