

REVELATION: 7 LETTERS: I RETURN! (PT 3)

One of the most impactful issues that we find in the early chapters of the Book of Revelation is the powerful 'self-revelation' of Jesus...the amazing ways Jesus presents Himself to us.

The 'self-revelations' of Jesus in Revelation 2:

- ***He holds the 'stars' in His right and He walks among the seven lampstands. (v1)***
- ***He is the first and last who was dead and has come to life. (v8)***
- ***He is the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. (v12)***
- ***He is the Son of God and He has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished bronze. (v18)***

• ***The letter to Smyrna:***

⁸ "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: ⁹ 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.' Revelation 2:8-11 NASB

- ***Jesus describes Himself as the first and the last who has died and come back to life.***
 - ***Smyrna was a city 35 miles northwest of Ephesus, a rich, fine, beautiful city. There coins read... "The first city of Asia in size and beauty." WM Ramsay***
 - ***The Church at Smyrna struggled financially and was blasphemed and persecuted by the synagogue of Satan. These Jewish people denied the deity of Jesus and His resurrection. They considered the miracles of Jesus to be demonic and they were vicious and cruel to the church.***

But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." Matthew 12:24 NASB

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth

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because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God." ⁴⁸ The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" ⁴⁹ Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. John 8:44-49 NASB

- **Jesus warns the church that trouble and suffering are coming (including imprisonment).**
- **Ten days of bad trouble and threatening trials were coming, but being faithful even until death will give them the crown of life.**
- **This is not the gift of eternal life, but a reward for proving faithful during persecution.**
- **Overcoming the persecution protects you from the second death.**

¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14-15 NASB

Note: About twenty years after this letter was written, the congregation at Smyrna had a heroic pastor named Polycarp who was martyred for his faith in Smyrna...Jesus' words..."be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life."

- **The letter to the church at Pergamum:**

¹² "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: ¹³ 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. ¹⁵ So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. ¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name

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written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.' Revelation 2:12-17 NASB

- **Jesus is described as the one who has the sharp two-edged sword...(v12)**
- **Pergamum is where 'Satan's throne is. (v13)**
 - **It is the official center of emperor worship in Asia.**
 - **It is the home of the temple Asclepius, the Greek god of healing symbolized by a 'snake'.**
 - **Pergamum is also the home of the first Christian martyr in Asia...a man named Antipas was slowly roasted in a bronze kettle until dead.**
 - **Jesus lauds them for refusing to deny Him even in this trial.**
 - **But...they tolerated those who taught the ways of Balaam and practiced idolatry and mingled immorality with worship.**
 - **They also allowed the Nicolaitans to teach and practice their heresies.**

²⁷ "Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸ "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: ²⁹ that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell." Acts 15:27-29 NASB

- **Jesus says repent...change your mind and change your ways, or else I am coming quickly to make war with the sword of my mouth.**
 - **He who has an ear...hear and heed! And Jesus promises 'hidden manna' (supernatural sustenance) a white stone with a new name written on it for those who overcome.**
 - **What is the white stone? Some think it is the admission to the 'banquet'. Some say the word for white can also mean shiny or bright like a jewel or precious stone on which God writes your new name.**

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. ² The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will designate. ³ You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴ It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; but you will be called, "My delight is in her," and your land, "Married"; for the LORD delights in you, and to Him your land

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will be married.

⁵ For as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you. Isaiah 62:2-5 NASB

¹⁵ "You will leave your name for a curse to My chosen ones, and the Lord GOD will slay you. But My servants will be called by another name.

¹⁶ "Because he who is blessed in the earth Will be blessed by the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth will swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from My sight!

¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. Isaiah 65:15-17 NASB

¹⁸ "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: ¹⁹ 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. ²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. ²² Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. ²³ And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. ²⁴ But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. ²⁵ Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. ²⁶ He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; ²⁷ AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' Revelation 2:18-29 NASB

- ***Jesus' letter to the Church of Thyatira:***
 - ***Jesus acknowledges their work, their love, faith, service, and perseverance.***
 - ***He recognizes that they have grown and expanded their ministry.***

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- ***Lydia, Paul's first convert in Europe was from Thyatira. (see Acts 16:1-15)***
- ***But He has this against them...they 'tolerate' Jezebel, they have a woman in their congregation who promoted pagan practices of idolatry and immorality. (see Revelation 2:14)***
 - ***This woman was not willing to repent and He promises consequences...He gives her time, opportunity to repent but with no redemptive results.***
 - ***He says that the person with the Jezebel spirit and her followers will be sick and greatly troubled, even 'taken out' if they refuse to repent.***
 - ***But, this only applies to those who are involved in the idolatrous pagan indulgences...for the rest of the church He says hold on...keep the faith...continue to overcome.***
- ***He makes a promise to them about affecting the nations for God.***

⁸ 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. ⁹ 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.' Psalm 2:8-9 NASB

- ***Jesus promises them that they will receive the 'morning star'...Jesus IS the Morning Star.***
- ***In Revelation 2:24, Jesus tells them that they were offered the 'deep things of Satan' but they refused to 'buy in'. I think that now He is offering the 'deep things' of God that are found in fully knowing Jesus, the Morning Star***