

# Christ to the Churches

Revelation 1 – 3

Jean-Pierre Brétegnier,  
stained glass, France,  
20<sup>th</sup> Century



# Christ to the Churches Introduction



# Christ to the Churches Introduction

- I began reading the book of Revelation – just out of curiosity – over 40 years ago.
- This was before I truly knew Jesus.
- It is the book that brought me to faith in Christ.



# Christ to the Churches Introduction

- John the Apostle was exiled to Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea.
- While there Christ appeared to him.
- This was followed by several visions, which John was told to record.



# Christ to the Churches Introduction

- The word **Revelation** or *apokalypsis* means an unveiling or a disclosure.
- It is a complex book, but will reward all the study we can give to it.
- Truly, it should not be ignored.



# Christ to the Churches Introduction

- **Revelation 1:3** (ESV)

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.



# Christ to the Churches Introduction

1. John on Patmos **Rev 1**
2. Christ to Churches in Asia **Rev 2 – 3**

# John on Patmos    Revelation 1



# John on Patmos    Revelation 1

- **1:1**    The revelation of Jesus Christ
- There are two ways to understand this.
  1. The revelation belongs to Jesus.
  2. It is also Christ who is being revealed.



# John on Patmos      Revelation 1

- 1:4      seven spirits
- Strange imagery, but it is also in **Revelation 4:5** and **5:6**.
- Something like this first appears in **Zechariah 4:1-10**.



# John on Patmos    Revelation 1

- 1:4    seven spirits
- **Revelation** contains literally hundreds of connections to the Old Testament, but few, if any, direct quotations.
- The more you read the entire Bible, the more **Revelation** will make sense.



# John on Patmos    Revelation 1

- 1:4    the ruler of the kings on earth
- Jesus has the most exalted place he can be given.
- 1:5    He has “freed us from our sins by his blood.”



# John on Patmos    Revelation 1

- 1:7    Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye ...
- This is the first of many references to Christ's return that we find in this book.



# John on Patmos    Revelation 1

- **1:10**    the Lord's day
- This may be the first written reference to Sunday as "the Lord's day" in Christian literature.



# John on Patmos    Revelation 1

- **1:12-16**    This is John's initial vision of the glorified Christ.
- **1:17**    We can understand John's reaction. Our reaction would probably be similar.



# John on Patmos    Revelation 1



To Ephesus      Revelation 2:1-7



# To Ephesus    Revelation 2:1-7

- Jesus knows the state of these churches intimately – both good and bad.
- This is a hard-working church.
- It is doctrinally sound.
- But they “have abandoned the love that they had at first.”



To Smyrna      Revelation 2:8-11



# To Smyrna    Revelation 2:8-11

- This is poor and suffering church.
- Jesus encourages them not to fear, but gives them no real correction.



To Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17



# To Pergamum      Revelation 2:12-17

- **1:13**    **Antipas** was killed for his faith – which was a foretaste of things to come.
- The word **witness** is ***martys***, from which we get our word “**martyr**.”



# To Pergamum      Revelation 2:12-17

- **1:14-15**    the teaching of Balaam and the teaching of the Nicolaitans
- Many commentators believe these are one and the same – a teaching that encourages unbiblical sexual practice.
- A church can be right in some ways – even to the point of martyrdom – and still need serious correction by Jesus.



To Thyatira      Revelation 2:18-29



# To Thyatira      Revelation 2:18-29

- **2:19** This church was also wonderful in some ways.
- **2:20-23** Yet it is receives more words of correction than any other church.
- Notably the themes of **sexual immorality** and **idolatry** are here as in **Pergamum** – but in a worse way.



To Sardis      Revelation 3:1-6



# To Sardis      Revelation 3:1-6

- This church had a reputation that was better than its reality.
- Wouldn't it be so much better to have the reality – as important as a good reputation may be?



To Philadelphia Revelation 3:7-13



# To Philadelphia      Revelation 3:7-13

- This is the church that we all want to be a part of.
- They have kept Christ's word.
- He is establishing them and giving them an expanded ministry.



To Laodicea      Revelation 3:14-22



# To Laodicea      Revelation 3:14-22

- This may be the worst church of the bunch.
- Their lack of commitment is making Jesus sick.
- He loves them, but they have somehow kept him outside the door.



# Christ to the Churches **Conclusions**



# Christ to the Churches **Conclusions**

- Sardis and Laodicea received no compliment from Jesus.
- Smyrna and Philadelphia need no correction.
- Ephesus, Pergamum and Thyatira receive both.



# Christ to the Churches **Conclusions**

- The most common problem seems to be compromise with the world.
- Faithfulness to his word, even when that is hard, is what Jesus desires most.



# Christ to the Churches **Conclusions**

- In the weeks we have left in this book, please go back and read these letters repeatedly.
- It is one of the surest ways to understand what Jesus desires of his church.



# Christ to the Churches **Conclusions**

- Let's spend some time praying for our own church before we go.

