

# To the Church at Smyrna

Date: February 3, 2021

Text: Revelation 2:8-11

## - Review:

- What lessons did we learn from the church in Ephesus?
  - We must protect against false teaching
  - We must defend the truth of the gospel
  - We must never stop loving God and one another.
  - We must never stop sharing the good news of Jesus.

## - Background on Smyrna

- Smyrna had a very large population of Jews
- Like most other places in Asia Minor, Emperor Worship was a normal part of everyday life.
- It may have been necessary to participate in emperor worship just to have a job.
- At this point in history, Jews were distancing themselves from Christians more and more.

## - The Letter

- v. 8 What from the vision of Jesus in chapter one can you find in this letter?
  - *First and the last, dead and came to life*
- What was Smyrna doing right?
  - *They were enduring persecution*
- What was Smyrna doing wrong?
  - *Jesus says nothing against them!*
- v. 9 What challenge was the church in Smyrna facing?
  - *persecution from Jews and Romans*
- v. 9 How can they both be in poverty and be rich?
  - *Materially poor, Spiritually rich*
- v. 9 What do you think is meant by “those who say they are Jews and are not”?
  - *Ethnically they were Jews, but didn't worship God or his Messiah*

- Synagogue of satan: Satan=false accuser, making false accusations against the church
- Who is the true Israel? Who are the true “children of Abraham?”
  - Galatians 3:7, 29
  - Romans 4:11-17 (cf. Ephesians 2:11-22)
- Do not be afraid/first and the last= Isaiah 41:4, 8-10
  - The church is the fulfillment of the promises made to Israel.
  - Keep that in mind as we continue to go through the book.
- Why is their affliction described as only for “ten days”?
  - *Daniel 1:12; Symbolic for a “short time”*
- What does the “crown of life” symbolize?
  - *Same thing as the “tree of life” (v. 7): Eternal life*
- Final Thoughts
  - Connect of the Jesus Vision to their circumstances
  - Tell story of Polycarp
    - (Disciple of John, Bishop of Smyrna, died at 86 years old, could have been a part of the church at Smyrna when this very letter was read)

## To the Church at Pergamum

- Background on Pergamum
  - Was the center of emperor worship in this region
  - Was the first city in Asia Minor build a temple to a Roman ruler (Augustus)
  - Also a center of worship for many false Gods
- The Letter
  - v. 12 What from the vision of Jesus in chapter one can you find in this letter?
    - *Double edged sword*
  - What was Pergamum doing right?

- *Holding on to their faith, enduring persecution*
- What has Pergamum done wrong?
  - *holding to the teaching of “Balaam” and the “Nicolaitans”*
- What does that mean?
  - *Numbers 22-25; 31:16: giving in to social pressures and committing sin*
- What does Jesus threaten will happen to those who do not repent? What does that mean?
  - *Fight against them with the sword of my mouth: receive same fate as Jesus’ enemies (Revelation 19:15)*
- What do the hidden manna, white stone, and new name symbolize?
  - *Same as vv. 7, 11: Eternal life*
- What is meant by “let anyone who has ears to hear listen”?
  - *Use in the OT by prophets, used by Jesus when telling parables, Message is designed to enlighten some and blind others.*