

REVELATION SERIES - LESSON 4

REVELATION 2:8 - 17

“CHURCH OF SMYRNA”
SUFFERING CHURCH

Jesus dictates and John writes this down but they have spiritual significance.

Remember these are literal churches and we need to have eyes and ears cause there are things that the Lord might be saying to us today.

There is also a historical significance to each of these churches as well.

Remember, each one of these churches represent a different time period in church history.

In Ch 2 - 3, it's like God has given us a timeline of church history leading up to the second coming of Christ.

So the church at Ephesus was a literal church but represents the Apostolic Church.

It's dated from AD 33 - Pentecost - Jesus ascends - birth of the church.

It ended around AD 100 when the last of the Apostles died. John being the very last one.

So this ended the Apostolic Age.

Commends the church of their hard work and labor steadfastness.

Complaint - "left their first love" - not that they lost it but they left it!

Record = Tree of Life

This next church is the church of Smyrna. Smyrna is the suffering church.

Let me give you a little background on the city of Smyrna.

Smyrna - what we know about the city is not found in Bible but it's found in history.

It was founded 3 centuries before Christ by Alexander the Great.

It was located on the trade route from Persia to Rome.

It was a Seaport City, also second only to Ephesus.

“Smyrna” = “myrrh”

Myrrh was the great commodity in this city back in the day. It was gum resin derived from a shrub indigenous to this area.

It's an extremely fragrant substance but only fragrant when it's crushed or smashed.

1 - Ingredient in perfume - Psalm 45:8

2 - Holy anointing oil for priest - Ex 30:23

3 - Embalming the dead - John 19:39

Most notable christian martyred in Smyrna was Polycarp.

He was Bishop of Smyrna and was burned at stake in his 90's for his faith.

Church historians tell us that this time period was known for tremendous martyrdom.

So this was a literal church, but it speaks of a time period that the church suffered tremendous persecution.

It's also when the fish came to be a sign of the early church.

(Vs 8) The letter is dictated to the "Angel" of the church.

"Angelos" = Spiritual beings or messengers.

Vs 9 - "I know your works and your poverty".

“Poverty” - not merely poor but they were impoverished and destitute.

But then he says “you are rich”.

They were broke but blessed.

It's possible to be materially poor but spiritually rich at same time.

Riches of his Kindness - Rom 2:4

Riches of His Glory - Rom 9:3

Riches of Wisdom & Knowledge of God - Rom 11:33

Riches of God's Grace - Eph 1:7

Riches of Glorious Inheritance - Eph 1:8

Unsearchable Riches Christ - Eph 3:8

9b) “I know the blasphemy of those who claim to be Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan”. He is referring to people known as Judaizers. Judaizers were Jewish and believed in Jesus but they believed salvation was not merely believing in Jesus but it was good works law and Jesus.

They are not responding to the message of the gospel and grace and elevating works over grace.

He calls it a “synagogue of Satan”. Satan inspires messages and things to contradict and counterfeit the gospel.

Satan corrupts the message of the gospel in any way he can. Even by mixing in works.

(Vs 10)

“Tested” = “peirazo” = to make proof or to ascertain the quality and quantity.

“10 days” - most scholars agree this is symbolic of the 10 worst Roman Emperors.

1). Nero = 64 - 68 AD

2). Domitian = 90 - 96 AD

3). Trajan = 104 - 117 AD

4). Marcus Aurelius = 161 - 180 AD

5). Septimius Severus = 200 - 211 AD

6). Maximinius = 235 - 237 AD

7). Decius = 250 - 253 AD

8). Valerian = 257 - 260 AD

9). Aurelian = 270 - 275 AD

10). Diocletian = 303 - 312 AD

He adds "Be faithful and I will give you crown of life".

There are 5 crowns mentioned in the Bible.

1. Crown of Life - Rev 2:10, James 1:12

2. Incorruptible crown - I Cor 9

3. Crown of Rejoicing - I Thes 2

4. Crown of Righteousness - II Tim 4

5. Crown of Glory - I Peter 5

(Vs 11)

Here is what the Bible teaches “If you are born twice, you die once, but if you're born once, you die twice”.

When we surrender our life to Jesus we are “Born Again” - it’s straight out of the Bible.

The punishment intended for us, Jesus took upon himself. So by faith in HIM we can have only one death, but IF we never trust HIM, die twice (second death).

So if you have trusted Christ, no second death, but will experience eternal life forever.