

**The Seven Churches of Revelation:
How They Apply to You
Smyrna – The Second Church of Revelation
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Revelation 2:8-11 NKJ. 8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: **9** "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **10** "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (NKJ)

The second church of the seven is known as the "persecuted church." AD 70 - 313

- Jesus gave no correction or admonishment to this church because they were undergoing intense and cruel persecution for His Name.
- **Smyrna** was located 60 kilometers north of Ephesus and was known for its harbors, commerce and marketplaces with expensive homes on the mountainsides above the bay. Its ruins are located in the Turkish city of Izmir. Smyrna was a trading center... It was also called the "*Crown City*." It was one of the last cities to fall to Islam.
- In the church age, this period was one of the most vicious persecution and martyrdom. AD 107 – Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch and friend of John the Apostle was thrown to the lions in the Roman amphitheatre. In AD 155, Polycarp, disciple of John, close friend of Ignatius, was burned alive in Smyrna. (*flames swirled around him and they had to kill with sword – then burn).
- Persecution climaxed under Diocletian in AD 303 who sought to utterly destroy Christianity by slaughter. This lasted for ten years until ended by decree of Constantine in AD 313 – fulfilling Jesus' prophesy.
- First came intense love of Jesus, witnessing of His coming to earth as Savior...all Asia was turned upside down for Him, then came persecution...
- New believers – so on fire – then comes persecution (to stamp out that fervor)

Smyrna- came from "myrrh" bitter (sweet smelling myrrh); collected by cutting the bark – it weeps "tears" that harden and are collected and used for medicinal and fragrance properties.

- That sweet fragrance is given off by Christians who are hurt, persecuted wrongly, "caused to bleed," who through their knowledge of Christ remain steadfast and sweet of spirit throughout.
- This church suffered great persecution and martyrdom, yet produced many whose names and stories still evoke a sweet fragrance of faithful commitment and dedication to Christ to this day...

Jesus identifies Himself to the Church of Smyrna as the: *First: foremost (in time, place, order or importance) and ***Last:** farthest, final (of place time)

- I was there and know what led up to the persecution/cutting/ tears you are in or will face...
- I am the end and have already seen the outcome and will lead you successfully – why?

- Because He was dead and came to life... He experienced to the worst outcome, yet came out of it alive and victorious. **Matt:28:18-20; Heb. 4: 15; Luke 6:40; John 16:33**

*** In our lives: things cut and cause 'tears' especially persecution – just or unjust.**

- **Ps 56:8-11** 8 You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book? 9 When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me. 10 In God (I will praise His word), in the LORD (I will praise His word), 11 In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? (NKJ)
- **Matt 27:12-14** 12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" 14 And He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.
- **2 Cor 2:14-15** 14 - Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 - For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. (NKJ) **WHAT IS MY FRAGRANCE IN TRIBULATION?**

Rev 2:9 "I know your works, *tribulation (*pressure*), and poverty (*destitute of abundance*) (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews (Christians) and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan (the accuser)

- Jesus asked Paul why He was persecuting *HIM* (**Acts 9:4**) Paul was persecuting the church, but Jesus let him know that he was persecuting *Him* by persecuting His church!

Rev 2:10 "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer (*cause pain*). Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested (*objectively tested and scrutinized and disciplined – through the idea of piercing experience*), and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful (*trustworthy*) until death, and I will give you the crown (*mark of exalted rank, given as prize to victors*) of life. (NKJ)

Rev 2:11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes (*subdues, comes out victorious*) shall not be hurt by the second death.(miserable state of the wicked dead in hell – utter darkness for all eternity)" (NKJ)

Has the modern church convinced itself that Christ never has any words of pending danger for them? Here, God is warning them that more persecution is on the way- not just persecution but martyrdom "be thou faithful unto death.")

11 Tim. 3: 12 "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"

Matt 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.