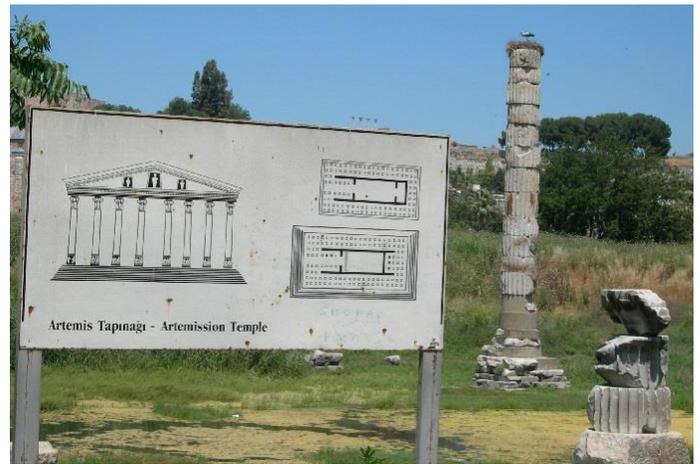


## Study Notes – Revelation 2

### Seven Churches of Yeshua the Messiah - Revelation 2:1- 3:22 (TLV)

- Yeshua is walking among the Menorot (Candlesticks) – Rev 1:13
- John commissioned by Yeshua to:
  - What you have seen: Things revealed to John prior to addressing the 7 churches. (Chapter 1)
  - What is: John's present time, which are set forth in the letters to the churches. (Chapters 2 &3)
  - What will happen after these things: The things in the future to John's time. (Chapter 4 – 22)
- When did the "Church Age" begin? Shavuot / Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13)

**Ephesus** was an important seaport of the Roman province of Asia (Turkey) and Ephesus is nearest to Patmos.



Famous for the Temple of Artemis (Diana) 425' long 220' wide with 120 columns each donated by a King. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

- ✓ The Temple became the primary banking institution for Asia Minor.
- ✓ Pilgrims swelled population & contributed substantially to Ephesian business. Note: Acts 19: 24-41, reaction to Paul's teaching which caused riot reacting to Paul's teaching.

Ephesus participated in the Imperial Cult with Temples built to Claudius, Hadrian & Severus.

- ✓ Magic & the Occult thrived resulting in Demon possession of the people.
- ✓ Many also of those who had believed came confessing and recounting their practices. <sup>19</sup> And many of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together in a heap, burning them before everyone. They totaled the value of the books and found it to be about fifty thousand pieces of silver. Acts 19:18-19

The Titles that Yeshua assumes in these letters are mainly from Rev. 1:12-18. Tailored to the message in each letter – specifically to that congregation.

Rev. 2:1 <sup>1</sup>To the angel of Messiah's community in Ephesus write: "Thus says the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks in the midst of the seven golden menorot:

- ✓ the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, - He protects the Stars, secure – position of favor.
- ✓ the One who walks in the midst of the seven golden menorot - Yeshua walking among & with his church.

2:2 <sup>2</sup> I know all about your deeds and your toil and your patient endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. You have tested those who call themselves emissaries and are not, and have found them to be liars.

- ✓ I know (perfect tense) “I have known” – Yeshua is omniscient Psalm 139:9-12
- ✓ deeds and your toil and your patient endurance – they worked hard, wearisome labor (to exhaustion), endured great hardship (2 Cor. 11:27) and patient endurance – perseverance is produced by tribulation Romans 5:3
- ✓ you cannot bear those who are evil. You have tested those who call themselves emissaries and are not – Emissaries, Apostles, “one sent with credentials and a message as a representative.” Tested, to make certain the emissary was sent from God **prior to teaching** so not to corrupt the congregation. Test the spirits. 1 John 4:1-2, 1Th 5:2, 1Tim 4:1, 2 Pet 2:1, 2 Tim 3:13, 2 Cor 11:12-15 & Acts 20:29-31

2:3 <sup>3</sup> You have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and you have not grown weary.

- ✓ My name's sake Yeshua said that all believers would be reviled, hated & persecuted for his name sake. Matt 5:11 & 10:22

2:4 <sup>4</sup> “But this I have against you, that you have forsaken your first love.

- ✓ But (nevertheless) – very sobering word.
- ✓ have forsaken (left) – Leave not lose. Aphekes (grk) to send away, to bid going away or depart, a husband divorcing his wife; to give up, abandon.
  - They had fallen to the same fate as Israel before them. Jer. 2:1-9
  - A zeal & hunger we had for him when he first calls us out of the “wilderness” of the world. A relationship with Yeshua that is personal & loving from our heart.
  - Relationship over works, Mary & her sister Martha. Luke 10:39-42
  - Passion for 1<sup>st</sup> love for Yeshua had faded and they lost their focus. They now focused on their works done for his name. This is the essence of idolatry.

2:5 <sup>5</sup> Remember then from where you have fallen. Repent and do the deeds you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your menorah from its place—unless you repent.

- ✓ Remember – the imperative tense.
- ✓ Repent – A command, stop, turn around & return.
- ✓ Do – the first works. Not the quantity but the quality of the works. Retrace your steps back to where you went astray. Gen 13:3-4 & Heb 10:32-35
- ✓ I will come (present tense) “I am coming” – His impending arrival is imminent.
- ✓ Remove (kineso) – shake, move, provoke, stir. This may indicate that the lampstand, congregation, will be removed, but that it will be disturbed in such a way as to disperse its members elsewhere to form new congregations. Matt 10:23 & Acts 8:4

Note: The Lampstand at Ephesus was removed. Ephesus today shows ruined archway, a Moslem dwelling, and a Castle among the desolate hills.

2:6 <sup>6</sup> “Yet you have this going for you, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

- ✓ Nicolaitans – only mentioned in Revelation 2:6 & 2:13-15
- ✓ Hate (miseo) – to hate, to abhor or find utterly repulsive. Yeshua hates this group for their deeds, finds them completely objectionable and loathes & rejects entirely. It is hatred of their behavior, actions, beliefs, conduct and everything associated with them.

## Nicolaitan (continued)

### ✓ Who are they & What were their works?

- Nicolaitan is a combination of Greek word meaning “to conquer or subdue the people.”
- Ireneus (early church leader that recorded church history) said they were spiritual descendants of Nicolas of Antioch who had been ordained as a Deacon. Acts 6:5
- Nicolas was a “proselyte of Antioch”
  - Not born a Jew
  - Converted from paganism to Judaism then to Christianity.
  - Pagan background meant that he had previously been immersed in the occult.
  - Not concerned about opinions of others, ability to change religions
  - Open to embracing new ideas & concepts. For a Pagan to shift to Judaism meant liberal thinking as most Pagans were offended by Judaism.
  - He taught a doctrine of compromise – you didn’t have to separate Christianity from Paganism or Occultism. He had no problem intermingling religions and continued to practice black magic.
  - Deep roots in paganism led to a belief that pagan practices & the occult were not damaging or dangerous. Encouraged the people to stay connected to the world. This led people to indulge in sin with a lowered godly standard. Thus, conquering the people.
  - The doctrine of compromise with the world & false religions should be hated!
- ✓ In Ephesus idolatry and the occult were the main form of worship. It was one of the most wicked cities in the ancient world. Believers were fiercely persecuted.

Note: See additional comments:

[www.Bibletools.org](http://www.Bibletools.org) - search: “Nicolaitans”, for present day Nicolaitans select the hyperlink at the bottom of page “[Nicolaitanism Today](#)”.

[www.Biblestudytools.com](http://www.Biblestudytools.com) – search “Nicolaitans”

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Nicolaitans.html>

2.7<sup>7</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Ruach is saying to Messiah's communities. To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to eat from the Tree of Life, which is in the Paradise of God."

- ✓ He who has an ear – Listen physically & spiritually. Understand it’s significance – open your hearts and believe; respond and obey.
- ✓ To Messiah’s communities – plural: all 7, all congregations from the beginning of the “Church Age” to the end of “Church Age”. All believers in every age.
- ✓ Overcomers (nikao) – To conquer, to carry off the victory (continuous), Hold fast to your faith even unto death.
- ✓ The Promise: eat from the Tree of Life – Tree of Life which is in the Paradise of God
  - Originally stood in the Garden of Eden. Gen 2:9
  - Eating its fruit gave eternal life. With fall of man lost access to the tree. Gen 3:22-24
  - A motif for righteousness, moral living, and wisdom.
  - Jews refer to the Word of God as the Tree of Life.
  - Torah scrolls are written on parchment, sewn together, rolled on to wooden rollers called “eytz chayeem” (tree of life).

- ✓ The Promise: eat from the Tree of Life (continued)
  - The cross, altar, of Yeshua provides a Tree of Life for us. Those who place their trust in his atoning work have eternal life. John 3:14-16
  - A Tree of Life will be in The New Jerusalem. Rev 22:1-2, 14, 19
- ✓ Paradise of God – originally a Persian word denoting an enclosed garden especially in a royal park – A Garden of Delight.
  - Originally in the Garden of Eden, then a resting place of souls in comfort & joy (Bosom of Abraham). Luke 16:19-31
  - At Yeshua’s crucifixion he told the repentant thief "Amen, I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:43.
  - Following Yeshua’s victory on the cross, Paradise moved to Heaven. For Paul was caught up into Paradise where he heard the inexpressible words. 2 Cor 12:4
  - After the Millennium and for all Eternity Paradise will be in the New Jerusalem – on the New Earth. Rev 21 & 22

### **Mount Pagos - Smyrna**



**Smyrna** (myhrr) – suffering, crushed, bitter; Myhrr: a sedative effect – was offered to Yeshua on the cross which he refused. One of the gifts from the Magi given at Yeshua’s birth.

The congregation at Smyrna:

- ✓ Founded in Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. Acts 19:10
- ✓ 35 miles North of Ephesus. Was a port on the Aegean Sea which was destroyed in the 7 century and then rebuilt.
- ✓ Scholars believe the city grew to 100,000 by the time of the Apostilles Paul & John. It was 1/3 Christian.
- ✓ Archeologists have found many different coins. One had the inscription: “The city that had died & come to Life again.”
- ✓ A 2<sup>nd</sup> century Agora, was a central public space in ancient Greek city-states, was excavated between the Acropolis, a citadel or fortified part of an ancient Greek city, typically built on a hill, and the harbor. Porticos lined the north & west side and an alter to Zeus sat in the center. A street of Gold ran around Mt. Pagos with Temples all around it so it looked like a crown.

The congregation at Smyrna (continued):

- ✓ A large population of Jews who strongly opposed the Messianic congregation (Church).
- ✓ The Church encountered imprisonment & execution.
- ✓ John's apprentice Polycarp, who presided as the Bishop of Smyrna, was martyred - burned alive, because he would not blaspheme God's name.
- ✓ The Birthplace of Homer.
- ✓ A center of learning, especially science & medicine.

### **Smyrna: Do Not Fear Satan's Testing**

Rev 2:8<sup>8</sup>To the angel of Messiah's community in Smyrna write: "Thus says the First and Last, who was dead and came to life.

- ✓ First and Last Rev 1:17
- ✓ who was dead and came to life – literally became dead Rom 6:8-11 and He rose from the dead Rev 1:18

2.9<sup>9</sup>I know your tribulation and your poverty (yet you are rich), as well as the slander of those who say they are Jewish and are not, but are a synagogue of satan.

- ✓ tribulation (thlipsis, grk) – A pressure, crushing external or internal. Anything that comes upon us and brings pressure in our lives.
- ✓ poverty (ptocheria, grk) – abject poverty, destitute. It is possible that the congregation's personal goods were plundered due to persecution. Heb 10:34
- ✓ yet you are rich – riches laid up in Heaven. Matt 6:20, 19:21, Luke 12:21
- ✓ those who say they are Jewish and are not – the Church faced its most intense opposition from unbelieving Jews of Smyrna – physically circumcised but not circumcised of the heart. Rom 2:28-29, Matt 3:9, John 8:39-41, Acts 13:50, 14:2, 5 & 19 and Acts 17:5
- ✓ synagogue of Satan – the local synagogue opposed the assembly, lack of faith in Yeshua. They hated & rejected Yeshua and believed they had the only true understanding of God and viewed the believers as troublemakers. The Jews gathered the wood for burning Polycarp on the Sabbath and then hindered his remains from being returned for burial.

2.10<sup>10</sup>Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

- ✓ The devil is about to throw – throw, cast, hurl, will place them in prison.
- ✓ So that you may be tested, - Why? This is God's plan – he allowed it to happen.
- ✓ have tribulation for ten days – trial, literal ending in 10 days.
  - Note: In the book of Revelation days, months, years are literal. 1 Thes 3:2-5, 2 Tim 1:7-8, Phil 4:13, 2 Cor 1:5, Luke 12:11-12, Pslm 56:3-4, James 1:2-4, 1 Cor 10:13, Rom 8:28-31
- ✓ until death – a sobering message. He knows all things & is preparing these for the ultimate witness. The worst the enemy can inflict on a believer, like Polycarp.
- ✓ Crown of life – eternal life.

2.11 <sup>11</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Ruach is saying to Messiah's communities. The one who overcomes shall never be harmed by the second death."

- ✓ one who overcomes – Overcomer will not suffer the second death. Born again: 2 births & 1 death  
the not born again: 1 birth & 2 deaths.

### Pergamum



### Pergamum: Where Satan's Throne was

- ✓ The political capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor, 50 miles north of Smyrna.
- ✓ A center for pagan idol worship & Emperor worship – Caesar. Every citizen was required annually to go to the temple of Caesar to worship, take a pinch of incense & burn it to his statue, bow your knee and say, "Caesar is Lord." They then received a certificate that allowed them access to everything, including their work. Believers often had no work because they refused to do this and could be put to immediate death. The Roman governor was given the "right of the sword" and could put a person to death at any time.
- ✓ The alter of Zeus (soter – "savior") 40' x 100' is a massive stone alter with podium built on the rocky outcropping overlooking the city. As you enter Pergamum, as you look up you would see the alter in the shape of a Throne. Currently located in Berlin. 1 Cor 10:19-20
- ✓ Center for worship of Asclepius a god of healing (a snake god). There was a medical school at the temple and people would visit from the Roman Empire to seek healing. The god was worshiped under the sign of a snake coiled on a pole. Suffers would spend the night in the darkness of the temple with tame snakes. If one touched a sick person, it was said to be the touch of Asclepius.
- ✓ A very wealthy city with many temples devoted to idolatry, statues of gods, alters & sacred groves.
- ✓ Famous for its library of 200,000 volumes which were moved by Anthony of Egypt and presented to Cleopatra.
- ✓ Parchment paper was invented in Pergamum.

Rev 2:12 <sup>12</sup> To the angel of Messiah's community in Pergamum write: "Thus says the One who has the sharp two-edged sword:

- ✓ two-edged sword – broad sword used in warfare. Rev 1:16, Heb 4:12, Eph 6:17, Rev 19:15.

Note: The Pergamum church faced imminent judgement. Is 11:4

2:13 <sup>3</sup> I know where you live—where satan's throne is. Yet you continue to hold firm to My name, and you did not deny your faith in Me even in the days of Antipas, My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where satan resides.

- ✓ where satan's throne is – Asklepios was a snake savior with healing powers. Zeus was considered a savior with a throne like alter. Emperor worship “Caesar is lord”.
- ✓ hold firm my name – did not deny, did not compromise, did not deny my faith. Jude 3-4, 2 Pet 1: 20-21, 3:1-2, Matt 5:17-19, Luke 24:25-27
- ✓ even in the days of Antipas – Antipas means “against all” or “like the father”.
  - God allowed this man to be martyred
- ✓ even in the days of Antipas (continued)
  - A faithful servant of the Lord.
  - Tradition records that he was burnt to death inside a bronze bull.
  - May have refused to worship the Emperor.
  - Faithful unto death. Matt 10:28

2:14 <sup>14</sup> "But I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who was teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before Bnei-Yisrael, to eat food sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.

- ✓ But I have a few things against you
  - Teaching of Balaam – Prophet for hire, could not curse Bnei Israel, only blessings did he speak. Advised Balak to send Moabite women to seduce the men into sexual immorality & idolatry. Num 22-25, Deut 23:4-5
- ✓ stumbling block (skandalon, grk) – a trap - the trigger of the trap upon which the trap is laid.
  - The bait being the Moabite women.
- ✓ eat food sacrificed to idols – refers to meat, part of which was burnt on the alter, part eaten at the temple and part was sold in the Market. Message for Gentile converts, since Judaism prohibited it. The church at Pergamum was integrated into the culture instead of “living apart”. These feasts included licentious (promiscuous) behavior as part of the pagan ritual. 2 Cor 6:16-18 & Jude 10-16

2.15 <sup>15</sup> Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

- ✓ Nicolaitans didn't hold to sound Biblical teachings.

2.16 <sup>16</sup> Repent then! If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

- ✓ I will come to you soon – If they do not repent His arrival is imminent. He is already on his way! Eph 6:10-18

2.17 <sup>17</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Ruach is saying to Messiah's communities. To the one who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone—and written on the stone a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it."

- ✓ Overcomer receives:
  - Phago (grk) to eat literally & figuratively.
  - Hidden Manna to conceal by covering – kept secret. Manna, “what is it”, from Heaven fed the Bnei Israel during their 40 years in the desert. The Lord speaks of it as being typical of Himself – the True Bread from Heaven imparting eternal life & substance to those who walk by faith partaking spiritually of Him. John 6:31-35

- ✓ Overcomer receives (continues):
  - White Stone, bright or shiny, a pebble worn smooth by handling. Used as a ballot, a verdict, a vote. A white stone was often used in the social life and judicial customs of the ancients; festal days were noted by a white stone & days of calamity by a black. In the courts a white stone indicated acquittal, a black condemnation. Deut 27:2-8, 2 Cor 2:2, Rom 8:29, 1 Cor 15:49, Isa 56:5-8, 2 Cor 5:17

### Thyatira



#### Thyatira: Do Not Tolerate Jezebel

- ✓ Thyatira mean sacrifice of labor, odor of affliction.
- ✓ Was of limited importance at this time.
- ✓ Was a growing congregation in a growing city.
- ✓ Most outstanding feature was the Trade Guilds: bakers, potters, workers in brass, tanners, leather cutters, workers in wool & flax, clothiers, dyers. They excelled in the manufacturing of woolen goods.
- ✓ Local god was Tyrimnus, a horse mounted god armed with a battle axe and a club.
- ✓ Home of the Oracle of Sambethe, an oracle presided over by a female fortune teller.
- ✓ Famous for purple or crimson dye manufactured from the Madder root. See Paul's ministry to Lydia. Acts 16:14
- ✓ This Church tolerated sexual immorality.

Rev 2:18 <sup>18</sup> To the angel of Messiah's community in Thyatira write: "Thus says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like polished bronze:

- ✓ the Son of God – a title not a descriptive attribute. God incarnate, has to do with the condition of this congregation. Heb 4:15-16
- ✓ eyes like a flame of fire – He sees everything. Fire represents judgement – it can also purify (dross). Phlox (Greek) – blaze & pur (grk) – fire, literally & figuratively.
- ✓ Feet like polished bronze – Bronze represents judgement. In the Old Testament sacrifices were made on a bronze altar. This congregation is about to be judged by the Son of Man! He doesn't want this to happen in His church.

2:20 <sup>20</sup> "But this I have against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess—yet she is teaching and deceiving My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

- ✓ You tolerate the woman Jezebel –
  - Has led His bondservants into sin – sexual immorality & eating food sacrificed to idols.
  - The guilds would feast in the pagan temples and this Jezebel said it was fine for the people of the congregation to attend these “love feasts” – she led them astray. 1 Cor 5:6-7
  - Read 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings about the Jezebel connected with Israel.

2:20 (continued)

- ✓ calls herself a prophetess –
  - a female fortune teller and false teacher.
  - Her prophetic powers were not from God. This church thought they were, but didn't “test the Spirits”. 1 John 4:1, Eze 13:17-23
  - She teaches and leads my bondservants astray. Plana (grk) – seduce, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way, deception.
  - Told congregation it was alright to indulge in sexual immorality & eat food sacrificed to idols. This was the same teaching as the Balaamites in the Pergamum congregation.

2:21 <sup>21</sup> I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her immorality.

- ✓ I gave her time – an opportunity
- ✓ Repent – metanoia (grk): change her mind, make up her mind, go a different way, change direction. Stop this behavior and return to living their lives according to the way God has explained for those who follow Him. Matt 3:1-8 & 2 Cor 7:10-11

2:22 <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will throw her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation—unless they repent of her doings.

- ✓ I will throw – the judgement is imminent as if it had already begun.
- ✓ sickbed – kline (grk): a couch for sleep, sickness, sitting or eating.
- ✓ those who commit adultery – tous moicheuintas (Hebrew idiom) those who at a woman's solicitation are drawn away to idolatry. Eze 16:37-41
- ✓ great tribulation – a personal time of great anguish.

2:23 <sup>23</sup> I will also strike her children with a deadly disease. Then all of Messiah's communities will know that I am the One who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your deeds.

- ✓ strike her children – apokteino (grk): to kill outright, slay, put to death (with a plague). Who are her children? Probably those who follow her spiritual teaching.
- ✓ Messiah's communities will know – Judgement serves two purposes, to chasten or eliminate the one being judged & to serve as a warning to others. Deut 13:11 & Acts 5:11
- ✓ minds and hearts - nephros (grk): a kidney that is in the inmost mind, reins & kardia (grk): the thoughts or feelings.
- ✓ according to your deeds - Nothing escapes His fiery gaze. Jer 17:9-10 & John 2:23-25

2:24 <sup>24</sup> "But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold to this teaching and have not learned the so-called 'deep things' of satan—I place on you no other burden.

- ✓ the “deep things” of satan – bathus (grk): the evil designs and workings, extent of. Col 2:8-10

2:25 <sup>25</sup> Only hold firm to what you have until I come.

- ✓ hold firm – an aorist imperative (continuous action) You all hold fast! The imminent coming of Yeshua.

2:26 <sup>26</sup> To the one who overcomes and guards My deeds until the end, 'I will give him authority over the nations

- ✓ until the end – 2 Cor 5:8, John 14:3, 1 TH 4:15

What does the overcomer receive?

- ✓ authority over the nations – exousia (grk): authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength. Ethnos (grk): a, non-Jewish, tribe, gentile nation, people.

2:27 <sup>27</sup> and he shall rule them with an iron rod, as when clay pots are broken into pieces.'

- ✓ iron rod – divine ruling with impossibility of disobedience. rhabdos (grk): a baton of royalty, staff, a scepter. Psalm 2 – when Yeshua returns to establish the Millennial Kingdom.
- ✓ clay pots - the clay of the potter was originally intended to be formed & fashioned to the purpose of the potter. Isa 29:16, 64:8 & Jer 18:1-11. Since the clay refuses to serve its intended use it is the right of the potter to dash it to pieces. Isa 41:25, 49:9, Dan 2:35, 43-44.

2:28 <sup>28</sup> Even as I have received from My Father, so I will give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Ruach is saying to Messiah's communities."

- ✓ morning star – An indicator of the approaching dawn. The long night is over and soon the Sun will shine – removing all traces of darkness. Isa 60:1-3, Luke 21:32-36. Aster (grk): a star issued metaphorically of Christ, as the morning star, figuratively of the approach of the day when He will appear as the "sun of righteousness", to govern the earth in peace, an event to be preceded by the rapture of the church. Rev 2:28; 22:16. Vines Complete Expository Dictionary.