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(Peter Lok)駱沅祺

[lokpeter@outlook.com](mailto:lokpeter@outlook.com)

[Bibleao.com](http://Bibleao.com)

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## Revelation 2

YouTube Prayer Link

Jesus' letter to the churches

Revelation 2 conveys God's message to seven Asian churches. Jesus' message to the seven churches assesses their faith and behavior while encouraging them to remain faithful and steadfast. The first letter was written to the church in Ephesus, warning them not to lose their original love. The second letter was addressed to the church at Smyrna, warning them of heretical teachings. The third letter was addressed to the church in Pergamum, encouraging them to remain steadfast in their trust in God. A fourth letter was written to the church of Thyatira, criticizing them for tolerating the wrongdoings of some people. The fifth letter was addressed to the church of Sardis, warning them that although they were famous in the eyes of God, their faith was dead. The sixth letter was addressed to the church in Philadelphia, encouraging them to continue their faithfulness even in the face of persecution. The seventh letter is addressed to the Laodicean church, criticizing them for being weak, poor, and blind, and encouraging them to return to the bosom of God in order to gain true abundance and sight.

Ephesus is the most important of the seven cities in the province of Asia, located on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea in the eastern Eastern Mediterranean, Ephesus is the garrison city of Rome, Ephesus is an important commercial town, goods shipped from the Eastern Mediterranean must be sent to all parts of the province of Asia through Ephesus, and goods shipped from the East must also go to sea through Ephesus.

The Lord counseled the church in every situation. This counsel is given in chapters 2 and 3: to Ephesus (2:4~5), to Smyrna (10), to Pergamum (14~16), to Thyatira (20~25), to Sardis (3:2~3), to Philadelphia (11), and to Laodicea (17~20).

Before the Lord Jesus spoke to the seven churches, he always praised the good things of the church, rebuked her shortcomings, and finally exhorted and called the overcomers to the different conditions of each church.

The Lord Jesus emphasized to every church that "I know you," and the apostle John used this "knowing" to mean "omniscient." The Lord is our Great Shepherd, and He knows the thoughts, words, and actions of each person, and the difficulties and pressures of every church. Therefore, we can trust Him in any circumstance and in any situation, and we should be mindful of our conduct before the Lord at all times.

## Ephesus

Ephesus was populated by a complex Jewish population, and Paul preached there for more than two years. The church in Ephesus was founded by Paul on his third missionary journey. Because Ephesus was a prosperous city, with many people coming and going, and the church was more likely to be disturbed, Paul's prophecy of "a fierce wolf coming in among you" (Acts 20:29) had been fulfilled by Timothy in his final farewell to the church at Ephesus (1 Tim. 6:21). But the church in Ephesus served faithfully and stood firm in the truth.

The Lord's praise is threefold:

(1) To themselves 1. Behavior, behavior must be the best. Second, to work, that is, to work hard. 3. Patience, having a parental heart in the church, bearing the weaknesses of others.

(2) For the administration of the church 1. Do not tolerate the wicked (1 Cor. 5). Second, if they do not accept people to work casually, even if the apostles are still tested, it can be seen that they have the most spiritual vision.

(3) Patience with outside work is the Lord's name. From the above, the church in Ephesus is perfect.

"First love" refers to love for the Lord, and love for brothers and all people out of love for God. Love is a sign of regeneration, but Ephesians may have forgotten 'the first love' in the process of upholding the faith (v.2,6).

Methods of Revival:

(1) 'Recall from whence you fell,' and this is the reason for the inquiry. Every time there is a reason for retreating, and if the cause is not found, there is no way to revive. In the eyes of the Lord, the church at Ephesus is perfect on the outside, but it has fallen on the inside. So, first the inside falls, and then the outside fails.

(2) 'And repent,' Repentance is not only for sinners, but also for believers; When there is a fall, there is a need to repent.

(3) 'Do what you did in the beginning,' repentance is negative, and what you did in the beginning is positive.

Today, we often share the same labor, patience, and purity of faith as the church in Ephesus, but over time, ministry becomes a responsibility, and the zeal of the flesh gradually replaces "love" for the Lord. "I forsaken my first love." And the Great Commission throughout the life of the believer (Matt. 28:18-20) is not only to preach the gospel to others, but also to preach to oneself "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Only when we realize daily that we are the sinners who crucified Christ can we restore and maintain our "first love."

"Everyone who has ears let him hear," indicating that many have ears but do not hear, and hear but do not understand. This phrase appears in every letter, and the Lord Jesus often reminded us when He preached the gospel.

### Smyrna

Smyrna is a port city about 70 kilometers north of Ephesus, where Paul preached for more than two years on his third missionary journey, and the church in Smyrna may have been founded at that time.

Smyrna had suffered 'tribulation' and 'poverty', but instead of sympathy, the Lord said, 'I know' (v.9)! For it is not surprising that these encounters are God's will. Today, truth-abiding believers are also increasingly prone to encounter difficulties in the workplace and in the marketplace, and are more likely to encounter "tribulation and poverty." But all this is also in the Lord's "knowing," and He reassures us that whatever is given to us by the Lord's hand is good for our eternal "riches" (Rom. 8:28).

'Be faithful unto death' (v.10) refers to the believers who are 'in prison' who have to choose between death and backsliding. The 'crown of life' (v.10) refers to the joy and glory of eternal life after a believer's 'trials'.

'The second death' (v.11) refers to the eternal punishment of the lake of fire, that is, eternal separation from God.

'It is appointed that every man should die once, and after this the judgment' (Heb. 9:27), and God's will is not to spare believers from death, but rather to promise that 'he who overcomes will not be harmed by the second death' (v.11). Therefore, the grace we need to pray for in our weakness is to enable us to prevail in the Lord.

Victorious believers, even if martyred, "shall not suffer from the second death," for the Lord is with us even in the fiery furnace:

(1) The Lord left an example for us to follow; The Lord has gained in this world yet one death, how much more so us?

(2) He is able to have compassion on us when He suffers unto death (Heb. 4:15).

(3) In order for the Lord to overcome his enemies and accomplish God's will, he must die, and so should we, if we are to be equally successful.

(4) Although the Lord died and rose again, so that we suffer for the Lord, or even lay down our lives, because we have the hope of resurrection, and we will not fail.

## Pergamum

Pergamum (v.12) is located in the inland mountains and was originally the capital of the kingdom of Attalus.

The claim of the Lord Jesus to the church at Pergamum is quoted from 1:16. The Lord is 'the one who has two sharp swords' (v.12), indicating that the word that comes out of His mouth will not only deal with the enemy (19:15), but also judge the mixture in the church (v.16). Pergamum was the administrative capital of the province of Asia, and the "sword" (Rom. 13:4) represented the authority of the Roman governor over life and death. Therefore, the Lord Jesus declared to the church in Pergamum that He is "the one who has two sharp swords", that only Christ has the right to decide life and death, and that His authority is superior to the authority of all swords on earth.

'The teachings of Balaam' (v.14) refer to Balaam's offer to Balak, king of Moab, for financial gain (Num. 31:16), seducing Israel to commit adultery with Moabite women (Num. 25:1) and idolatry (Num. 25:2). 'The teaching of the Nicolaitans' (v.15) is a teaching of 'grace, liberty and antinomianism' to continue to worship idols and indulge the flesh (v.14).

The phrase 'so so' (v.15) indicates that 'the teaching of the Nicolaitans' (v.15) is similar to 'the teaching of Balaam' (v.14), that is, they try to grasp the ticket to heaven with one hand and the good of the world with the other, through some compromise and compromise, and the result is that they will compromise with the world and no longer be sanctified. 'Repent' (v.16) means to be set apart. The urgency of the original sentence is an order with no room for tolerance.

'Attack them with the sword of my mouth' (v.16), referring to the Lord Jesus' judgment of unrepentant believers based on His Word. If we do not obey the Lord's Word today, it will be the basis for our judgment in the future (John 12:48).

The greatest enemy facing the church today, like the church at Pergamum, is not persecution from outside (v.13), but false teachers who have infiltrated from within (vv.14–15). They do not openly profess to destroy the church, but they claim to provide a more reasonable, humane, and timely faith, with the result that the church is no longer sanctified and rapidly corrupted.

## Church of Thyatira

While the church in Ephesus has lost its 'first love' (v.4), the church at Thyatira has a lot of 'love' (v.19), but 'love' is not a substitute for truth, much less spiritual life. If 'love' is not based on truth (v.20), the Lord praises this as a church with good works, more complete than the church at Ephesus, and they do have love and deeds. But the Lord rebuked her for a very serious thing, which was to tolerate the temptation of the false prophet Jezebel to lead people into the trap of adultery and eating of idols. This is because they did not stand firm on the ground of the truth, but had to examine everything and stand firm. If you are willing to repent, you will become an overcomer, and the overcomer will have authority to subdue the nations, just as he reigns with the Lord.

## Jezebel

**【Rev2:20】** "But there is one thing I want to rebuke you, that you have allowed Jezebel, the woman who claims to be a prophet, to teach my servants, and to tempt them to commit adultery and eat of things sacrificed to idols."

"Jezebel" (v.20) is the Gentile wife of King Ahab of Israel who seduces northern Israel to worship the idolatrous Baal (1 Kings 16:31–32), representing an unknown woman whose influence on the church of Thyatira is as great as Jezebel is on northern Israel. But these two women were equally fatal to the spiritual life of the Northland and the church.

'Adultery' (v.20) refers to fornication in idolatry. 'Eating of things sacrificed to idols' (v.20) refers to attending an idolatrous feast. The guilds of the trade of Thyatira often met in the temple of the patron saint of the trade, and sacrifices and eating sacrifices were a part of the process, and the scenes were often lascivious and debauched. False prophets may encourage believers to participate in these meetings in confidence, not only to be part of society, to spread the gospel, but also to work hard and to become rich and do more 'good works' (v.19).

Today, many Christians are also accustomed to compromising with the world, going to church and the world on the one hand, and "serving God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24), as if they were not being disciplined by God. Don't you know that this is God's 'opportunity to repent' (v.21), and we must not 'despise the riches of His kindness, forbearance and patience, not knowing that His kindness leads you to repentance' (Romans 2:4).

Let's pray:

Abba Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us the wisdom to identify heresy and discern falsehood through the teachings of the Bible, the traditions of the Church, and the teachings of pastors, so that we will not go astray and fall into error. However, our knowledge and experience often make us cold and heartless. Dear Lord, help us to strike the greatest balance between reason and emotion.

In the holy name of Jesus Christ. amen

In Chapter 2 of the Revelation

2:1 Write a letter to the messenger of the church in Ephesus, saying, "He who walks among the seven golden lamps with seven stars in his right hand, said,

2:2 I know your deeds, your labor, your patience, and you know that you cannot tolerate evil, and you have tried to see that those who claim to be apostles but are not apostles, and see that they are false.

2:3 Thou art patient and hast worked for my name, and thou hast not grown weary.

2:4 But there is one thing I am responsible for you, and that is that you have given up your first love.

2:5 Remember, then, that you fell from there, and repent and do what you did in the beginning. But if you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp from its place.

2:6 But you still have one thing to do, and that is that you hate the behavior of the Nigerians, which I hate.

2:7 Whoever has ears should hear what the Holy Spirit says to the congregation. To him who overcomes, I will give him the fruit of the tree of life in the Garden of Elysium.

2:8 Write a letter to the messenger of the Church who said, "The first, the last, the dead and the living,

2:9 I know your afflictions, your poverty, (but you are rich) and the slander of the Jews, who claim to be Jews, are not Jews, but Satan's congregation.

2:10 you don't have to be afraid of what you are going to suffer . The devil will put a few of you in prison and put you in trial and temper . You will suffer for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

2:11 Whoever has ears should hear what the Holy Spirit says to the congregation. He who overcomes will not suffer the second death.

2:12 Write a letter to the messenger of the church of Begamo, saying, He who has two sharp swords,

2:13 I know that your dwelling place is where Satan's seat is . When Antipas, my faithful witness, was slain among you, in the land where Satan dwelt, thou wilt hold fast to my name, and thou hast not forsaken my word.

2:14 But there are several things in which I will reproach you, for there are men with you who have obeyed Balaam's teachings. This Balaam had taught Balak to place the stone in front of the Israel men to make them sacrifice to their idols and commit adultery.

2:15 There are also people there who have followed the teachings of the Nicolan party .

2:16 Therefore repent, and if you do not repent, I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

2:17 Whoever has ears should hear what the Holy Spirit says to the congregation. To him who overcomes, I will give him the hidden manna. and gave him a white stone with a new name written on it . No one knows it except the one who received it.

2:18 Write a letter to the messenger of the order of Thyatira, saying, The Son of God, whose eyes are like flames, and his feet are like bronze,

2:19 I know your deeds, your love, your faith, your diligence and your patience. and know that thou hast done more good deeds in the last days than thou hast done in the beginning.

2:20 But there is one thing I want to blame you for, and that is that you allow Jezebel, a woman who claims to be a prophet, to teach my servants and lead them to adultery and doll sacrifices.

2:21 I gave him a chance to repent, but he refused to repent of his fornication.

2:22 Behold, I will lay him sick in bed, and I will cause great trouble with those who have committed adultery with him, if they do not repent of what they have done.

2:23 I will also kill his party, and let the congregation know that I am the one who sees the hearts of men. and repay each one of you according to your deeds.

2:24 As for the rest of you who are pushing Jatira, you are the ones who do not follow the teachings and do not know the profound teachings of Satan as they have always said. I tell you that I don't put other things on you.

2:25 But what you already have, always hold on, and wait until I come.

2:26 He who is victorious, and who keeps my commandments to the end, I will give him authority to subdue the nations.

2:27 And he shall rule over them with a rod of iron, and shall crush them like the vessels of the householders. like the authority I received from my father .

2:28 And I will give him the morning star.

2:29 Whoever has ears should hear what the Holy Spirit says to the congregation.

Revelation 2 conveys God's message to seven Asian churches. Jesus sent a message to the angels of the seven churches to assess their faith and behavior while encouraging them to remain faithful and steadfast. The first letter was written to the church in Ephesus, warning them not to lose their original love. The second letter was addressed to the church at Smyrna, warning them of heretical teachings. The third letter was addressed to the church in Pergamum, encouraging them to remain steadfast in their trust in God. A fourth letter was written to the church of Thyatira, criticizing them for tolerating the wrongdoings of some people. The fifth letter was addressed to the church of Sardis, warning them that although they were famous in the eyes of God, their faith was dead. The sixth letter was addressed to the church in Philadelphia, encouraging them to continue their faithfulness even in the face of persecution. The seventh letter is addressed to the Laodicean church, criticizing them for being weak, poor, and blind, and encouraging them to return to the bosom of God in order to gain true abundance and sight.

The key verses of the second chapter of the book of Revelation are in the Chinese version in the Harmony Version.

1. Revelation 2:4-5 - However, I have several things to rebuke you for forsaking your first love. Remember therefore where you have fallen, and repent and do what you first did. Otherwise, I will come to you and take away your lampstand from its place, which is your sin.

2. Revelation 2:7 - Let him who has ears hear what the Holy Spirit says to the churches: "To him who overcomes, I will let him eat of the garden of the tree of life."
3. Revelation 2:10 - Do not be afraid of the afflictions that are to come. The devil will put some of you in prison and put you to trial. And ye shall be faithful unto death ten days, and I will give you a crown of life.
4. Revelation 2:17 - Let him who has ears hear what the Holy Spirit says to the churches: To him who overcomes, I will give him the hidden manna, and a white stone with a new name written on it, and no one can know him but he who receives.
5. Revelation 2:26-28 - Whoever overcometh and obeys My commandments to the end, I will give authority over the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron, as he breaks the potter's vessels. And I will give him the morning star, which I have received from the Father.

Revelation 2 continues to explore Jesus Christ's message to seven churches, each representing different qualities, challenges, and teachings. Here are some highlights of the theological significance, theological thinking, and spiritual impact of Chapter 2:

**The Seven Churches:** Chapter 2 covers Jesus' message to the seven churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Each church represents a different church group, but its teachings and challenges are also universal and applicable throughout Christian history.

**Encouragement and Warning:** Jesus has both encouragement and warning in every church's message. He praised the virtues of the church, but also revealed their shortcomings and areas for improvement. This reflects the attitude of God's parents who care about the church and encourage believers to continue to pursue spiritual growth.

**Faithfulness and purity in the church:** Jesus emphasized the importance of faithfulness and purity in several churches. He warned of disloyalty and the tendency to deviate from the truth, and called on believers to hold fast to the truth and avoid the influence of worldliness and paganism.

**Patience and perseverance:** Jesus encouraged the church to be patient and persevering in the face of difficulties and persecution. In some cases, he promised spiritual rewards that required believers to hold on to their faith and not give up even in the face of adversity.



Change and Growth in the Church: Jesus' message encourages the church to change and grow. He provided specific guidance for the church to repent and seek spiritual growth in order to be recognized in the eyes of God.

Eschatological Influences: Jesus hinted at eschatological events in some of his messages, such as judgment and return. These prompts emphasize the importance of holding fast to the faith in the last days and encourage believers to prepare themselves for Christ's return.

In terms of theological thought and spiritual influence, Revelation 2 emphasizes the importance of the church's faithfulness, perseverance, and spiritual growth. This information is not only applicable to the seven churches of ancient times, but also has profound implications and guidance for Christians today. These teachings encourage believers to remain steadfast in their faith, walk with God, and have a profound impact on the life and witness of the church. At the same time, these messages remind us to be on guard against the effects of worldliness and moral depravity, and to remain spiritually vigilant.