



UNDERSTANDING
THE BOOK OF
REVELATION

Revelation 2

Letter to the Church In Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11)

- This letter is the shortest of the seven.
- It abounds in beauty.
 - It contains...
 - Words of praise...
 - Words of prophecy...
 - Words of promise.

- The name Smyrna means "myrrh."
- It is a very fitting name because myrrh is a perfume, the fragrance of which is released by crushing.

· **Smyrna was a seat
of emperor-worship
with a
temple to Tiberius.**

**The city was a seat of
the worship of
Cybele the Mother of
the gods, and of
Dionysus or Bacchus.**

(VWS)

- Smyrna had erected a temple to Roma,
the goddess of Rome,
as far back as 195 BC.

- Having a temple to the emperor
was a matter of great pride
to the city of Smyrna.

Emperor Domitian

(81-96 a.d.)

was the first to demand
worship under the title
"Lord" from the people of
the

Roman Empire as a
test of political loyalty.

**"Emperor worship
began as a
spontaneous demonstration of
gratitude to Rome;
• but toward the end
of the first century,
in the days of Domitian,
the final step was taken
and Caesar worship
became compulsory.**

(Barclay)

**" Once a year
the Roman citizen must burn
a pinch of incense
on the altar to
the godhead of Caesar;
and having done so,
he was given a certificate
to guarantee that
he had performed
his religious duty."**

(William Barclay's Daily Study Bible)

**Refusal by any citizen of
the city to pay tribute in
that temple was seen as
a disgraceful lack of
patriotism.**

- To receive a certificate to conduct business, you were required to burn incense on an altar to Caesar once a year.
- The Jews had received an exemption,
- But the Christians had not.

Smyrna:

**The persecuted church
which receives
no word of blame**

**2:8 And to the angel of
the church in Smyrna
write...**

John was the writer...

**But the words he wrote were
the words of Christ.**

**2: 8b “These things saith
the first and the last”**

• The “Alpha and the Omega”

• The author and finisher
of our faith.

(Hebrews 12:2)

- **All letters to the 7 churches begin with a reference to some of the attributes of the Saviour,**
- **To make a deep impression so as to have a special application to each particular church.**

• To the church at Ephesus

Rev_2:1

• Reminding them

that he who speaks to them

“holds the seven stars

in his right hand,

and walks in the midst of the

seven golden candlesticks”;

· To the church at
Smyrna Rev 2:8,

it is He who

“is the first and the last,
who was dead
and is alive”;

· **To the church at**
Pergamos,

• It is **He**

“which hath
the sharp sword
with the two edges”

Rev_2:1

· To the church at Thyatira, it is “the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass”; Rev_2:18

· To the church at Sardis, it is he who
“hath the seven
Spirits of God, and
the seven stars” Rev 3:1

- **To the church at Philadelphia,**

- **It is**

**“he that is holy,
he that is true,”;**

Rev_3:7

- **To the church at Philadelphia,**

- **It is “he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and no man openeth”; Rev 3:7**

• **To the church at Laodicea**

Rev_3:14,

• **It is he who is the**

“Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”

- These introductions
are followed
with the words,

- “I know thy works.”

Of two of the churches
He expresses his approval

Smyrna

Rev_2:9,

- Philadelphia

Rev_3:10,

- **To the churches of:**

Sardis

Rev_3:3,

- **Laodicea**

Rev_3:15-18,

- **He administers a rebuke.**

- **To the churches of:**
 - Ephesus,
 - Pergamos
 - Thyatira
- He intermingles praise and rebuke,
- For he saw much to commend,
- And some to condemn.

- In all cases the approval precedes the blame;
- Showing that he was more disposed to find what was good than what was evil.

Joel 2:13

The LORD your God:

- **for he *is* gracious and merciful,**
- **slow to anger,**
- **and of great kindness,...**

- **There follows in each case**
counsel, advice,
admonition, or promises.

- **As circumstances**
demanded.****

- **There is a solemn admonition to hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches.**

- **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”**

• **What was addressed
to one church would be
equally
applicable to
all churches.**

• 2:8c Who was dead
and lived again

• In this little expression
is the sum total
of the gospel.

• The death and
resurrection

are the two great divisions
of the work of
the Lord Jesus
on our behalf.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

- Christ died to live again.
- You will die to live again.
- What a fine thought to encourage a people who were to be called upon to die for their faith.

· That He who is
beyond the reach
of death
might give them
encouragement.

**Though they were called
to undergo the
bitterest deaths
for his sake,
They should be raised again
as he was, and
live with him for ever.**

• Words of Praise

• 2:9 I know thy tribulation, and
thy poverty {G_4432}
(but thou art rich),

• and the blasphemy of them that
say they are Jews, and they are
not, but are a synagogue of
Satan.

· **This is the
first mention
of the devil
in the book of
Revelation.**

- They were commended for their heroic endurance.
- Smyrna was a suffering church.
 - Against whom no word of reproach was spoken.
 - Had these saints been refined by suffering?

- **Where there is spiritual plenty,**
- **Outward poverty
may be better
endured.**

- **2:9** Tells us that these Christians were in poverty {G_4432} yet were rich.

- Without that certificate it was very hard to find work.

- There are two Greek words for poverty:
- One that means destitution
 - Another that means having nothing extra.
- The one used here means destitution.

- **Two Degrees of Poverty**
are recognized
in the New Testament.
- The **Old Testament** does not
distinguish between them
as clearly as does the
New Testament.

· **The New Testament,**
for example,
by its use of
two words
for "poor"
sets forth this distinction.

- “Penes”

G_3993 {pennies}

not extreme poverty,
but simply a condition of
living from hand to mouth,

- “Ptochoi”

G_4434 -- (pto-khos’)

a condition is indicated
of abject beggary, pauperism

(ISBE)

- In 2Cor 9:9,
"he hath given to the poor,"
the word used is "penes,"
which does not indicate
extreme poverty,
- Down to their last penny
widow who cast her two mites
into the treasury
(Luke 21:2);

- Without that certificate mentioned earlier it would be almost impossible to find work.

- Might this be the “mark of the beast” that John is referencing in his Revelation letter? (Rev.16:2)

- The next Greek work used to indicate poverty is

ptochoi (pto-khos')

{**G_4434**}

- Denoting a condition of

abject beggary

such as that in which we find

Lazarus

• **who was laid at the gate of the rich man's palace, begging even the crumbs which fell from the table of the rich man (Luke 16:20-**

- **Remember the words of the Apostle Paul to Corinth:**

- **2 Corinthians 6:10 (ASV)**

••• **sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;**
as poor {G_4434},
yet making many rich;
as having nothing,
and [*yet*] *possessing all things.*

- Who are the Jews that are not really Jews in 2:9?

- We find similar descriptions elsewhere.

**In John 8:39 Jesus
told some Jews that
they were not truly
Abraham's
children.**

In Romans 2:28–29

Paul explained

that to be a true Jew

one must believe in

Jesus Christ.

- Very strong language
is used in verse 9

• “I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

• **Synagogue of Satan?**

• Who was the **mean-spirited**,
divisive, **unloving**, **hatemonger**
who came up with that phrase?

• **Oh!** What do you know?

It was **Jesus**.

And this was **not the first time**
he had used this description.

We have become
a generation of Christians
afraid to rock the boat.

Christians of John's generation were
much more interested in
pulling perishing people
into the boat
than they were about
not rocking that boat!

- **Listen to what he said to the Jewish leaders in**

John 8:44

- **You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.**

• **It doesn't sound much like Jesus thought the Jewish leaders were just on another path to God.**

• **But that message does not go over very well in today's modern world.**

· **But if one can
be saved
apart from
the blood of Christ,
then Christ
died in vain.**

**• What does that tell us
about the God
revealed to us in scripture?**

**• What kind of God
would he be if
he sent his son
to suffer and die
for no reason?**

· **There is only**
one way to God
and we do no one
any favors when we
teach or suggest
otherwise.

1 John 2:22-23

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the

Christ? He is antichrist who

denies the Father and the Son.

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either.

- 1 Corinthians 3:11

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- Acts 4:12

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

- **John 14:6**

**“I am the way,
the truth, and the life.”**

- **No one comes
to the Father
except through Me.”**

- The phrase

“synagogue of Satan”

is strong, but it was fitting.

- The **Jews** of that day stirred up a lot of trouble for the early Christians.

- There is more anti-semitism in the world that we need.

- But in Smyrna it was the other way around.

- When it comes to salvation the Gospel of Jesus Christ divides people into only two groups:
 - Those in Christ.
(Found 78 times)
 - Those out of Christ.
(Eph 2:12 “no hope”)

•Smyrna's tribulation came in
two forms:

•**1st** in the spoiling
of their goods.

•The ruthless hand of persecution
had reduced them
to dire poverty.

(**Hebrews10:24**)

• Although they had lost their material possessions, they retained their spiritual wealth:

• For the Savior said, “Thou art rich.”

- **2nd** Smyrna was commended for its endurance.
- The saints in Smyrna must have been godly in life, Or they would not have drawn such opposition.

- **Rev 2:9 I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they art not, but are a synagogue of Satan.**
 - **As surely as Christ has a church in the world,**
 - **So the devil has his temple.**

Words of Prophecy in Verse 10.

2:10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days.

- **Trials and tribulations were to come.**
- **They were not out of the fire yet.**

- He forewarns them of future trials:
- The devil shall cast some of you into prison, and you shall have tribulation,
Rev 2:10.

- They had been impoverished by their tribulations before;
- Now they must be imprisoned.

- **In store for them were the pain and shame of imprisonment**
 - **Perhaps death itself.**
- **But they were to face these things with calm courage,
trusting in the
mighty arm of the Lord.**

• The author of these things was “the devil,”

• “the accuser of our brethren.”

(Revelation 10:12)

**The Lord acknowledges
that he who is the
First and the Last
is going to allow
this to happen.**

- The duration of the persecution would be

“ten days,”

- A short period
of time.

• Rev 2:10

• "TEN DAYS."

Remember the

KEY

to understanding Revelation

is

symbolism.

- **He does not promise**
to remove the trials,
- **But He does promise**
to be with us
in those trials.

· **For the**
child of God,
all evil is
temporary.
(Job 3:17; 2 Cor. 4:17)

- For the child of God,
all evil is temporary.
(Job 3:17; 2 Cor. 4:17)

- For the
“Joy set before him”
the captain of our salvation
endured the cross,
despising the shame.
(Hebrews 12:2)

- **I counted dollars
while God
counted crosses.**

- **I counted gain while
He counted losses.**

- **I counted
my worth**

- **by the things
gained in store,**

• But he sized me up
by the scars
that I bore.

• I coveted honors, and
sought for degrees.⁸⁶

**• He wept as he
counted the hours
on my knees.**

**• I never knew till one
day by a grave,**

- How vain are the things

- that we spend life to save.

• **I did not yet know, 'til a
Friend from above,**

• **Said, richest is he**

• **Who is rich in God's love!**

(Author Unknown)

• **Fear none of these things.**

• **Not enslaved by fear.**

• **But subduing it and
furnishing the soul with
strength and courage.**

**The fact that the Lord
knows all that we
suffer for him should
serve a least
three purposes.**

1st : It should cause us
to seek His help.

2nd : It should
inspire us with courage.

3rd : It should clothe us with
deepest humility.

Words of Promise

2:10 Be thou faithful
unto death, and
I will give thee
the crown of life.

• Observe:

- First, The sureness of the reward:
 - He who said it is able to do it;
- 2nd A life laid down in his service, shall be rewarded with another and a much better life that shall be eternal.

James 1:12 (ASV)

Blessed is the man

that endureth temptation;

for when he hath been approved,

he shall receive the

crown of life,

which [the Lord] promised

to them that love him.

2:11 He that hath an ear,

let him hear what the

Spirit saith to the churches.

He that over cometh

shall not be hurt

of the second death.

• Two precious promises
are pledged.

1st: The first promise is positive in
nature:

• “*I will give thee the crown of
life.*”

• Our Christ is the gracious giver.

- (1.) There is not only a first,
 - but a second death,
 - a death after
the body is dead.

- (2.) This second death is unspeakably worse.
- Which is the agony of the soul.
- Having no hope!
(1 Thess. 4:13)

- **(3.) From this 2nd death,
Christ will save
his faithful servants;**

- **The first death
shall not hurt them.**

- **And the second death shall have
no power over them.**

(Rev 20:6)

Because He is the

“Prince of Life”

**he is abundantly
able to bestow the
gift of life. (Acts 3:15)**

- The metaphor “**crown**”
is employed
in various scriptures.
- Paul speaks of his own
personal hope
“**crown of righteousness**”
(**2 Timothy 4:8**)

- **James** speaks of
“**the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him.**” (James 1:12)

- **Peter** speaks of the
“**crown of glory that fadeth not away.**” (1 Peter 5:4)

- Let us now note the condition upon which this crown is awarded.

- 2:10 “Be thou faithful unto death”

- There is something more precious than life itself.

- The **2nd** promise is negative –
- Immunity from punishment of the most fearful form.
- “He that over cometh shall **not** be hurt of the second death.”
(Rev 2:11)

- One death is of the body.
- The 2nd death
is of the soul.
- But, the “*crown of life*”
secures us.

**Persecution may
take you life but it
cannot
take your soul**

From this letter we learn:

- That unto the saints who suffer, Christ comes with words of consolation.
- “I am the Alpha and the Omega. I was dead, but I am alive again.”

- **From this letter we learn:**
 - **That fiery trials of tribulation consume life's impurities**
- **But at the same time fits us for a higher calling.**

• **From this letter we learn:**

• **That it is better by far to be
rich in grace and
poor in earthly goods,**

• **Than to be poor in grace and
rich in earthly goods.**

- From this letter we learn:
 - That it is better to suffer injury
- Than it is to inflict injury.

• **From this letter we learn:**

• **It isn't**
lukewarm Christians
but
zealous Christians
that Satan pursues.

- **From this letter we learn:**
 - **That the suffering of a Christian is confined to this life.**
 - **He shall not feel the pangs of the second death.**

• **From this letter we learn:**

• **The lesson for the church today is that**
Christ is not just a way

• **Christ is the only way.**

• The modern world
gnashes its teeth and
recoils at the idea that
there is one and
only one path
to the Father.

**But we must
never cease
to proclaim it,
no matter the cost.**