

Notes on the Greek New Testament

Week 237 – Revelation 2:8-3:6

Day 1181: Revelation 2:8-11

Verse 8

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν·

Smyrna was a seaport rivalling Ephesus. The old city had been destroyed and a new one was built by the successor of Alexandria the Great. The city made claim to be the first city of Asia, disputing this title with Ephesus and Pergamum.

Nothing is known of the origin of this church. Mounce suggests that it was founded during the time Paul lived in Ephesus on his third missionary journey (cf. Acts 19:26).

γράφον see v.1

ὁδε, ἡδε, τοδε see v.1

πρωτος, η, ον see 1:17

Cf. note on 1:17.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
γίνομαι

νεκρος, α, ον **dead**

ζωω **live, be alive**

Cf. 1:18. Ramsay has pointed out that the description of Christ as the first and the last, who was dead and came to life is well suited to a city which had also been dead and came to life, and which now claimed to be 'first'.

Verse 9

Οἶδά σου τὴν θλίψιν καὶ τὴν πτωχείαν, ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ, καὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτούς, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ Σατανᾶ. θλίψις, εως f **trouble, suffering**

"The burden which crushes" Morris. A reference to affliction the church was suffering at the hands of Jewish and heathen persecutors.

πτωχεια, ας f **poverty**

"The linking of tribulation and poverty suggests a close connection between the two. In an antagonistic environment it would be difficult for the Christian to make a living, and thus many were economically destitute. They may also have been victims of mob violence and looting (cf. Heb. 10:34). Their poverty, however, was a material poverty: spiritually they were rich (note the contrast with the Laodicean church which claimed to be rich but was poor; 3:17)." Mounce.

Witherington suggests that their poverty may have been linked to the guild system – Christians may have been unwilling to participate in the guilds because of their inclusion of pagan or imperial ceremonies.

πλουσιος, α, ον **rich**

βλασφημια, ας f **slander, blasphemy**

"Jewish hostility to Christians seems to have stemmed both from their conviction that to worship a Galilean peasant who had died a criminal's death would be blasphemy and the apparent success of the Christians in evangelising God-fearers and even some from within Judaism." Mounce.

Witherington suggests that Jews, angered by Christian's witnessing in the synagogues, may have sought to make trouble for Christians by reporting them to the authorities as practicing an illegal religion, a *superstitio*. Christians had previously enjoyed a measure of protection from imperial power by being viewed as simply another Jewish sect. He comments, "Jews of course had a right to practice their own religion (something Rome allowed most ethnic groups they conquered to do), but in the Jews' case abstaining from other gods was a component of their faith. If Christians could be shown to be Gentiles or no longer Jews, they could not claim the benefits of an exemption from emperor worship, a precarious position in which to be."

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

Cf. Rom 2:28-29; 9:6 for Jews who are not real Jews – it takes more than physical descent.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον **him/herself, itself**
συναγωγη, ης f **synagogue**
Σατανας, α **the Adversary, Satan**

Cf. Jn. 8:31-47. Jesus said of Jewish opponents in his day that they were not children of Abraham but of Satan. The strong language here is self-defensive rhetoric making deliberate use of hyperbole. It is not the rhetoric of hate or anti-semitism. John means that by opposing and persecuting (or instigating the persecution of) the Christians, these Jews were doing the devil's work.

Verse 10

μηδὲν φοβοῦ ἃ μέλλεις πάσχειν. ἰδοὺ μέλλει βάλλειν ὁ διάβολος ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰς φυλακὴν ἵνα πειρασθῆτε, καὶ ἔξετε θλίψιν ἡμερῶν δέκα. γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς.

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

Cf. Mt 10:28.

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about
πασχω suffer, experience
βαλλω throw, place
διαβολος, ου m the devil

They should be strengthened in recognising this attack as the work of the devil. John spends much time in this book showing how Satan's hand can be detected in the affairs of this world but that the last word is always with God – it is *his* plans which will triumph.

φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment

Probably to await execution.

πειρασθητε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl
πειραζω test, put to the test, tempt
δεκα ten

A round number indicating a short period of time.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, believing
αχρι prep with gen until, as far as
θανατος, ου m death
δωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι
στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown

A wreath, not a royal crown which would be διαδημα. Smyrna was famous for its games. The picture here is of the victory wreath. Witherington adds that Smyrna had the wreath as a symbol for its city, a symbol often found on inscriptions.

ζωη, ης f life

Life is the victor's prize (cf. James 1:12; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Thess 2:19; 1 Peter 5:4; Heb 2:9).

Verse 11

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῆ ἔκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.

οὖς, ὠτος n see v.7.
νικαω conquer, overcome
ἀδικηθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἀδικεω
harm
δευτερος, α, ον second

"The second death is a rabbinic term for the death of the wicked in the next world ... In Revelation 20:14 it is identified as the lake of fire, and in 21:8 as the final lot of 'the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted,' etc. Over the faithful, who share in the first resurrection, it has no power (20:6)." Mounce.

Day 1182: Revelation 2:12-17**Verse 12**

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Περγάμῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὴν ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξειάν·

Pergamum was the seat of government of the Roman province of Asia. The first temple of the imperial cult was built there in 29 B.C. in honour of Rome and Augustus. This is why John speaks of Pergamum as the 'place where Satan has his throne'. It was also the centre of the worship of Asklepios, the serpent-god who was famed for healing and who was referred to as 'saviour'. Witherington adds, "Pergamum was also famous for its 200,000 volume library. Here above all the church was likely to clash with the dictates of Hellenistic culture and the imperial cult."

ῥομφαια, ας f see 1:16

δίστομος, ον see 1:16

ὀξυς, εια, υ see 1:16

"In the context of life in a provincial capital where the proconsul was granted the 'right of the sword' (*ius gladii*), the power to execute at will, the sovereign Christ with the two-edged sword would remind the threatened congregation that ultimate power over life and death belongs to God." Mounce.

Verse 13

Οἶδα ποῦ κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Σατανᾶ, καὶ κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀντιπᾶς ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστὸς μου, ὃς ἀπεκτάνθη παρ' ὑμῖν, ὅπου ὁ Σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ.

ποῦ interrogative adverb where (?)

κατοικεω live, settle, inhabit

ὅπου adv. where

θρονος, ου m throne

Some think that the allusion is to the serpent god Asklepios. Most however, see it as a reference to the fact that Pergamum was the official cult centre of emperor worship in Asia. Caird says "John believed that Rome was the latest and greatest agent of Satan, not only because of her totalitarian demand for that absolute allegiance which is due to God alone, but also because he saw in her the epitome of all paganism and worldliness."

κρατεω hold, hold fast

ἤρνησω Verb, aor midd dep indic, 2 s

ἀρνεομαι deny, disown, renounce

πιστις, εως f faith

By yielding to the pressure of burning incense to the emperor and declaring 'Caesar is Lord'.

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
witness, martyr

Suggests that he alone had thus far lost his life for the faith. It is not clear whether this was by judicial execution or mob violence.

πιστος, η, ον see v.10

Withington comments, "It is striking that Antipas is given the same title as Jesus, 'the faithful witness'."

ἀπεκτάνθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

ἀποκτεινω kill, put to death

"A contrast is intended with the first clause [of the verse] – both the believers and their ultimate adversary live in the same locality." Mounce.

Verse 14

ἀλλ• ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὀλίγα, ὅτι ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ, ὃς ἐδίδασκεν τῷ Βαλάκ βαλεῖν σκάνδαλον ἐνώπιον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ, φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ πορνεύσαι•

ὀλιγος, η, ον little, small; pl. few

There may be more than a few things we do not like about a church, but what matters is the verdict of Christ.

ἐκεῖ there, in that place

κρατεω see v.13

διδαχη, ης f teaching, what is taught

"John's opprobrious name for the teaching of the Nicolaitians." Caird.

διδασκω teach

βαλεῖν Verb, aor act infin βαλλω throw

σκανδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/
offence, obstacle

ἐνώπιον prep + gen before, in front of

"This reference is not to a body of doctrine but to Balaam's activity of advising the Midianite women how to beguile the Israelites into acting treacherously against the Lord.

Numbers 25:1ff. reports that the Israelites 'began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab,' who in turn were successful in getting them to worship their gods and take part in their sacred meals. Although there is no mention of Balaam at this point, we learn in Numbers 31:16 of his role in Israel's apostasy... Thus Balaam became a prototype of all corrupt teachers who betrayed believers into fatal compromise with worldly ideologies." Mounce.

φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθιω eat

εἰδωλοθυτον, ου n meat offered to idols

Probably at pagan festivals.

πορνευω commit sexual immorality

May either be literal (pagan festivities often included sexual licence), or figurative (i.e. religious infidelity).

Withington comments, "Whether John has in mind sex with sacred prostitutes (which would mean that πορνεία is used in its technical and root sense) or, more likely, the sexual dalliance that went on at dinner parties held in the temple precincts is uncertain. In either case John is warning against going to pagan temples and participating in events there."

Verse 15

οὕτως ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν [τῶν] Νικολαϊτῶν ὁμοίως.

οὕτως thus, in this way

Suggests that the previous verse referred to the Nicolaitians.

ὁμοίως likewise, in the same way

Withington writes, "G.R.Beasley-Murray makes the appealing suggestion that the Nicolaitans may have been high-status Christians who believed a certain amount of compromise with the dominant culture was all right. They could have argued, 'Even Romans don't really believe the Emperor is a god, so why not just go along, and have a good living as a member of a guild?' They might have been dualists like some of the Corinthians (see 1 Cor. 8-10), arguing that what one did with the body did not affect one's spiritual condition and status. The complaint against Balaam is a complaint against syncretism, the luring of Christians into participation in pagan cults."

Verse 16

μετανόησον οὖν· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι ταχύ, καὶ πολεμήσω μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου.

μετανοεω **repent**

"Only a portion of the church has fallen prey to the pernicious doctrine of the Balaamites, but all are guilty of not taking action against their presence. The fault is the opposite of Ephesus where the heretics were rooted out but love was missing (2:2, 4)." Mounce.

ταχύ **adv** quickly, without delay, soon
πολεμεω **wage war, fight**

The sword of Christ's mouth is more to be feared than the sword of Rome.

Verse 17

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκὴν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.

νικαω **see v.11**

δώσω **Verb, fut act indic, 1 s** διδωμι
κεκρυμμένου **Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n**
gen s κρυπτω **hide**

Reflects a Jewish legend that the pot of manna from the Ark was taken by Jeremiah at the time of the destruction of Solomon's Temple and hidden underground. There it would remain until the time of the Messiah when the manna, the ark and the temple would all be restored. "To those who conquer is offered not idol food but hidden manna (i.e., bread that is not currently visible and that comes from heaven). here is the promise of a much more lasting and satisfying fellowship than one could get at a pagan feast, drawing on Jewish messianic traditions about the repetition of the manna miracle in the messianic kingdom." Witherington.

δώσω **Verb, fut act indic, 1 s** διδωμι
ψηφος, ου **f pebble, stone; vote**
λευκος, η, ον **white, shining**

There are several explanations of the white stone:

- i) Stones were used as tickets of admission to the theatre or to a banquet. Caird and Mounce say that this is the conqueror's ticket of admission into the heavenly banquet.
- ii) Some suggest that a white stone was used in a court of law to signify acquittal.

iii) Some think that it refers to a Rabbinic belief that in the last days the manna would be accompanied by precious stones falling from heaven.

Morris says, "We simply do not know what the white stone signified, though clearly it did convey some assurance of blessing."

καινος, η, ον **new**

γεγραμμένον **Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n**
nom/acc s γραφω

Mounce thinks it could be the name of the victor himself. Witherington adds, "The new name implies a new identity and being someone special in the kingdom. Christians did not have to compromise on earth by socialising with pagans in temples when they had a much better engraved invitation to a much better banquet."

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν **no one, nothing**

Day 1183: Revelation 2:18-21**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**

ὁμοιος, 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 ὑπομονήν σου, καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου τὰ ἔσχατα πλείονα τῶν πρῶτων.

διακονια, ας f ministry, service
 ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance
 ἔσχατος, η, ον adj last, final
 πλειων, πλειον ορ 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 προφητιν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἔμοιους δούλους πορνεῦσαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα.

ἀφιημι 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 διδωμι
 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.

Day 1184: Revelation 2:22-29

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
 ἐαν μη 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 γνωσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἔραυνῶν 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
θανάτος, 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).

γνωρίζω make known, disclose, know
ἐραυναῶ search, examine, try to find out
νεφρός, ου m (lit kidney) mind, thought

Used of the will and affections.
He searches heart and mind with burning eyes.

δώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι
ἕκαστος, 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
Θυατείροις, 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, ἡτις, ὁ
τι who, which, whoever, whichever
ἔγνωσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl γινωσκω
βαθυσ, 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[ς] οὗ ἂν ἦξω.

πλην conj. but, nevertheless, however

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

κρατεῶ 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,

νικῶ see v.11

τηρεῶ keep, observe, maintain

τέλος, ους n end, conclusion

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

δώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι
ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power
ἔθνος, 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 σκεύη 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, ους 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 κἀγω εἴληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου,
καὶ δωσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωΐνόν.

κἀγω a compound word = και ἐγω
εἴληφα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s λαμβανω
ἀστηρ, ερος m star
πρωΐνος, 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, ὥτος n cf. 2:7

Day 1185: Revelation 3:1-6**Verse 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

νεκρὸς, 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
ἔμελλον 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.

στηριζω strengthen

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining

There is a small residue of spiritual vitality.

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about
ἀποθνησκω die
εὔρηκά Verb, perf act indic, 1 s εὑρισκω
find, discover

πεπληρωμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n
nom/acc pl πληρωω 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
γρηγορήσῃς, 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 ἦκω come
κλεπτης, 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.

γνώσ 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 πατρὸς 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.

ἐξαλειφω 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 οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὖς, ὄτος n see 2:7