**LESSON III**

**Revelation Chapters Two & Three**

**THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

**I. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS (2:1-7)**

1. Salutation (vs. 1)
2. Christ's Self-designation (vs. 1)
3. Commendation (vss. 2, 3)
4. Deeds, toil, perseverance
5. Cannot endure evil men.
6. Test false apostles (2 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 15:18-19; Acts 5:12)
7. Condemnation (v vs. 4)--they had left their "first love.
8. Warning (vs.5)
9. Further commendation (vs. 6)

1. Nicolaitans

1. May be a specific set of people or simply referring to a lifestyle.
2. The historical evidence is not sufficient enough to be dogmatic.

 2. Something is known of the lifestyle.

1. they were abusers of the Christian freedom.
2. Sexual immorality and all types of debase pagan practices were done in the name of Christian liberty.
3. Exhortation and Promise (vs. 7)

**II. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA (2:8-11)**

* + 1. Salutation (vs. 8a)
		2. Christ's Self-designation (vs. 8b)
		3. Commendation (vs. 9)
1. Tribulation
2. Poverty
3. Enduring blasphemy
	* 1. Condemnation--none
		2. Warning (vs. 10)
4. Thrown into prison for testing.
5. Ten days of tribulation.

 (Question: should we interpret the number 10 literally?)

"The number ten is a round number which represents a measured and very brief period of time (Gen. 24:55). The fact that the testing will be for a short period of time is often used in apocalyptic teachings as the ground for encouragement and consolation. The "ten days" was probably intended to remind them that the severe persecution would be but a little while when compared with the life with which they would be crowned. The time of the persecution is short; the duration of joy is forever."

Robbins, The Revelation Of Jesus Christ, p. 60.

* + 1. Exhortation and Promise (vs. 11)

**III. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMUM (2:12-17)**

1. Salutation (vs. 12a)
2. Christ's Self-designation (vs. 12b)
3. Commendation (vs. 13)
4. Faithfulness in the midst of paganism.
	* + 1. where Satan dwells, and where his throne is.
			2. Pergamum as a center of paganism.
5. Temple of Zeus
6. Temple of Aesculapsius
7. Temple of Rome (featuring Caesar worship)
8. Faithfulness even during the death of a martyr, Antipas.
9. Condemnation (vss. 14, 15)

 1. Some holding to the teaching of Balaam. (Numbers 22:5)

 2. Some holding to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

1. Warning (vs. 16)
2. Exhortation and promise (vs. 17)

 1. Hidden manna

 2. White stone with a new name written on it

**IV. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA (2:18-29)**

 (The longest letter to the smallest church or the least known.)

 A. Salutation (vs. 18a)

 B. Christ's Self-designation (18b)

 C. Commendation (vs. 19)

 D. Condemnation (vss. 20-21)

1. The Historical Setting: trade guilds in Thyatira.
2. The woman Jezebel
3. What she symbolizes (II Kings 9:22)
4. What she was probably teaching: to conquer Satan, yet do no sin by getting involved with the world.
5. (vs. 21) Immorality or Fornication
6. Greek: porneia
7. In Scripture it is used to represent unfaithfulness to a marriage partner or God.
8. Here it probably means both.

 E. Warning (vss. 22-23)

1. Jezebel's bed of prostitution shall become her bed of sickness.
2. Children can be understood literally or figuratively.
3. "minds": Greek word means "kidneys". In Jewish thought it represented the inner man or the seat of the emotions.
4. "heart": in Jewish thought represented man's will and intellect.
5. The idea being conveyed then is that the son of God knows the innermost thoughts and feelings of man.

 F. Exhortation and Promise (vss. 24-29)

1. (vss. 26-27) See also Psalm 2:7-9
2. The tables shall be turned.
3. What once was the oppressed church shall become the conquering church.
4. (vs. 28) "the morning star" (See also Revelation 22:16)

**V. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS (3:1-6)**

 **(God has no use for a dead church!)**

1. Salutation (vs. 1a)
2. Christ's designation of Himself (vs. 1b)
3. Commendation: None
4. Condemnation (vs. 1c–2)

 1. They were a socially acceptable church, but they were spiritually dead.

 2. Notice there is no hint of persecution.

 3. "Wake up"

1. The church was making the same mistake the city had made in history.
2. Twice in the city's history they had let down their guard. As a result, they were attacked and defeated.
3. Do not settle for mediocrity.
4. Warning (vs. 3)
5. Exhortation and Promise (vss. 4-6)

**VI. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA (3:7-13)**

 A. Salutation (vs. 7a)

 B. Christ's Self-designation (vs. 7b)

 1. "the key of David" (see Isa. 22:22)

 2. As David held the keys to old Jerusalem, Jesus holds the keys to the new.

 C. Commendation (vs. 8)

 (The picture of the open door has 2 possible interpretations.)

 1. A door of opportunity for service.

 2. The door of eternal life.

 D. Condemnation: None

 E. Warning: None

 F. Exhortation and Promise (vss. 9:13)

 1. Note the relationship between vs. 9 and 2:26-27.

 2. (Verse 12) pillar in the temple of God

 (see also I Timothy 3:14-15)

 3. The writing of names (see also Rev. 13:16)

**VII. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA (3:14-22)**

1. Salutation (vs. 14a)
2. Christ's Self-designation (vs. 14b)
3. Commendation: None
4. Condemnation (vs. 15)
5. Warning (vss. 16-18)
6. "spit" (Greek is literally "vomit")
7. (vs. 17) They were impressed with their spirituality, but God was not. (Luke 16:15)
8. (vs. 18) Three needed items
9. gold
10. white garments
11. eyesalve

 F. Exhortation and Promise (vss. 19-22)

1. Notice that verse 20 is talking to those who are Christians.
2. Notice again the relationship between verse 21 and 2:26-27.