

## THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation: 2:8-17 | Session 5 | Notes

### Summary <sup>1</sup>

- The book is one revelation, not several, thus we refer to it as *The Revelation*.
- John is the author of the book writing on the island of Patmos.
- It contains prophecy regarding the revealing of Jesus Christ in His glorified state at His second coming, and the events during the Day of the Lord.
- Written to the Seven Jewish assemblies, or synagogues (All English Bibles; a bit misleading, refer to these assemblies as churches).
- It is delivered unto each assembly via the Angel of each assembly. Angel means messenger, not always a heavenly supernatural being. In this case, the messenger is the human leader of the synagogue.

### To the Angel of the Assembly in Smyrna

#### Verse 8—

In our last session we looked at the first letter to the angel/messenger of the church/assembly in Ephesus. The second letter is addressed to the *messenger* of the assembly in Smyrna. The only time this location is mentioned in the New Testament is here and in 1:11. Smyrna, as are all of these seven assemblies in chapter 2 and 3, is located in modern day Turkey, and there does not seem to be any known reason as to why the letters are addressed to these particular seven. Nonetheless, Jesus, **the First and the Last, Which was dead, and is alive** has a message for the messenger. The introduction used here, as we have already seen, i.e., **the First and the last** is a title God used specifically in connection with Israel in Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12, pointing us again to the Jewish nature of these letters.

#### Verse 9—

**I know thy<sup>2</sup> works**, all seven letters begin with this statement.<sup>3</sup> Being a Jewish synagogue made up of Jews in the Tribulation, works are the only hope of getting into the Kingdom of God. Not only does Jesus Christ know the **works** of this assembly, but also the **tribulation, and poverty**.

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<sup>1</sup> See notes from previous sessions at [www.hopenowbiblechurch.com](http://www.hopenowbiblechurch.com)

<sup>2</sup> The singular addressee (Thy, Thou) is the messenger throughout all of these seven letters. Probably, "*I know the works of thy synagogue.*"

<sup>3</sup> Modern translations do not include "I know thy works" here. It is the difference between the use of the Critical Greek Text in which all modern English Bibles are translated as opposed to the KJV and other earlier versions that translate from the majority of Greek texts, i.e., the Textus Receptus. Your pastor believes the correct and authentic Greek text is the Textus Receptus. We must ask, why would "I know thy works" not be included in this letter when it is in all of the others? Some say it is not included because Jesus had nothing bad to say about this assembly, implying that He only referring to *bad works*. But that argument falls apart with the assembly at Thyatira. Most likely the omission due to a scribal error which is why the Critical text should be suspect.

Since this is a future message, we do not know specifically what is causing **tribulation, and poverty**, although it is quite probable it stems from not taking the *mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads* (Revelation 13:16,17), and not being able to *buy or sell without the mark*. Great poverty will follow those who refuse the mark. Evidently, this assembly's works are strong in the Lord and although poor and troubled, Jesus tells them **thou art rich**. James wrote regarding Israel and the Jews, **hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him?** (James 2:5). So, while this assembly is poor in one sense, they are rich in another. It is okay to be poor in this world, yet rich in faith!

Some have crept into this assembly saying they are of God, but they are filled with **blasphemy**, they **say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan**. Speculation: Are these people those who take the *mark*, but join in this Jewish synagogue thinking they could still enter the Kingdom? Whatever reason, they said they were Jews and were not and Jesus calls them for being in the wrong synagogue!

Anxiety will certainly creep in for those who do not receive the *mark* and know that more suffering is about to come, but Jesus comforts them, **Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.**

**Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried.** The use of **ye** indicates Jesus is including the *messenger* with some of those in his *assembly who* will go to **prison**. However large that group is, they are going to be **tried<sup>4</sup> and will have tribulation ten days**. Exactly what the trial will be we are not told. But Jesus, in Matthew 10:22 may have alluded to this particular trial, *"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."* This testing will last for **ten days**. Jesus encourages the messenger, (and seems to predict he is going to die\*), to **be thou faithful unto death**, don't cut and run!

\*It is interesting that the word Smyrna carries the meaning of Myrrh; Myrrh is a plant that was used by the Jews to embalm the dead (John 19:39). Draw your own conclusion on whether or not this has any significance.

And if this messenger remains **faithful** Jesus will **give him a crown of life**. Lots of people make up stuff about this crown, but it is only mentioned twice in Scripture (here and in James 1:12), and always in a Jewish context, not pertaining at all, or ever to "us".

The *faithfulness* Jesus mentions here *may* refer to Revelation 20:4, *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the*

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<sup>4</sup> **Tried**; proved, examined, or tested.

*beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”*

Verse 11—

**He that hath and ear...** same as verse 7 to the church of Ephesus. **He that overcometh**, that is the Jews in the assembly of Smyrna. **Shall not be hurt by the second death**, which is being cast into the *Lake of Fire*, Revelation 20:14; 21:8.

The Jews who are faithful unto death, and die a violent death during the Tribulation are promised they will not suffer the death that will finally destroy their enemies. Jesus is able to promise this because He, Himself was faithful unto death thereby making Him, *Lord both of the dead and the living* (Romans 14:9).

### To the Angel of the Assembly of Pergamos

Verse 12—

**To the angel of the church in Pergamos write.** Located in modern-day Turkey, the city is known today by the name *Bergama*. While a relatively small city, it is known for cotton growing, and gold (although gold mining was halted in one of the largest mines, in June 2022 due to environmental damage).

Jesus is identified to the messenger as **He which hath the sharp sword with two edges** (See 1:16). The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, refers to the sword of the spirit as the Word of God. God's Word reproveth, corrects, and instructs. Here in Pergamos, by the **sharp sword** Jesus will teach this messenger that by His Word he can also destroy (Revelation 19:15); and therefore, the messenger will do well to listen to Jesus's words. This is a threatening letter—not one of grace.

Verse 13—

**I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is.** In Revelation 13:2 John saw the *dragon gave him (the beast, Antichrist) his power, and his seat, and great authority*. All the powers of the Antichrist are given to him by Satan. Since we are taking a futuristic interpretation of Revelation, it appears **Satan's seat** will be in Pergamos.

Such a small obscure city does not seem a likely place for the Antichrist's seat. Yet just because a city may be small today does not mean it cannot be rebuilt into a major international center in the future.<sup>5</sup> Or, why does the Antichrist have to have his seat in a large city? If we take this literal, large city or small, Satan's seat will be in Pergamos.

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<sup>5</sup> Consider Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Established as a small fishing village in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is now the most populous city in the UAE (about 3.4 million). Its growth came primarily in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the help of oil revenue. Dubai boasts the tallest building in the world.

**And thou holdest fast my name, instead of taking the mark of the beast. And hast not denied my faith even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.** The messenger of Pergamos is *faithful*. One of the martyrs of his assembly to be killed<sup>6</sup>, is mentioned here prophetically by the name; Antipas.<sup>7</sup>

Jesus praises the messenger of this assembly.

Verse 14—

**Nevertheless, Jesus also has a few things against him. Some in his assembly hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.** The book of Jude calls **the doctrine of Balaam, the error of Balaam**. It is found in the O.T. book of Numbers 25:1, and 31:16. The error of Balaam has to do with the idolatry of which sexual fornication was made a religion; like all cults and godless systems of religion, they are turned into idolatry. This is what will be coming to earth during the Tribulation—we already see it growing even today. Jesus is holding the messenger accountable for allowing this false doctrine in his assembly.

Verse 15—

We read about the Nicolaitans in session 4. In the future, during the Day of the Lord, the meaning of the Nicolaitans will be known. Otherwise, there is no meaning we can connect to this group (presumably a group of people). Their **doctrine** is also hated by Jesus Christ. This sort of squashes the idea that Jesus is just about love, love, love. But notice what he hates? In verse 6 he hates their *deeds*, and in this verse, he hates their *doctrine*.

Verse 16—

**Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.** The repentance needed is for the messenger to repent of his sin of allowing false doctrine to creep into his assembly. Like the warning to the assembly in Ephesus (2:5), works are required for Jews living under the Law. This is not a message of grace, those who have believed and received salvation by *grace through faith* are never threatened by the Lord because the gift we received is *not of yourselves...not of works* (Ephesian 2:8). Each individual believer today is of the body of Christ and we are *complete in him* (Colossians 2:10); therefore, this warning is not for us.

We see the fulfillment of this threat in Revelation 19:21.

Verse 17—

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<sup>6</sup> This is one of many martyrs during the Tribulation, see for example Revelation 6:9; 20:4.

<sup>7</sup> Scripture records other prophecy of naming a person years before he appears. 1 Kings 13:2, Josiah is named 290 years before his reign. Isaiah 44:28, and Isaiah 45:1 name Cyrus, king of Persia, 150 years before we read about him in the book of Daniel.

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Jesus uses the same words as before, **He that hath an ear...**

**To him that overcometh** (this false doctrine of Balaam) **will I give to eat of the hidden manna.**

Three promises so far:

Ephesus (2:7): Eat of the tree of life.

Smyrna (2:11): Not be hurt of the second death.

Pergamos (2:17): Eat of the hidden manna.

**I will give him** (the overcomer) **a white stone and in the stone, a new name is written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.** This has been taken by Christians so often to mean *we, you and me, will get a new name in heaven.* But, the subject of this prophecy is Israel, and it is to them to receive the new name. The often-repeated mistake could be avoided by Christians today if we would only study the Bible.

Isaiah 62:2, speaking to Israel God says, *“And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.”*

Isaiah 65:15: *“For the LORD GOD shall...call his servants by another name.”*

Revelation 19:12 tells us that Jesus Christ has a *name written, that no man knew, but he himself*—a likely fulfillment of this promise of a new name.