

Smyrna: Faithful Suffering

Revelation 2:8-11



Revelation Outline

- I. “The Things Which You Have Seen”: The Setting of Jesus’ Prophecy (1:1-20)
- II. “The Things Which Are”: The State of Jesus’ Church (2:1—3:22)



The Repeating Structure

1. “To the angel of the in [city] church, write.”
2. “This, says the One...” [followed by Christ’s personalized self-description from the vision in ch. 1].
3. “I know...”
 - a. Commendation of the Good
 - b. Correction of the Sin
 - c. Call for Repentance
4. “The one having ears, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”
5. “To the one overcoming...” [followed by Christ’s personalized promise to the persevering believer].

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- I. The Introduction to the Letter: the Command to Write (8)
 - A. The Character of the City







Smyrna, Izmir, modern city from acropolis



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- I. The Introduction to the Letter: the Command to Write (8)
 - A. The Character of the City
 - B. The History of the Church
 - C. The Description of Christ (8b)
 - 1. He is eternally sovereign over human history.
 - 2. He died and was raised again.



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Revelation 2:8-11

- I. The Introduction to the Letter: the Command to Write (8)
- II. The Body of the Letter: the State of the Church (9-10)
 - A. A Commendation of the Good (9)
 - "I know your tribulation."
 - "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)."
 - "I know ... the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."



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- I. The Introduction to the Letter: the Command to Write (8)
- II. The Body of the Letter: the State of the Church (9-10)
 - A. A Commendation of the Good (9)
 - B. An Encouragement in Persecution (10)



B. An Encouragement in Persecution (10)

1. Don't Fear Its Suffering (10a).

a. Jesus knows and ultimately controls the details of your persecution.

- 10 - "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days.
- 1 Pet. 4:19 - "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."

B. An Encouragement in Persecution (10)

1. Don't Fear Its Suffering (10a).

b. Jesus will be with you in your suffering.

- Ps. 23:4 - "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."
- Acts 9:5 - "He said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,"
- 2 Cor. 4:9 - "Persecuted, but not forsaken.
- Heb. 13:5 - "He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU."

B. An Encouragement in Persecution (10)

1. Don't Fear Its Suffering (10a).

c. Jesus will give you courage through His Spirit.

- Luke 12:11-12 - "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."
- Acts 4:7-8 - "When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people,"

B. An Encouragement in Persecution (10)

1. Don't Fear Its Suffering (10a).

d. Jesus will preserve your faith through persecution.

- Luke 22:31-32 - "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail."

B. An Encouragement in Persecution (10)

1. Don't Fear Its Suffering (10a).
2. Don't Mistake its Source (10b).
 - a. Satan is the primary source.
 - 2:13; Gen. 3:15; Job 2:6-7; Zech. 3:1; Lk. 22:3-4; Jn. 8:44; 1 Pet. 5:8
 - b. Satan uses various instruments ...
 - Unbelievers in the world (Mk. 12:7; Jn. 5:18-19; 17:14; Acts 14:22; 1 Th. 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:1, 13)
 - Earthly government & its rulers (1 Kings 19:2; Neh. 6:1,9; Est. 3:6; Ps. 119:161; Jer. 38:6; Dan. 3:13-17; Mt. 10:17; Mk. 13:9; Acts 12:1-3)
 - False religion & human philosophies (Jer. 26:8; Amos 7:12-13; Mt. 23:34-37; Acts 4:27-29; 5:17-18; 22:4; 1 Th. 2:13-16)
 - Unbelieving family and friends (Micah 7:6; Mt. 10:21, 36; Mk. 3:21; Gal. 4:29)

B. An Encouragement in Persecution (10)

1. Don't Fear Its Suffering (10a).
2. Don't Mistake its Source (10b).
3. Don't Miss its Purpose (10c).
4. Don't Question Christ's Sovereignty (10d).
5. Don't Forget Christ's Reward (10e).

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- II. The Body of the Letter: the State of the Church (9-10)
 - A. A Commendation of the Good (9)
 - B. An Encouragement in Persecution (10)
- III. The Conclusion of the Letter: an Exhortation to Each Believer (11)
 - A. A Call to Listen (11a)
 - B. A Call to Overcome (11b)



The Enduring Lessons from Smyrna

1. Repent & believe in Christ, so you will not face the second death.
 - Mt. 10:28 - "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
2. Pray for those churches currently suffering persecution.
 - Heb. 13:3 - "Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body."
 - Col. 4:18 - "Remember my imprisonment."
 - Mt. 25:34-40

The Enduring Lessons from Smyrna

3. Don't fear persecution.

- Jesus knows and ultimately controls the details of your persecution.
- Jesus will be with you in your suffering.
- Jesus will give you courage through His Spirit.
- Jesus will preserve your faith through persecution.

4. Don't fear abandoning your faith under persecution.

- Luke 22:31-32 - "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail."