

“LETTERS FROM JESUS - Pt. 5” (Rev. 2:8-17)

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REVIEW/INTRO: Let’s work our way through the letters Jesus dictated to the churches of Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11) and Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17).

1. These were actual churches that existed, but are representative of all churches of all times.

I. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF EPHEBUS – the church that left its first love (Rev. 2:1-7)

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

1. Smyrna was a wealthy city with a pagan culture.

2. Jesus identifies Himself as *“the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:”* (Rev. 2:8).

3. Commendation (v. 9):

A. They persevered in ministry in the midst of tribulation and false Judaizers.

B. They were facing financial poverty, but were rich spiritually (Ja. 2:5).

C. Because the Jews in the city had rejected the Messiah, Jesus called their local synagogue *“a synagogue of Satan.”*

D. Under the new covenant, a true Jew isn’t an ethnic description but a spiritual description (Jn. 8:33-47; Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:26-29)!

NOTE: There is no correction given to the church of Smyrna. Jesus only gives/allows us what we can handle!

4. Exhortation (v. 10):

A. Don’t fear any of the suffering you’ll be facing.

B. *“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”* (Rev. 2:10)

C. Times of tribulation/testing show us what we’re made of & how we’ll respond (1Pet. 1:6-7).

5. A Call to Overcome and A Promise to the Overcomer (v. 11):

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” (Rev. 2:11)

A. The 1st death is physical death, and the 2nd death is spiritual death, resulting in being cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

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

A few New Testament verses on suffering

(Acts. 5:40-41; Rom. 8:18; 2Tim. 3:12; 1Pet. 3:17; 4:19).

III. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS (Rev. 2:12-17).

1. Pergamos was a famous, prosperous & pagan city.

2. Jesus came to this church as *“He who has the sharp two-edged sword”* (Rev. 2:12)

3. Commendation (v. 13)

A. They held fast their faith in the midst of paganism.

4. Correction (vv. 14-15)

A. Some of the church held to the doctrines of Balaam & the Nicolaitans (2:6) which led to idolatry & sexual immorality (Num. 25:1-3; 31:16).

5. Exhortation (v. 16)- Repent or I will fight against you.

6. An Exhortation to hear what the Spirit is saying and to overcome (v. 17).

CONCLUSION: Let’s hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches! Let’s persevere in the midst of suffering and in a god-less culture. Let’s not tolerate false doctrines & the evil deeds they lead to. Is there anything you need to repent of?