

The Return Of The King

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 11th, 2012 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**He who overcomes, I will grant to him
to sit down with Me on My throne,
as I also overcame and sat down
with My Father on His throne.**

~Revelation 3:21 (NASB)

1) The Seven Churches Of The Apocalypse

- A) All of the seven churches of the Apocalypse (Revelation 2:1-3:22) were actual churches which existed at the time John composed Revelation. Each had its own geographic location, historical context and specific characteristics.
- B) Simultaneously, the “seven churches” are representative of the universal church through all of history. The issues of these seven churches are not meant to be exhaustive, but provide a pattern for all churches to follow.
- C) This pattern is most easily identified by looking at as many consistent similarities for the churches as possible. Noting the universally true similarities provides us with a list of characteristics which are true of all churches in all places.

2) The Universal Church Of Jesus Christ

- A) The most obvious similar characteristic between the seven churches is that each has an “angel” (2:1, 8, 12, 18, 3:1, 7, 14). Christ’s leadership of His church is spiritual, and must be spiritually engaged. Spiritual leadership is key!

- B) Christ knows each church by name, and the “deeds” of each church. Christ’s involvement in His church is personal and exhaustive. Christ is not just involved in the big picture, but also in the smallest details.
- C) Each church needs Jesus Christ at its center (1:13), relying on His character for success. People living out Christlike character defines true success within the church (1:12-18).
- D) The Spirit of God is alive in the midst of the church (1:4, 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:1, 6, 13, 22). The Spirit is actively speaking to the **churches**, but churches must “train” their ears to listen. The Spirit provides illumination/spiritual potency (cf. 4:5).
- E) Faithful followers of Jesus Christ overcome, no matter the circumstances or consequences (2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21, also 5:5). Faith in Jesus the King produces overcoming, not misleading sincerity or good works.
- F) There are substantial rewards for the overcomer. All the rewards are based on Christ’s rewards for overcoming. In essence, the rewards of the overcomer are all a “sharing” in the rewards of Jesus (2:7, 11, 17, 26-28, 3:4-5, 12, 20-21), a complete/perfect sharing in His Sonship.

3) How Big Is Your Jesus?

- A) John goes to great lengths to connect the symbolism of Revelation to numerous Old Testament books which look forward to the coming (advent) of the powerful and ruling Messiah. This is not suffering Jesus, this is victorious Jesus!
- B) What can give us the strength to “live like Jesus?” It is the knowledge that Christ is the ultimate overcomer! Christ is victor! Christ conquered and is King! Living like Jesus is not weak, it is victorious. Followers of Christ need not fear defeat. We have confidence that Jesus is Victor!
- C) Our trials and tribulations can become bigger than Jesus. They are NOT, Jesus is Victor! Is your Jesus too small, too impotent, too weak? Come know the true and powerful Jesus! He is the Lion of Judah who the faithful still follow!



Growth Group Homework



Powering Up

1. What observations from this weekend's message on "The Return Of The King" did you find to be the most interesting or challenging? Share your answer.

2. **Clothed in Character...** Imagine that character was like clothing, something that you could put on, and even better, something you could take off if you didn't like how it looked. Share a character trait with your Growth Group which you wish you could "take off," and then another character trait you wish you could "put on." This is a good opportunity to listen carefully to one another and get to know the hearts of your fellow Growth Group members!



Digging In

1. What is more important, a person's character, or a person's actions? How does Revelation 1-3 address this question?



2. All but two churches in Revelation 2-3 (Smyrna & Philadelphia) are condemned for something significant/scandalous in their churches. Are there characteristics about these two churches which could help everyone in the church avoid God's condemnation? What can we surmise about the church (generally speaking) based on the five of seven churches who are condemned for some of their practices?



Connecting To Life

1. One of the key areas from last Sunday's sermon was asking the question, "Is your Jesus too small?" It's an odd question in some ways, because Jesus is clearly not too small to be Victor over all our lives. But when there are circumstances or tribulations in our lives which consume us, sometimes even to the point of being bigger than anything else, Jesus often feels very small – even impotent – to help us. Connect this to your life with this question...
 - Can you think of circumstances or character needs in your life that need the BIG JESUS of Revelation 1:12-18? What are these? Please share this with your Growth Group for both prayer and in order for your group to track with you about this. Like always, please share as you feel comfortable (but risk a little ☺)!
2. Share with your group the most interesting thing you learned about Jesus Christ in your Growth Group study over the past 10 weeks. As you look forward in Revelation, what excites you the most?