

Revelation Chapter Two

- Chapters 2 and 3 unveil “the things which are” in messages given to seven local churches.
 - These churches are under the Apostle’s authority.
 - Each message contains some general information.
 - A brief description of Jesus Christ in His glorified state.
 - A call for believers to “hear” the Word of God being given by the Holy Spirit to the local churches.
 - A description of rewards for “overcomers” – believers who, through their position in Christ, share in His overcoming [Jn 16:33 cp. 1 Jn 5:4-5; Ro 8:37; 2 Cor 2:14].
 - Each message contains some specific information for the local church being addressed.
 - The pastor is given an evaluation in which the positives and/or negatives of his ministry are highlighted.
 - The pastor (and sometimes his congregation) is given one or more commands to follow.
 - Consequences for disobedience of the Lord’s commands are described.
- These messages are delivered from God the Father to Jesus Christ (He is the Head of the Church) to the Apostle John to the messenger of each local church.
 - This represents a chain of command within God’s “org chart” for the Church (age of the local church).
 - In the time of the Apostles, local churches had many elders – all under the authority of the Apostle.
 - While there may be more than one elder in a local church today, one and only one man serves as the messenger accountable to Jesus Christ.
- The Church at Ephesus [2:1-7].
 - The pastor of this church is commended for eight positive attributes [2:2-3, 6].
 - Unfortunately, he failed because he left his first love [2:4] which hindered his ministry [1 Cor 13:1-3].
 - The one command for him is to repent and, if he disobeys, he will lose his local church [2:5].
 - The overcomer is promised access to the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God [2:7]. (The Tree of Life is replanted on the new earth [22:2].)

- The Church at Smyrna [2:8-11].
 - The pastor of this church is commended for three positive attributes [2:9] with no negatives given.
 - The two commands for him are to be faithful and not succumb to fear [2:10].
 - A test is coming that will last ten days.
 - Some of the congregation will be thrown in prison.
 - The overcomer is promised that he need not fear banishment to the lake of fire [2:11]. (The lake of fire is the second death [20:14; 21:8].)
- The Church at Pergamum [2:12-17].
 - The pastor of this church is commended for three positive attributes [2:13].
 - There are two things against him [2:14-15].
 - Some followed the teaching of Balaam.
 - Some followed the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
 - The one command for him is to repent and, if he disobeys, the Lord will enact swift judgment [2:16].
 - The overcomer is promised three eternal blessings: manna, a white stone, and a new name [2:17].
- The Church at Thyatira [2:18-29].
 - The pastor of this church is commended for six positive attributes [2:19].
 - Unfortunately, he failed because he allowed a false prophetess to lead believers astray [2:20].
 - She will not repent and will face judgment [2:21-23].
 - Her followers still have time to repent [2:22].
 - The one command for him (and the rest) is to hold fast until Christ comes [2:24-25].
 - The overcomer who keeps the Lord's deeds until the end will receive authority to rule with Christ in the Millennium and a special honor – the morning star [2:26-28].
 - These rewards are unique in that they are the only rewards tied to experiential faithfulness.
 - This is a special reward of authority (from God the Father [2:27]) above and beyond that which every member of the Church receives through faith in Christ.