

REVELATION



Smyrna

Revelation 2:8-11

Smyrna: Biblical Background

- ⁸ And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ **And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.**



Acts 19:8-10

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Smyrna: Historical Background

- **Name Meaning**
 - Sweet Smelling Savor
- **A Harbor Trade City**
 - Wealthy city
 - Known for production of Myrrh
- **The Crown of Asia**
 - Great structures including libraries and boasted the largest stadium.
- **The Crown of Smyrna**
 - A fortress, for protection of Domination

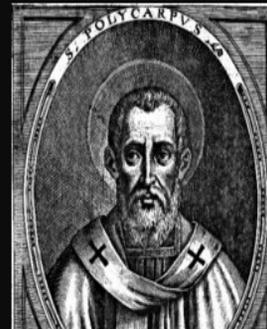


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Smyrna: Historical Background

- **Center of Emperor Worship**
 - Led to Persecution of Christians
- **Hostile Jewish Population**
 - Led to persecution of Christians
- **Martyr City**
 - Polycarp (155 AD)

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Polycarp

Eighty and six years have I served Christ, nor has He ever done me any harm. How, then, could I blaspheme my King who saved Me?...I bless Thee for deigning me worthy of this day and this hour that I may be among Thy martyrs and drink the cup of my Lord Jesus Christ.

AZ QUOTES

Smyrna: Greeting/Identification

- “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:

Revelation 2:8

- **The First and the Last**

- Long before Rome I was and long after Rome I will be. (see. John 1:1-4)

- **The Understanding High Priest**

- To a suffering people He identifies with their suffering.
- To a persecuted people He assures them that death is not the end of the the story for the one who overcomes.

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Smyrna: Condition

- “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.

Revelation 2:9

- **Poor**

- Poor coming into the faith (see. Luke 18:25)
- Poor as a result of the faith

- **Persecuted**

- Greeks – Emperor worship
- Jews – disdain for Christianity

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Smyrna: Condition

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- **Affirmed in their Affliction**

- Not self-inflicted affliction but affliction from external pressure.

- **Perspective of the Priest**

- A church that sees itself as poor but is viewed by Christ as rich.
 - They lack material things; however, they do not lack in spiritual things.
- Which church sees itself as rich but is considered poor?
 - Laodicea (see. Rev 3:17, Rom 12:3)

Smyrna: Problem

- 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.

Revelation 2:10

- **More Problems to Come**

- For a short while (10 days) they would suffer trial and imprisonment that would often lead to death or banishment.

- **Have No Fear**

- Within the counsel is the exhortation to stop fearing. Christ says this not to be cold, but to remind them that while the body may be destroyed the one who was dead and is alive will bring those who die in Him to life again as well. (see Matthew 10:28)

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- **Have No Fear**

- This is a call away from self pity

Self pity is the response of pride to suffering - John Piper

- **Faith Over Fear**

- Be faithful unto death is a call to focus not on the temporary crisis but the eternal crown, the crown for victors who have come through great tribulation.

Smyrna: Counsel

- Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

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• Be Faithful Until Death

- “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day”
(2 Tim. 4:7–8).
- For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

(Rom. 8:18)

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Smyrna: Closing/Promise

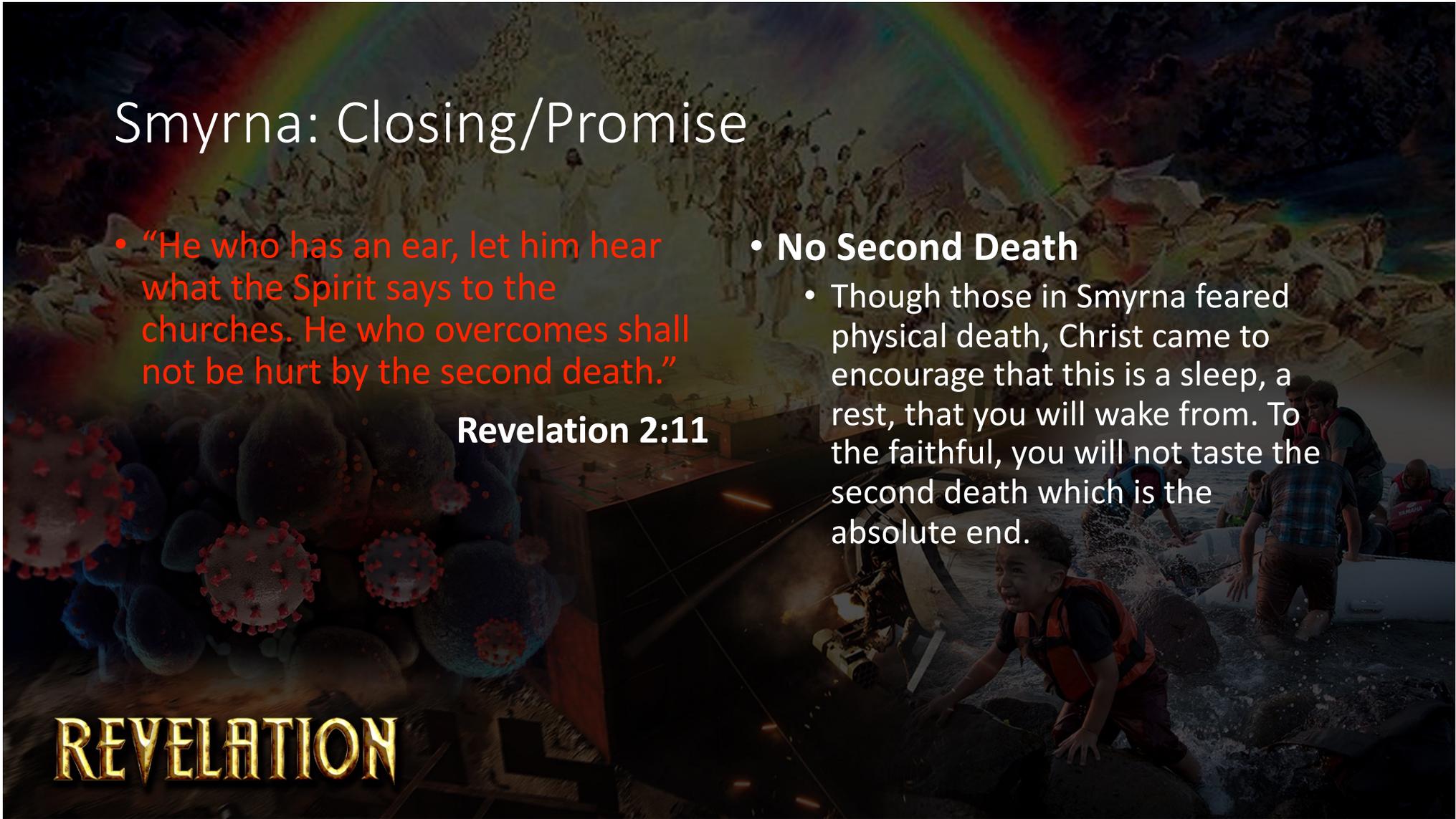
- “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”

Revelation 2:11

- **No Second Death**

- Though those in Smyrna feared physical death, Christ came to encourage that this is a sleep, a rest, that you will wake from. To the faithful, you will not taste the second death which is the absolute end.

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Smyrna: Historical Application

AD 100-323

- Each church has a literal and prophetic meaning.
- **Prophetic**
 - This period of Christianity speaks of a time of relentless persecution.
 - The greatest persecution of Christianity happened under Pagan Roman rule from AD 100-323.

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Stefanovic, Ranko. Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation . Andrews University Press. Kindle Edition.

Smyrna: Historical Application

AD 100-323

- Each church has a literal and prophetic meaning.

Prophetic

- 10 Days
 - A Short Time (Gen 24:55; 1 Sam 25:38; Acts 25:6)
 - A Time of Testing (Daniel 1:12-15)
 - Days for Years in Prophecy
- The ten days have been interpreted as the time frame between AD 303 and 313 under the reigns of Diocletian and Galerius.

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Prophetic

- This would be during the pronouncement of the Edict of Milan by Constantine (AD 313).
- In AD 323, Christianity became the official religion of Rome.

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