

Revelation 1-3

By Chantel Bink



In the beginning of the book of Revelation, John offers a greeting to the seven churches of Asia Minor and a warning of sorts. He reminds them what Jesus said to the disciples in the book of Matthew (24:30):

“Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So it shall be!

Amen” (Revelation 1:7). So it shall be. That’s it. No discussions. Jesus is going to return in a magnificent way and the people of the earth will realize just

how badly we have behaved and will be filled with regret. He then offers some words of advice to those churches caught in sin and persecution to help them be ready for his arrival.

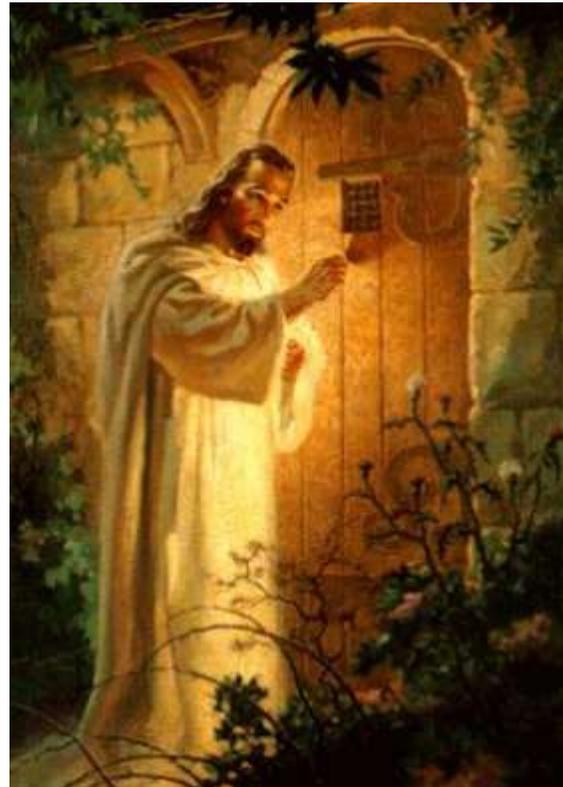
It must have been absolutely amazing (and humbling) to be one of those churches that received a letter from John which told them outright what they were doing wrong and how to fix it in the words of Christ himself. Some of these churches had issues which ranged from the blatant, outright, in-your-face sin of acceptance of immorality and idolatry of Thyatira, to the much more concealed sin of being “lukewarm” of Laodicea, and having “forsaken [their] first love” in Ephesus (3:16, 2:4). Others were suffering persecution and being told to stay the course, like Smyrna and Philadelphia (2:10, 3:8-9).

It is probably fair to say that all churches have issues of some kind at some point. Being that Satan likes to attack those who are doing God’s work in God’s will, it is also probably fair to say that if a church never was under attack they may be having issues of a different sort. If God is working in our church, I think we should expect to struggle sometimes.

Unfortunately, Jesus hasn’t sent a prophet with a letter addressed to Berlin Seventh Day Baptist Church to tell us where we need to smarten up yet. Fortunately, he did give us access through

his sacrifice so that God can tell us through his Word, our prayer, and other people exactly what we need to know. Just like the churches of Asia, Jesus tells us through John, “He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” He says that to every single church John is writing to and to us. When we are being attacked we need to use the tools God gave us to “hear” him and to overcome with his strength. We also need to be aware that problems do crop up sometimes. No church is immune... even one as awesome as ours, so we need to “hear” God tell us where we may be straying and how he wants us to fix it.

In what ways does our church struggle? Are we wishy-washy? Are we forsaking our first love? Are we overlooking sins? Are we forgetting to build each other up in love and encourage each other in faith? I think it is important that we, as a church, pray about this just in case there is something we are missing. If so, we need to pray that God will help us overcome. We may not be missing anything, but we need to remember that Jesus is right there waiting to help us if we ask. He wants to be awake and ready for his return.



“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”

~Revelation 3:19-22

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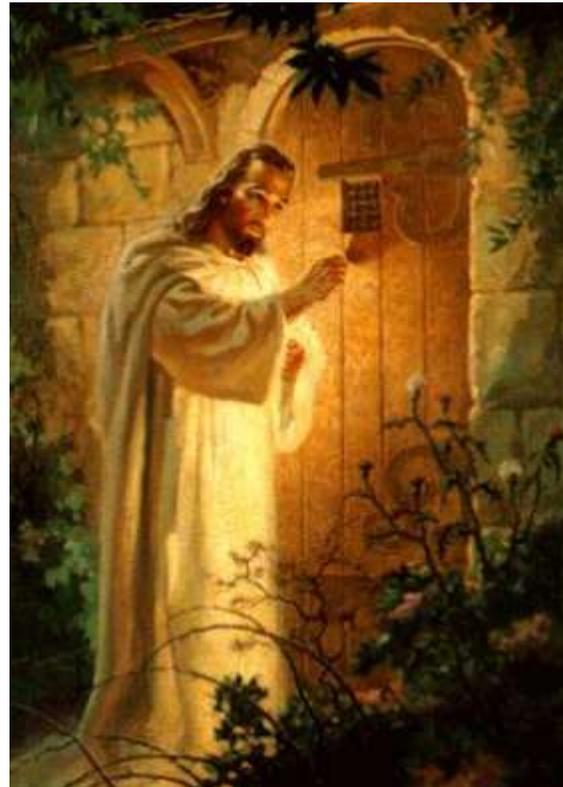
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