

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Session 5

Section 2: The Letters to the Churches – Rev 2&3

SMYRNA: Faithfulness in Suffering (Rev. 2:8-11)

I. THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA

A. Background

1. Smyrna was a large harbor city on the Aegean Sea (west coast of modern Turkey) with over 100,000 residents. It continues today as the city of Izmir with a population of about 200,000. This heavily persecuted city is the only city of the seven mentioned in Rev. 2-3, that still exists today. Satan could not stamp out their testimony. It was one of the most beautiful cities in Asia being referred to in the ancient world as “the Crown of Asia” or “the Flower of Asia. It was a prosperous harbor with many roads connecting it to the major cities of Asia.
2. All were required by law to worship at a pagan temple. The most prominent were the temples to Zeus and the goddess Cybele. Emperor worship was a unifying factor in the Roman Empire. Once a year, all were required to burn incense on an altar for Caesar. Christians who refused to participate in this were considered criminals of the state. They were burned at the stake or killed by wild beasts. There was a large influential Jewish population who persecuted the church.

B. Revelation of Jesus

1. Words of the First and the Last
2. Who died and came to life

C. Affirmation

1. I know your tribulation
2. I know your poverty (but you are rich)
3. I know the slander of those who are of the synagogue of Satan.

- D. Rebuke
 - a. None
- E. Exhortation
 - 1. You are about suffer imprisonment – DO NOT FEAR!
 - 2. You will have tribulation – but be faithful unto death.
- F. He who overcomes – the rewards
 - 1. Crown of Life
 - 2. Not be hurt by the second death