

Smyrna: Faithful Until Death

Revelation 2:8-11

I. PICTURE: "the first and the last" (v.8)

A. Destination: "the church in Smyrna" (v.8a)

1. Name: "Smyrna" (maritime city/aromatic resin/mean's "bitter")
2. Notoriety: "church" (called out assembly)

B. Description: "who was dead, and has come to life" (v.8b)

1. Eternal God: "the first and the last"
2. Faithful Man: "was dead and has come to life"

II. PRAISE: "I know..." (v.9)

A. Distressed: "your tribulation" (v.9a)

B. Destitute: "your poverty" (v.9b)

1. Physically: "poor"
2. Spiritually: "rich"

C. Denounced: "the blasphemy" (v.9c)

1. Physically: "who say they are Jews"
2. Spiritually: "are a synagogue of Satan"

III. PROBLEM: *No Complaints Listed*

IV. PRESCRIPTION: "Do not fear...be faithful" (v.10a)

A. Relax: "do not fear...to suffer"

B. Realize: "behold...tribulation"

C. Resolve: "be faithful until death"

V. PROMISE: "crown of life...not be hurt" (vv.10b-11)

A. Reward: "I will give you the crown of life"

B. Result: "shall not be hurt by the second death"

PERSECUTION

The Pursuit of Believers

Explanation - Why will believers be persecuted?

- (1) **Holiness:** because we practice righteousness - Matthew 5:10-; 1 Peter 3:14.
- (2) **Hatred:** because people hate the followers of Christ - Matt.5:44; Luke 6:27-29.
- (3) **Opposition:** because of lies to silence believers - Matthew 5:11.
- (4) **Conviction:** because of guilt over their own sin - John 9:24-34.
- (5) **Ignorance:** because they lack knowledge/truth - Luke 23:34; John 15:21; 16:3.
- (6) **Separation:** because we don't belong to the world - John 15:19; 17:14.
- (7) **Identification:** because we associate with Christ - Acts 9:4-5; Romans 8:17.

Expectation - What kind of persecution should we anticipate?

- (1) **Distress:** prison, trials, betrayal, hate, death - Luke 21:12-28; Acts 14:22.
- (2) **Aggression:** the godly will be pursued with malignity - 2 Timothy 3:12.
- (3) **Attacks:** charges, condemnation, separation, death - Romans 8:31-39.
- (4) **Suppression:** commands, threats, flogging - Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29,40.
- (5) **Pressure:** afflictions, hardships, distresses, beatings, prison - 2 Corin.6:4-6.
- (6) **Loss:** dishonored, tortured, destitute - 1 Corin.4:10; Hebrews 11:32-36.
- (7) **Martyrdom:** executed for their faith - Acts 12; Revelation 6:9-11; 12:11.

Exaltation - How should we respond to persecution?

- (1) **Bless:** speak well of those who persecute - Luke 6:28; Romans 12:14; 1 Corin.4:12.
- (2) **Forgive:** release the debts of persecutors - Luke 23:34; Matthew 6:14.
- (3) **Rejoice:** be glad when you are persecuted - Matthew 5:10-12; Acts 5:41.
- (4) **Pray:** pray for those who mistreat you - Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28; Acts 4:23-30.
- (5) **Behave:** keep your behavior excellent - 1 Peter 2:12.
- (6) **Endure:** patiently endure for doing what is right - 1 Peter 2:20.
- (7) **Encourage:** be of good courage and confident in God - John 16:33; Acts 14:22.
- (8) **Testify:** witness when you have an aggressive audience - Luke 21:12-13.

Examples - Who can we follow that was persecuted?

- (1) **Jesus Christ:** follow in His steps - Hebrews 3:1; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21-25.
 - (2) **Paul:** faithful apostle - Acts 9:29; 13:50; 14:5,19; 1 Corin.4:12; 2 Corin.11:23-27
 - (3) **Peter/Apostles:** imprisoned, tried and threatened - Acts 4; 5:17-18; 12:1-17.
 - (4) **Stephen:** stoned to death for preaching Jesus - Acts 7.
 - (5) **James:** put to death with the sword/mistreated - Acts 12:1-3.
 - (6) **Prophets:** follow the examples of the prophets - James 5:10.
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