

Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible
Current Book: Revelation – verse by verse

Scripture(s) for Today: Revelation 2:8-11 – Smyrna Church Period; the suffering, faithful church.

Today's Message:

"Burn the Christians!"



INTRODUCTION

Last week, we began with the first letter to Ephesus which prophesied of the first period in Church History. This church was directly and indirectly influenced by the Apostles. Today, we come to a special church in **SMYRNA**. To grasp this church's trials, imagine you are in the Roman Colosseum in 95AD and you can hear the crowd roaring, "Burn the Christians!" Can you truly comprehend what the Christians must have been feeling? May God bless us today with a reminder of our brothers and sisters who endured great **SUFFERING** for our Lord Jesus Christ, and who were faithful unto death!

LEARNING TOGETHER

CONTEXT: *Seven Letters to Seven Churches*

Historically The 7 letters to 7 literal churches in Asia addressing real situations and issues.

Devotionally The 7 letters are written to all churches; churches share these characteristics.

Doctrinally The 7 letters represent 7 periods of church history; Rev 2 & 3 continue Acts.

1. The Text Rev 2:8-11

#1. The Church – Smyrna means "myrrh" – in Church History (200AD-325AD)

"Myrrh" Although myrrh is a costly perfume made from the bitter gum of a middle-eastern tree, it was associated with death as it was used for embalming. It is therefore connected with bitterness and **DEATH**. **Mt 2:11; Jn 19:39**

SUMMARY: This Period takes place during the time of the great persecutions of pagan Rome toward anyone called "**Christian**." It ends with the **Council of Nicea**.

HISTORY: As we look back on church history, what happened during this time?

1. According to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, this was a horribly murderous period.
 - ✓ *Pagan Rome attempts to destroy the churches. They torture and murder anyone who publicly claimed to follow Jesus Christ or believe the Bible.*
2. A doctrinal error emerged concerning the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ.
 - ✓ *False teaching (blasphemy) that God was **FINISHED** with the Jews. **LIES!***

NOTE The more the church was persecuted, the more it flourished! A historical fact!!

2021 VISION: Faithful in Little Things!
Making disciples and caring for souls!

#2. The Commendation – despite evil persecution, the church GREW! (8-11)

1. It was a **persecuted** church ... **“which thou shalt suffer” “tribulation ten days”**
 - ✓ There were **TEN** official Roman persecutions!
 - ✓ Nero 67AD, Domitian 81AD, Trajan 108AD, Marcus Aurelius Antonius 162AD
 - ✓ Severus 192AD, Maximus 235AD, Decius 249AD, Valerian 257AD, Aurelian 274AD, Diocletian 303AD
2. It was a **faithful** church ... **“I know thy works”**
 - ✓ Despite persecution, it was still a church doing the work of the Lord! **1 Cor 15:58**
 - ✓ They were faithful to stick with the **MISSION** God gave them to do! Amen.
3. It was a **poor** church, yet **rich to God!** ... **“I know thy poverty, (but thou art rich)”**
 - ✓ In God’s eyes, they were wealthy in Jesus Christ! **Eph 1-3;** (contrast to **Rev 3:17**)
 - ✓ This world had no use for them; they were out-casts, down-trodden, and pests!
4. It was a church in the middle of **devilish trouble** ... **“And I know the blasphemy”**
 - ✓ God calls **ROME** the devil himself (wow) at this time in history! **Rev 2:10**
 - ✓ God calls **satanic / blasphemy** any teaching that He is done with Jews! **Rom 11:25**
 - ✓ The false teaching summarized: the Christian has replaced the Jew, the **CHURCH** has replaced Israel, and the kingdom of God and heaven are same! Lies from hell!

NOTE This satanic teaching is from the Devil himself (synagogue of Satan) and leads to false religions leading people to hell, the heresy of God’s church in Tribulation, baptismal regeneration, tongues, apostolic healing, and no eternal security!!

#3. The Condemnation – there was NONE.

1. There are 2 church letters that received no condemnation (Smyrna, Philadelphia).
 - ✓ This church was purged of sin and error. They had a serious kind of Christianity!

NOTE The facts: Evil persecution and tribulation make the church a pure church! We do not like to admit it, but we know it is true. In difficult times, we run to Christ!

2. The Lesson (How can we learn from our passage today?)

1. Suffering can lead you to a **PURE**, humble, loving, devotion to Jesus Christ.

- God permitted Satan to crush this church to yield the sweetness of their aroma. She was being crushed because of her love for Jesus Christ; they really loved Him!

❖ **Question:** “Have you suffered for Christ’s sake?” **2Tim 2:9,12; 3:12; Jas 1:4; 1Peter**

2. Fear none of those things which thou shalt **SUFFER** for Jesus Christ.

- God’s exhortation to Smyrna was, “Be thou faithful unto death.” He was with them!

❖ **Question:** “Are you ready / willing to suffer unto death?” **John 14:1,27; Acts 20:24**

2021 VISION: Faithful in Little Things!
Making disciples and caring for souls!