

Smyrna – The Persecuted Church

Revelation 2:8-11

Jesus sent a letter to each of 7 churches:

- Ephesus – The church the left its 1st love
- Smyrna – The persecuted church
- Pergamum – The compromising church
- Thyatira – The Immoral church
- Sardis – The Dead Church
- Philadelphia – The missionary Church
- Laodicea – The Lukewarm Church

CHURCH OF SMYRNA:

- We don't know anything about the prior history of the church at Smyrna
- We don't when it was founded or by whom it was founded
- It is mentioned twice in the Bible – Revelation 1:11, and chapter 2.
- It was located about 35 miles north of Ephesus
- The city had a population of about 200,000
- The city was known especially for her loyalty to Rome
 - Temple to Goddess Roma in 195 BC
 - Temple to Tiberius in AD 26

I. Christ – Verse 8

A. The First and the Last

This title is repeated several times in Revelation

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”” (Revelation 1:8, NASB95)

“Then He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end...” (Revelation 21:6, NASB95)

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” (Revelation 22:13, NASB95)

“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last.” (Revelation 1:17, NASB95)

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.” (Isaiah 44:6, NASB95)

B. He was dead

C. He has come to life

II. Commendation

Jesus acknowledges 3 areas of suffering for the church at Smyrna

1. “I know your tribulation” Vs 9

- Tribulation here is a strong word implying oppression, distress, affliction, and various kinds of trouble.

2. “I know your poverty” Vs 9

- This is a reference to physical/financial poverty
- This was a poor church and its members had little of this world’s goods

“But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you...

accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.”
(Hebrews 10:32–34, NASB95)

3. I know the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan

*“When the seven days were almost over, **the Jews from Asia**, upon seeing him in the temple, began to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place...Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple....” (Acts 21:27–30, NASB95)*

III. Criticism

None!

IV. Counsel – Vs. 10

Jesus tells the church of Smyrna to do 2 things:

1. Do not be afraid
2. Be faithful unto death

V. Certainty – Verse 11

“Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:14, NASB95)