

Behold | Sermons through the Revelation

Sermon #6: Revelation 2:1-11 | Seven Letters for Seven Future Messengers

A Quick Review

- The book of Revelation is about **the revelation of Jesus Christ** (Rev. 1:1).
- John **saw** this revelation (Rev. 1:2) and wrote it down in a book to send to the seven churches (Rev. 1:10-11). The things he saw were things revealed to him when he was taken *in spirit* to the *day of the Lord* (Rev. 1:10).
- As John was *spiritually* taken to the Day of the Lord (physically remaining on Patmos), he was given messages to the **angels** of the seven assemblies. He would include these messages in the book which he wrote (i.e.: the book of Revelation). The angels are the messengers of the churches (i.e.: the “pastor” or congregational representative).
- Therefore, the so-called “letters to the seven churches” are not related to churches in the past or present, but rather are messages related to the future, during the events immediately preceding the revelation of Jesus Christ (the Tribulation).
- If our interpretation is correct, we should expect to find that the doctrinal messages to these messengers is incompatible with the doctrine of the church today. This is because churches today live under the dispensation of grace, a dispensation which concludes with the rapture. Assemblies of believers during in the tribulation will be living in the age of Law, an age which was interrupted when God inserted this current mystery age of grace.

Revelation 2:1-7 | To the Messenger at Ephesus

- Worthy of note: the pronouns are singular: thy, thee, thou
- Commendations to the messenger:
 - His works, labor, and patience, for the name of Christ (mentioned in both vv. 2 and 3). Compare Isaiah 66:18, which teaches that the Lord deals with works in the Day of the Lord.
 - He cannot **bear them which are evil** (v.2)
 - He recognizes false apostles and calls them what they are (v. 3)
 - He hated the **deeds of the Nicolaitans** (v. 6). This group and these deeds are unknown today (being future). All we know is that God hates their deeds and commended the messenger for doing the same.
- Complaints against the messenger:
 - He left his first love.
 - This is almost universally said to be his love for the Lord, but the text does not indicate such.
 - The remedy was to **remember** and **repent** and **do** (v. 4).
 - Note that he was to **do the first works** (v. 4), giving indication that his first love was *something he once loved to do*.

- There was a great consequence if this messenger did not do that which he once did: *the candlestick itself would be removed*.
 - One of the things we will see consistently in the letters is the threat of removal.
 - Such a threat is inconsistent with the age of grace.
- The general word to the churches: *overcome!*
 - The task of the churches will be to overcome. The reward will be **to eat of the tree of life**.
 - It is impossible to reconcile this with salvation in our dispensation (though many have tried, refusing to see these churches as future).

Revelation 2:8-11 | To the Messenger at Smyrna

- Commendations to the messenger:
 - He dealt with **works, and tribulation, and poverty** well (v. 9).
 - He seemed to have endured *fake Jews* (v. 10).
 - In an age in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, this statement (along with the use of the word **synagogue**) seem out of place.
 - This should be taken literally: *there will be people who claim to be Jews but are not Jews*. In the context of this passage, it appears that there will be those who infiltrate synagogues in order to wreak havoc among the Jews, and likely to turn them over to authorities.
- Complaints against the messenger: *none!*
- Commands to the messenger:
 - He is to **fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer** (v. 10).
 - In the things he suffers, he is to **be faithful unto death** (v. 10).
- The specific word to the church:
 - They will be cast into prison for **ten days** (v. 10). If these words are figurative, we have no idea what they *figure*. It is better to take them literally (thus the message cannot be “dynamic” for all churches of all time).
 - Though they will endure this tribulation, and their pastor will die (**be faithful unto death**), no word is given on the outcome of the church.
- The general word to the churches: *overcome to avoid the second death*, which is the **lake of fire** (Rev. 21:8).

Conclusion

- In these two churches, there is nothing that directly fits with a theology of the age of grace, but everything fits in a *futuristic* interpretation.
- This gives hints that *all eyes should be on Turkey* for a future power-area in geo-political influence.