

# BLESSED ENDURANCE

## THE MESSAGE OF REVELATION

### LESSON THREE: HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR

#### Jesus in the Midst of his Church (1:4-3:22)

## INTRODUCTION

Where does Judgment begin?

### THE PROLOGUE (1:4-20)

The prologue establishes the whole format of the letter, including its source (the Trinity, vv.4-5), its style (making points by alluding to the OT), and its main focus (energizing believers to live the kingdom life while they wait for Jesus).

Jesus appears to John on Patmos as a

- Judge.
- Priest.
- King.

Jesus' first words to John when John turns to see him: Fear not.

## THE MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

The seven churches are evaluated by Jesus based on their:

- Commitment To witness to Jesus in their world
- Interaction with the wider culture in negative and positive ways
- compromise With that culture, false teaching, and sinful lifestyles

Church	Commendation	Judgment	Warning/Encouragement	Promise
<b>Ephesus (2:1-7)</b>	Toil and patient endurance; refusal to accept false teaching	Lack of commitment to Witness (cf. Matt 24:12-14)	"I will come and remove your lamp stand from its place unless you repent"	"To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life."
<b>Smyrna (2:8-11)</b>	Endurance in tribulation, poverty, and slander.	None	Testing is coming—"be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life"	"The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death."
<b>Pergamum (2:12-17)</b>	Endurance against cultural pressure, even when it leads to death	Cultural compromise; allowing false teaching that encourages compromise	"I will come to you and war against [the false teachers] with the sword of my mouth"	"To the one who conquers... (2:17)"

<b>Thyatira (2:18-29)</b>	Patient endurance in witness	A culture of compromise/missiveness, despite warnings	Sickness, death	"The one who conquers..." (2:26-28)
<b>Sardis (3:1-6)</b>	None	Lack of witness	"I will come against you"	"The one who conquers..." (3:5)
<b>Philadelphia (3:7-13)</b>	Witness despite lack of cultural power	none	Those who oppose you will be defeated; spiritual protection from trials	"The one who conquers..." (3:12-12)

<b>Laodicea (3:14-22)</b>	None	Spiritual lethargy	Encouragement to repent	"The one who conquers..." (3:21)
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## DISCUSSION

*Q: John writes that Jesus' work has made believers "a kingdom, priests to his God and Father." In light of what comes in the letters to the seven churches, how was the church living up to that calling?*

*Q: The overall impression of the early church is not very positive. They struggled with their commitment to witness, with engaging with their culture, and with compromise and spiritual lethargy. Which of these struggles do we see in our lives, and how might Revelation be the corrective we need?*

*Q: The first thing that Jesus says to John when John sees him is "Fear not." Why is this an important reminder when reading Revelation?*