

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

REVELATION CHAPTER 2:8-11

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

“WHAT KIND OF CHURCH ARE YOU?” – PART 2

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Revelation, End Times

Revelation 2:8-11

“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. :11“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’

How would you comfort Someone Who’s Suffering?

Suffering is a Mysterious Thing to Endure

Because Suffering doesn’t have to take on a physical face to threaten us.
Suffering can also be the very fear of what might happen.

Today, many people are tormented by
the prospect of suffering!

And to make it worse, there are so called ministries
that pronounce a curse upon anyone who is going through a difficult time financially or
perhaps someone is sick or being ill-treated...

That Somehow God has Abandoned Those Who
are Going Through the Crucible of Suffering

Listen Friend;

The Opposite is True. It is during those very dark and lonely hours that Jesus Christ has Promised to “**Never leave you or forsake you**”. It is at that point of crushing, that His word says - “**My grace is now sufficient for you, My strength**

in you will now be made complete” it is in the life of those who suffer, that Jesus presents himself in very tender ways, to comfort, to bring hope and assurance.

If in this day – you are in the fire of suffering,
Howbeit physical, spiritual or the looming specter of persecution
Jesus has a Word for You, for all of Us...

By the Way – in Our Current Days

In 2002, 361,000 Christians died at the hands of persecutors worldwide and that 81% of those Christians killed were killed by Muslims.

And Most of those killed were martyred in the African countries and in the Deep South pacific islands.

We are about to see

how Jesus ministers to those who are in trouble.
This is His very own approach to comforting those in trouble.

This is a Personal Letter from Jesus to Smyrna
To anyone suffering

Four (4) Very Short, Powerful Verses
Packed with a Comforting Message for a Suffering Church
And until you are in trouble - you will never know the true power of His words

WHAT KIND OF A CHURCH ARE YOU?

I.) <i>When you live in a hostile environment</i> vv. 8

“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write...”

• Smyrna - located 35 miles north of Ephesus, • it was an ancient city dating back over 1000 b.c. • it was a city that had been leveled by wars but was again rebuilt by general Lycemicus, one of the four generals that served Alexander the Great. • He restored to it such greatness that the citizens of Smyrna boasted that they had “died, but came to life again” • Smyrna was by far considered the most beautiful city in all of Asia Minor. • the design of the city was splendid, from the Mediterranean sea you would ascend up thru the city to mount pagus where atop the mount was beautifully designed buildings that caused the mount to take on the appearance of a great crown. Those of Smyrna affectionately called that mount “the crown of Smyrna, the crown of life”

it was the birth of Homer

and the place of emperor worship, it began in Smyrna,
where the roman emperors were first worshipped as gods and the personification of the gods were called
Caesars. it was here in Smyrna where the crowds first proclaimed
“Caesar is lord”

Today, **Smyrna** goes by the name **Izmir**, in **Turkey**
and is home to some 300,000 people

Smyrna gets its name from its chief export, a balm-like spice or perfume that is extracted from a tree called **Myrrh**

Perfumes / Medicine / Embalming Oil

Myrrh
(Smyrna)

was beaten and then crushed and when it was, out of it flowed a fragrant oil that was very costly and desirable.

The Church would have had its start from either Paul himself or missionaries sent out from Paul while in Ephesus.

Acts 19:9

Paul reasoned with the people daily in the school of Tyrannus. :10 And this he continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

There are no negative words in the letter, there are no rebukes

**Why was the church at Smyrna Suffering?
Because it wasn't taken seriously in light of the glories of Smyrna**

#1

There was the "Golden Street of the Gods"

Lined with the Beautiful Temples of the Goddess Sibyl, of the God Apollo, and of Zeus,

#2

The Roman Empire was Their Mother

Rome's legal system, military prowess, a citizen rights, equality, free commerce
The greatest power on earth of the day

#3

The Emperor Worship of Rome

Romans had their gods – what do we need Christianity for?

"Christians had to be Crazy – not to bow to Caesar"

*The Message of any Church will never be taken seriously as long as someone is leaning on external things,
Power, Wealth, Position*

Being a Christian in the Roman Empire was a hard thing. You were considered insane, odd, a freak...
an anti-patriotic to the empire – traitors to the emperor

When you live in a hostile environment

1.) You can be a peaceful Christian / Church v.8

'These things says; the First and the Last...

That's Important to You if;

Smyrna Claimed to be the sum total of

what the roman society should be like.
They believed that they were the final word in the Empire

I'm the Only One Eternal!
Says Jesus

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you, **my peace** I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Any Christian or Church that Understands That
Jesus is in Charge - *will be a church at peace!*

When you live in a hostile environment

2.) **You can be an encouraged Christian / Church** **v.8**

'These things says; who was dead...

That's Important to You if; You're about to be threatened with your life.

The church in Smyrna lived under constant threat of being attacked, persecuted for following Jesus Christ

Jesus is the Resurrection

John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. :26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

John 6:40

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up

Lo-Jack

Matthew 28:20

teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

The Lord; *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."*
be an encouraged Christian / Church

Acts 14:21-22

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, :22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

When you live in a hostile environment

3.) You can be a confident Christian / Church

v.8

'These things says; ...He who "came to life":

That's Important to You if; You're facing death...

But What About the Death of a Family Member or Friend?

John 6:51

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, **he will live forever...**

Confidence ! – in the face of peril

2 Corinthians 5:7-8

For we walk by faith, not by sight. **:8** We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

John 14:1-2

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. **In my Father's house** are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

WHAT KIND OF A CHURCH ARE YOU?

II.) When times of difficulty surround you

vv. 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.

1.) You will be able to endure

v.9

"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy

There are Three Things
that The Church at Smyrna Had to endure.

qli÷yiß thlipsis, thlip´-sis; the crushing pressure, heavy anguish, a sorrowful trouble.

The word is used to describe a man who is **being** crushed to death by a rockslide or someone who is pinned by a mudslide and the mud is rising!

Tribulation = Suffering!

Philippians 3:10

All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death,

God is Not Afraid to Have us Suffer

BECAUSE HE IS IN CONTROL AND HE IS WATCHING OVER US

The Church at Smyrna;

They were under Pressure to worship Caesar, to be pagan,
to be like the rest of the world.

I think of the pressure our young people in junior high and senior high school, and the pressure to have sex
and to do drugs and blend...

Right Now each of Us are Being a Sacrifice for Something

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. - :2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

When times of difficulty surround you

2.) *You will be able to prosper*

v.10

ptwcei=a ptocheia, *pto-khi'-ah*; to become destitute, to no longer have what is needed, to have one's material wealth either lost, stolen or handed over.

If I were to tell you that Jesus is talking about a man who lives from hand to mouth, from paycheck to paycheck, one who can barely make ends meet, this would not be the man.

You will be able to prosper

Jesus is telling us about a man who has nothing, any longer
Because of his godly lifestyle and his deep devotion to Christ. – a Christian

Good People, Smart People, Usable People

But because they named Jesus as Lord – Poverty Stricken People

Philippians 3:8

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

Philippians 4:11-12

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. :12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound:

When Jesus Said; “but you are rich”

He was telling them that they had invested wisely in eternal things

2 Corinthians 8:1-2

dear friends, I want you to know what God's grace has accomplished in the churches in Macedonia. :2 They have been severely tested by the many troubles they have gone through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their financial giving, even though they are very poor and in fact live in poverty.

When times of difficulty surround you

3.) You will be able to rejoice

v.9

blasfmi=a **blasphemia**, *blas-fay-me'-ah*; to vilify, to speak against, to go about slandering another person. To speak evil of another.

God has a Special Hatred for this Particular Sin
And I have seen Him judge both believer and unbeliever alike.

Matthew 5:10-12

Blessed are those who are **persecuted for righteousness' sake**,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. :11 "Blessed are you when they **revile and persecute** you, and **say all kinds of evil against** you falsely for My sake. :12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

the **blasphemy** of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan.

Remember; To the Church of Ephesus There is the Warning
About The False Apostles

Revelation 2:2

"I know that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

These False Apostles claimed apostolic succession. That the apostles that Jesus founded continued on in succession of church hierarchy to this day.

Those Who Say they are Jews

These were a powerful group of Jews who came to Smyrna, while there they claimed to be Christians. They believed themselves to be of a special **Priesthood that was continuous - (Imposters)**

This is a False Priestly System that Tried to Marry
An Elaborate Legalism of Judaism to the Simple Grace of Christianity

Revelation 2:6

But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nico-laitans, which I also hate.

Hierarchy, Lordship, Authoritative Rule over the Laity, the People

A Church Serving the Ministry
Rather than the Minister serving the church
Jesus says "I Hate That"

This Impostership Survived
In the Merger of Apostolic Succession and a Continuing Priesthood

The Mormon Church Claims This Apostolic Priesthood
The Roman Catholic Church Claims This Apostolic Priesthood

A System of Performances
Holy Ordinances, Elaborate Requirements, Legalistic Rights
And Church Dependence.

It's all known as Romanism

WHAT KIND OF A CHURCH ARE YOU?

III.) When eternity is an ever-present reality vv. 10-11

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. :11“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”’

1.) You'll see Jesus Christ as your shepherd v.10

#1

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer

.....
.....

I know... (I have experienced it too)

Hebrews 4:15-16

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin. :16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

He Feels Everything You and I Feel

2.) You'll see Satan the Devil as a tool v.10

Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days

Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison,
Jesus is Saying ***“I'm On It”***

that you may be tested
Jesus is Saying ***“I'm On It”***

Remember Peter's Sifting

and you will have tribulation ten days
Jesus is Saying ***“I'm On It”***

Personal Expounding
When You Hurt – Time Drags

When eternity is an ever-present reality

3.) You'll see heaven, eternity as your next home

v.10-11

***Be faithful until death,
...and I will give you the crown of life.*** :11“*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.*” ’

First - He wanted to Close, Leaving them with the Key Thought
“I will give you the crown of life”

their city “the crown of Smyrna, the crown of life”
No – Jesus was saying you don’t belong here anymore. You have a new citizenship that can never be conquered. A crown that is everlasting

The Emperor isn’t It / This City isn’t It Church / This System isn’t It

Things That God Has Promised to Give Those Who Trust Him

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. :17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, :18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

**The Roman “Crown” of Victory
Was everything to the roman – but not the Christian!**

What Can I Say to You, Who are Suffering?

What Can I Say to You, Who are About to Suffer?

I Have but One Word

“Bible”

if the thousands of people who attend this church gathered together to help you in your suffering, do you realize that we couldn’t do enough?

To understand that if you had all the money in the world, that that money could not buy your health.

It is the Bible – His Word

- It was Good Enough for the Church at Smyrna
- It was Good Enough for the Apostle Paul

