

“LETTERS FROM JESUS - Pt. 4” (Rev. 2:1-11)

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INTRO: Let’s work our way through the letters Jesus dictated to the churches of Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7) & Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11).

1. These were actual churches that existed, but are representative of all churches of all times.
2. Each church was given a copy of Revelation (v. 11).
3. There’s no biblical evidence to suggest that these churches represent seven periods of church history.
 - A. If so, Christ’s return couldn’t have been imminent until the church reached the Laodicean age.
 - B. Not all churches go through the same thing at the same time, not even these seven.

The Pattern of the 7 Letters [with some variance]:

1. The Recipient - who the letter is addressed to.
2. The Author – a fitting description of Jesus.
3. A Commendation (except the church of Laodicea).
4. A Correction (except Smyrna & Philadelphia).
5. An Exhortation - to respond to the correction.
6. An Exhortation - to hear what the Spirit is saying.
7. A Call to Overcome and a Promise to the Overcomer.

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS (Rev. 2:1-7)

1. Ephesus – a major, prosperous city; commercial center; seaport; shrine of Diana/temple of Artemis.
2. Church planted by Paul, Aquila & Priscilla (Acts 19).
3. Jesus identifies Himself as, *“He who holds the 7 stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the 7 golden lampstands.”* (Rev. 2:1).
 - A. Jesus is in the midst of the church of Ephesus and has the leader in His right hand!
4. Commendation: good works; persevered in the midst of trials; didn’t tolerate evil; and exposed false apostles (Rev. 2:2-3, 6; Acts 20:29-31; Matt. 24:11-12).
 - A. Notice Commendation **before** Correction!
 - B. Deeds of the Nicolaitans – immorality (see 2:15).
 - C. The church must constantly be discerning of false deeds (immorality) & false doctrines (1Jn. 4:1-3)!
5. Correction (vv. 4-5) - You’ve left your first love (Eph. 1:15-16; 4:15), so Remember, Repent & Return or I will come and remove your lampstand.
6. Exhortation (v. 7a) – hear what the Spirit is saying.
7. A call to overcome & a promise to the overcomer (v. 7b) – to eat from the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God (Gen. 2:9; 3:22; Rev. 22:1-2, 14).

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA (Rev. 2:8-11)

1. Smyrna [*“myrrh”*] - a seaport city; a center of the imperial cult of Rome and emperor worship; a city of great trade and wealth.
2. The origin of the church itself is unknown.
3. Jesus identifies Himself as, *“the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:”* (Rev. 2:8)
4. Commendation (v. 9) - persevered in the midst of tribulation; false Judaizers and poverty (Ja. 2:5).
 - A. False Jews – those not in Christ (Jn. 8:33, 39, 44, 47; Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:26-29).
5. No Correction is given to the church of Smyrna.
6. Exhortation (v. 10) – to be faithful in the midst of coming tribulation and testing (1Pet. 1:6-7).
7. Call to overcome & promise to the overcomer (v. 11).
 - A. Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.
 - B. Overcomers will not be hurt by the 2nd death.
 - 1) The 1st death is physical; the 2nd is spiritual – being cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

“Born once, die twice, born twice, die once!”

CONCLUSION: Let’s hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches and overcome!