

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 345 – December 11th – Revelation 2:18-3:6

Works frequently referenced in these notes on the book of Revelation

Morris, Leon	<i>The Revelation of St John</i> (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969
Mounce, Robert H	<i>The Book of Revelation</i> (New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977
Peterson, Eugene H	<i>Reversed Thunder</i> , San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1991
Witherington, Ben	<i>Revelation</i> (New Cambridge Bible Commentary), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003

Verse 18

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Θυατείροις ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἔχων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόγα πυρός, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ·

Thyatira was a prosperous centre for manufacturing and trade (cf. Acts 16:14). "Since the trade-guilds were inseparably intertwined with local religious observances, they posed a special problem for the economic well-being of Christians. The divine guardian of the city was Tyrimnos (identified with the Greek sun-god Apollo), who would be conceived of as the patron of the guilds and therefore honoured in their festivities." Mounce.

ὄδε, ἦδε, τοδε see v.1

Cultic worship of Apollo Tyrimnos was merged with that of the emperor, both being considered sons of Zeus. In contrast with their empty claims, Christ declares himself the Son of God. The title also prepares the way for the quotation from Psalm 2 in v.21.

φλοξ, φλογος f see 1:14

πυρ, ος n see 1:14

In contrast with Thyatira's sun-god. He is one who sees all.

πους, ποδος m see 1:15

ὅμοιος, α, ον see 1:15

χαλκολιβανον, ου n see 1:15

It has been conjectured that the local guild of bronze-smiths would have known the precise meaning of this term which occurs nowhere else in Greek literature.

Verse 19

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν διακονίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπομονὴν σου, καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου τὰ ἔσχατα πλείονα τῶν πρώτων.

διακονια, ας f ministry, service

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

ἔσχατος, η, ον adj last, final

πλειων, πλειον οι πλεον more, most
πρωτος, η, ον first

Cf. the message to the church at Ephesus in v.4.

Verse 20

ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἣ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφητὴν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἔμοῦς δούλους πορνεῦσαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα.

ἀφημι allow, tolerate

Cf. v.4 for a contrasting use of the same verb. Christian *laissez faire* can be a carelessness either about the demands of love and Christian discipleship or about the inroads of heresy.

γυνη, αικος f woman

"She is described as 'That Jezebel of a woman' because here relaxation of the terms of the apostolic decree or further compromise with paganism (cf. v.14) placed her in the succession of the OT Jezebel, whose Baal-cult was marked by idolatry and ritual prostitution." Bruce.

προφητις, ιδος f prophetess

διδασκω teach

πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive

ἔμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

πορνευω see v.14

φαγεῖν see v.14

εἰδωλοθυτον, ου n see v.14

A charge similar to that concerning the Nicolaitans (cf. vv. 14-15). "The Thyatiran Jezebel is probably some prominent woman within the church who, like her OT counterpart, was influencing the people of God to forsake loyalty to God by promoting a tolerance toward and involvement in pagan practices. This extended to fornication and participation in the religious feasts connected with membership in trade guilds." Mounce.

Morris comments, "The strong trade guilds in this city would have made it very difficult for any Christian to earn his living without belonging to a guild. But membership involved attendance at guild banquets, and this in turn meant eating meat which had first been sacrificed to an idol."

Verse 21

καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

ἔδωκα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s δίδωμι
χρονος, ου m time, period of time
μετανοεω repent
θελω wish, will
πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

"The concept of religious infidelity under the figure of harlotry is common in the OT. 'Rejoice not, O Israel!... for you have played the harlot, forsaking your God' (Hos 9:1; cf. Jer 3:6; Ezek 23:19; etc.). The fornication of which Jezebel was not willing to repent was her adulterous alliance with the pagan environment." Mounce.

Verse 22

ἰδοὺ βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην, καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετ' αὐτῆς εἰς θλίψιν μεγάλην, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς:

κλινη, ης f bed, couch, sickbed

Here a sickbed. She will be struck with disease as a punishment.

μοιχευω commit adultery
θλιψις, εως f see v.9
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
ἐὰν μὴ unless
μετανοήσωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl
μετανοεω see v.21

Witherington comments, "Christ inflicted great suffering in the hopes of repentance not because he wanted even Jezebel to undergo final judgment at the eschaton."

Verse 23

καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ· καὶ γνώσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἐραυνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν.

τεκνον, ου n child

"Jezebel's 'children' are not the literal offspring of her adulteries (so Beckwith...) or a second generation of heretics (Lenski...), but those who have so unreservedly embraced the antinomian doctrines of their spiritual mother that they are best described as younger members of her family." Mounce. They are the same as 'those who commit adultery with her' v.22.

ἀποκτενῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ἀποκτείνω
kill, put to death

θανατος, ου m see v.10

To 'kill with death' is a Hebraism meaning either 'to slay completely' or 'to kill by pestilence' (cf. Ezek 33:27; Rev 6:8).

γνωριζω make known, disclose, know
ἐραυνωω search, examine, try to find out
νεφρος, ου m (lit kidney) mind, thought

Used of the will and affections.

He searches heart and mind with burning eyes.

δωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s δίδωμι
ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every

Cf. Jer 17:10, also Mt 16:27; Rom 2:6.

Witherington comments, "There is indeed a judgment of Christian works, with rewards and punishment depending on the evaluation."

Verse 24

ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς ἐν Θουατείροις, ὅσοι οὐκ ἔχουσιν τὴν διδαχὴν ταύτην, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βαθέα τοῦ Σατανᾶ, ὡς λέγουσιν, οὐ βάλλω ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἄλλο βάρος:

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
pl. as many as, all

διδαχη, ης f see v.14

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τι
who, which, whoever, whichever

ἔγνωσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl γινωσκω
βαθος, εια, υ deep

Either:

i) This was actually their claim. They sought to get involved in pagan society in order to become knowledgeable in the mysteries of evil and so prove that evil is unable to touch the person who is saved by grace.

Or:

ii) Like Paul (1 Cor 2:10) they claimed to know the deep secrets of God and it is John who contemptuously calls their knowledge Satanic (so Witherington).

ὡς λεγουσιν uncertain whether this refers to the apostates themselves or to those who remained faithful.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
βαρος, ους n burden, weight

Phillips and Mounce connect verses 24 and 25 so that it reads 'no other burden except that you hold onto what you have until I come'.

Verse 25

πλὴν ὃ ἔχετε κρατήσατε ἄχρι οὗ ἂν ἦξω.

πλὴν conj. but, nevertheless, however

ὃ ἔχετε The sum total of Christian doctrine and hope and privilege.

κρατεω hold, hold fast

ἄχρι and ἄχρι οὗ until

ἦξω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἦκω come, have come, be present

Verse 26

καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἄχρι τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν,

νικαω see v.11

τηρεω keep, observe, maintain

τελος, ους n end, conclusion

τα ἔργα μου in contrast with 'her works' (v.22); cf. also v.19.

δωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδομι

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power

ἐθνος, ους n nation, people

John here quotes from Psalm 2. Those who are faithful to Christ will share in *his* reign.

Verse 27

καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ ὡς τὰ σκευῆ τὰ κεραμικὰ συντριβεται,

ποιμανεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ποιμαινω tend as a shepherd, rule

This verb, while in the Greek used only of tending sheep, reflects an ambiguous Hebrew verb which may mean either to shepherd or to rule. Among the Hebrews the ruler was regarded as shepherd of his people (Jer 23:4f.; 25:34f.; Ezek 34 etc.).

ῥαβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre

σιδηρους, α, ουν made of iron

Mounce thinks the shepherd's staff or club. Perhaps an oak club capped with iron to ward off the attacks of marauding beasts.

σκευος, ους n object, vessel

κεραμικος, η, ον earthen, made of clay

συντριβω break in pieces, shatter

"The description of this rule as the shattering of the potter's vessel speaks of the absolute power of the victorious Christ and his followers over the rebellious nations." Mounce.

Verse 28

ὡς κἀγὼ εἴληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωϊνόν.

κἀγω a compound word = καὶ ἐγω

εἴληφα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s λαμβανω

ἀστηρ, ερος m star

πρωϊνος, η, ον morning

"No completely satisfactory answer for this symbol has been offered. Among the many suggestions one finds

i) An allusion to Lucifer of Isaiah 14:12,

ii) Christ himself (cf. 22:16),

iii) a reference to Daniel 12:3 and the immortality of the righteous,

iv) the dawn of eternal life,

v) a literal reference to the planet Venus, and

vi) the Holy Spirit." Mounce.

Witherington, referring to Rev 22:16, comments, "The morning star is Venus, which to Romans was the symbol of victory and sovereignty. Christians will not obtain such things through pagan rituals or by following pagan teaching, but from Christ."

Verse 29

ὁ ἔχων οὓς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὓς, ὠτος n cf. 2:7

3:1

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας· Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ.

"In the sixth century BC Sardis was one of the most powerful cities of the ancient world. Yet by the Roman period it had declined to the point that Ramsay could appropriately describe it as 'a relic of the period of barbaric warfare, which lived rather on its ancient prestige than on its suitability to present conditions.'" Mounce.

The city possessed an almost impregnable acropolis which had never been captured in battle. However, the acropolis had twice fallen, on both occasions the invaders had come under the cover of darkness and had met no resistance – like a thief in the night.

ὁδε, ἦδε, τοδε see 2:1

The Spirit is the giver of life, hence the reference here to Christ as the one who possesses the fulness of the Spirit.

ἀστηρ, ερος m see 1:16

ὄνομα, τος n name, reputation

ζωω live, be alive

νεκρος, α, ον dead

Despite the appearance of life, the lack of persecution from outside and lack of division by heresy within, the church is without spiritual life – it is dead. Mounce says that "the majority had so fully compromised with the pagan environment that the church was Christian in name only (ie. 'nominally' Christian)."

Verse 2

γίνου γρηγορῶν, καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἐμελλον ἀποθανεῖν, οὐ γὰρ εὔρηκά σου τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ μου·

γρηγορεω be or keep awake, be alert

'Show yourself watchful'. It's a wake-up call. "The exhortations to watchfulness would carry special weight in Sardis because twice in its history the acropolis had fallen to the enemy due to a lack of vigilance on the part of the defenders... As in history, so in life, to consider oneself secure and fail to remain alert is to court disaster." Mounce.

στηρίζω strengthen
λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining

There is a small residue of spiritual vitality.

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about
ἀποθνήσκω die

εὔρηκά Verb, perf act indic, 1 s εὔρισκω
find, discover

πεπληρωμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc
pl πληροω fill, make full

Their works fall short of what they ought to have been. Perhaps also an allusion to the immense temple to Artemis which remained unfinished in Sardis.

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

Picking up on the lack of reference here to persecution, Caird remarks, "Content with mediocrity, lacking both the enthusiasm to entertain a heresy and the depth of conviction which provokes intolerance, it was too innocuous to be worth persecuting."

Verse 3

μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς εἴληφας καὶ ἤκουσας καὶ τήρει, καὶ μετανόησον· ἐὰν οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσης, ἦξω ὡς κλέπτης, καὶ οὐ μὴ γνῶς ποίαν ὥραν ἦξω ἐπὶ σέ·

μνημονευω remember, keep in mind

"Although πως regularly indicates manner ('how'), the connection with τηρει, which needs an object, suggests it should be translated 'what' (cf. Beckwith...)." Mounce.

εἴληφας Verb, perf act indic, 2 s λαμβανω
τηρεω keep, observe, maintain
μετανοεω repent

ἦξω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἴκω come

κλέπτης, ου m thief

Cf. Mt 24:42-44; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10. Here however the reference is not to the second coming but to an imminent act of judgement – which nevertheless anticipates the final day of judgement.

γνῶς Verb, aor act subj, 2 s γινωσκω
ποιος, α, ον interrog pro. what
ώρα, ας f hour, moment

Verse 4

ἀλλὰ ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ περιπατήσουσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς, ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσιν.

ὀλιγος, η, ον little, small; pl. few
ὄνομα, τος n name, person

Name here stands for the whole person.

ἐμόλυναν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl μολυνω
defile, make unclean

ἱματιον, ου n garment, clothing, robe

"It is often noted ... that since the manufacture and dying of woollen goods was a principal trade in Sardis, an allusion to defiled garments would be immediately recognised." Mounce. The reference is to compromised witness through accommodation to a pagan society.

περιπατεω walk
λευκος, η, ον white, shining

Cf. Rev 7:9. The white robes are a symbol of purity and holiness. Cf. Rev 19:8.

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting

"They themselves have done nothing to merit their exalted position, but are worthy in the sense that they have withstood the pressure to apostatise and hence have done nothing which would result in forfeiting their position." Mounce.

Verse 5

ὁ νικῶν οὕτως περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ὁμολογήσω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ.

νικαω conquer, overcome

οὕτως thus, in this way

περιβαλεῖται Verb, fut midd indic, 3 s

περιβαλλω put on, clothe, dress

"It would seem therefore, that the white garments promised to the overcomer in 3:5 represent attire appropriate to the heavenly state. Since they are made white by washing in the blood of the Lamb (7:13), the figure is highly appropriate to portray justification." Mounce.

ἐξαλειψω wipe out, remove, cancel

βιβλος, ου f book, record

ζωη, ης f life

Cf. Ex 32:32. All ancient cities kept a register in which the names of the citizens were recorded. The Book of Life is the register of citizenship of the heavenly city. Mounce considers whether or not this passage teaches that those who have been saved may subsequently be lost. Having considered the arguments on both sides he wisely concludes, "It is hermeneutically unsound to base theological doctrine solely on either parables or apocalyptic imagery. Better to allow the text, even when difficult, to present its own picture."

ὁμολογεω confess, declare

ἐνώπιον see v.2

Cf. Mt 10:32 and parallels. It is a courtroom picture – Christ vouches for his people.

Verse 6

ὁ ἔχων οὐς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὐς, ὠτος n see 2:7