

# He who has an ear to hear....

## Re 1:9–3:22

### Vision of the Son of Man

<sup>9</sup>I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. <sup>10</sup>I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup>saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

<sup>12</sup>Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup>The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup>his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. <sup>16</sup>In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

<sup>17</sup>When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup>and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. <sup>19</sup>Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. <sup>20</sup>As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

### To the Church in Ephesus

**2** "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: '**The words of him** who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

<sup>2</sup> " **I know your works**, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup>I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. [Significant praise from Jesus] <sup>4</sup>**But I have this against you**, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent**, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and **remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent**. <sup>6</sup>Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup>**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers** I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

### To the Church in Smyrna

<sup>8</sup>"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: '**The words of the first and the last**, who died and came to life.

<sup>9</sup> " **I know your tribulation** and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup>Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **Be faithful unto death**, and I will give

you the crown of life. <sup>11</sup> **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers** will not be hurt by the second death.'

#### To the Church in Pergamum

<sup>12</sup> "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: **The words of him** who has the sharp two-edged sword.

<sup>13</sup> " **I know where you dwell**, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup> **But I have a few things against you**: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup> Therefore **repent**. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers** I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

#### To the Church in Thyatira

<sup>18</sup> "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: **The words of** the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

<sup>19</sup> " **I know your works**, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. <sup>20</sup> **But I have this against you**, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> **I gave her time to repent**, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, <sup>23</sup> and I will strike her children dead. **And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.** <sup>24</sup> But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. <sup>25</sup> Only hold fast what you have until I come. <sup>26</sup> **The one who conquers** and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, <sup>27</sup> and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. <sup>28</sup> And I will give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'**

#### To the Church in Sardis

**3** "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: **The words of him** who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

" **I know your works**. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup> Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. <sup>3</sup> Remember, then, what you received and heard. **Keep it, and repent**. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. <sup>4</sup> Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup> **The one who conquers** will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I

will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. <sup>6</sup> **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'**

#### To the Church in Philadelphia

<sup>7</sup> "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: **The words of** the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

<sup>8</sup> " **I know your works.** Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. <sup>9</sup> Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup> Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup> I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. <sup>12</sup> **The one who conquers,** I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. <sup>13</sup> **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'**

#### To the Church in Laodicea

<sup>14</sup> "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: **The words of** the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

<sup>15</sup> " **I know your works:** you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so **be zealous and repent.** <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup> **The one who conquers,** I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'** "

1. All seven letters sent as part of the whole book to all seven churches
2. All have a similar structure
3. Beginning = The words of...
  - Jesus has something to say to each of the churches
  - Is a personalised word for each church even though there are similar elements
4. Ending = He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
  - The words of Jesus and what the Spirit says are equal in content and authority
  - To hear means to receive and respond (repent and obey)

5. I know....

- Jesus is intimately involved with building His Church and gives attention to every church
- He walks among the lampstands
  - He sees where we are at
  - It matters a great deal to Him as He is focussed on the Church in this age
- He knows our works, your tribulation, where you dwell...
- He knows our circumstances
  - successes, triumphs, failures and struggles
- He knows our way of life / being
- This is not merely information He is sharing
  - Says this to show His intent for the churches
  - and his evaluation of how they are doing in that regard
- He has an expectation of us in the world
  - For the display of His splendour
  - John 17:10 – His prayer / desire / plan that He is glorified in the Church
- Calling – glory of God in the church / glory of God through the church
- He has a victorious Church in mind – this is what the work He does in us is focussed on achieving

6. Begins with praise for most churches

- Except for Sardis and Laodicea (where He begins directly with a rebuke)
- There is praise for a few in Sardis

7. Praise for:

- Patient endurance, testing and exposing false apostles, not growing weary (Ephesus),
- Did not deny His name and held fast the faith during persecution (Pergamum),
- Love, faith, service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first (Thyatira),
- Kept His word and have not denied His name and have kept my word about patient endurance (Philadelphia)
- For Smyrna there is a warning of persecution to come and an encouragement to endure...
- For Philadelphia there is a promise (open door) and encouragement to endure...

8. But I have this against you...

- A rebuke
- Except for Smyrna and Philadelphia
- Not always against the whole church
- Some in Pergamum, Thyatira
- Most in Sardis, but not all

9. Rebuke for:

- Abandoned first love
  - Did not merely lose it
- Tolerating false teaching, false prophets,
- Tolerate idolatry, sexual impurity
  - Have been influenced by the ways of the world in their day
- Incomplete works
- Being asleep (although seemingly alive / awake)
- Lukewarm and blind to own true state

10. Rebuke is intended to produce conviction

- Awareness
- Godly sorrow

11. Call to repent....

- Every church except for Smyrna and Philadelphia
- Gain restoration and a promise if they do repent
- E.g. Laodicea – Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

12. If not....

- there is a judgement in this world

13. Judgement includes:

- Lampstand removed (Ephesus)
- War against them with the sword of my mouth (Pergamum),
- Sickness and death (Thyatira),
- Come like a thief in the night (Sardis)
- I will spit you out of my mouth

#### 14. Chief points:

- 2:23 – And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.
- 3:19 – Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline

#### 15. Call to overcome....

- Those who conquer – overcome – are rewarded
- An eternal reward
- Does that matter to you?
- Jesus indicates that it should
- Is about a victorious life
  - Not merely surviving

**39.57 νικάω; νίκη, ης f; νίκος, ους n:** to win a victory over—‘to be victorious over, to be a victor, to conquer, victory.’

νικάω: πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον ‘every child of God is victorious over the world’ 1 Jn 5:4. In 1 Jn 5:4 ‘the world’ must be understood in terms of the value system of the world. In a number of languages the closest equivalent of ‘to be victorious over’ is ‘to defeat.’

νίκη: αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἢ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἢ πίστις ἡμῶν ‘this is how we win the victory over the world: with our faith’ 1 Jn 5:4.

νίκος: τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νίκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ‘thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ’ 1 Cor 15:57.<sup>1</sup>

**3528 νικάω** [*nikao* /nik·ah·o/] v. From 3529; TDNT 4:942; TDNTA 634; GK 3771; 28 occurrences; AV translates as “overcome” 24 times, “conquer” twice, “prevail” once, and “get the victory” once. **1** to conquer. **1A** to carry off the victory, come off victorious. **1A1** of Christ, victorious over all His foes. **1A2** of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes, and temptations and persecutions. **1A3** when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, maintain one’s cause.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 500). New York: United Bible Societies.

<sup>2</sup> Strong, J. (1995). [Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon](#). Woodside Bible Fellowship.

16. The reward includes:

- I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God (Ephesus)
- will not be hurt by the second death (Smyrna)
- I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it (Pergamum)
- Him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star (Thyatira)
- Will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life (Sardis)
- I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name (Philadelphia)
- I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne (Laodicea)

17. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- Willing to receive His conviction
- Willing to repent
- Willing to do what He says

18. Holy Spirit – Is God

- Word of Jesus and what the Spirit says are the same in content and authority

19. Holy Spirit – a blazing fire

- Will touch / challenge every area of our lives
- Wants to do a transforming work in us
- Glory of God visible in our lives.

20. Holy Spirit – empowering/ fruitfulness

- Glory of God visible through our lives

21. Lordship – Jesus is God / head of the Church

- Focused on the Church
  - Is in the midst of the lampstands
  - Examines heart and mind
  - Rewards work
- Working in the Church – through the Holy Spirit
- Working through the Church – through the Holy Spirit

22. Implies a life of sacrifice

- Radical lifestyle of serving our Lord and Saviour
- Worship in Spirit and truth

### Isaiah 60:1-3

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.  
For behold, darkness will cover the earth,  
And deep darkness the peoples;  
But the Lord will rise upon you  
And His glory will appear upon you.  
Nations will come to your light,  
And kings to the brightness of your rising.

### Eph 3:20–4:3

<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

#### Unity in the Body of Christ

**4** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called**, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

### 2 Th 2:13–17

<sup>13</sup> But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup> **To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** <sup>15</sup> So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

### 1 Th 2:11–12

<sup>11</sup> For you know how, like a father with his children, <sup>12</sup> we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who **calls you into his own kingdom and glory.**

### 1 Pe 5:6–11

<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup> casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that

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-the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup> And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has **called you**

**to his eternal glory in Christ**, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

<sup>11</sup>To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### **1 Pe 2:9–12**

<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, **that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.** <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup>Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

### **Re 6:1–2**

**6** Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" <sup>2</sup>And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

1 Jn 5:4–5

<sup>4</sup>For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is it that **overcomes** the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

### **Re 12:10–11**

<sup>10</sup>And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup>And **they have conquered him** by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.