



**The Book of Revelation - Advanced Teaching Session 5**  
**The Church at Smyrna**

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*Key things to keep in mind, the bible is an intentional written book from God Himself.*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.**

*This includes the book of revelation!*

**The Book of Revelation is about The Revelation or Unveiling of Jesus Christ and things which will soon take place.**

*A Unique Promise*

**Revelation 1:3** tells us to “Read... Hear... understand and Keep” what is written in this book: This is the only book with a special promise if you do these three things.

Jesus tells John how He wants him to outline this book.

**Revelation 1:19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.**

**“The things which you have seen”:** The things which John had seen, are included in the Gospel of John and goes through the first chapter of Revelation.

For many scholars believe, that John wrote the Gospel of John after he wrote the Book of Revelation.

**“The Things that are”.** *The Seven Churches:*

This is what God’s *report card* looks like for these seven churches or the believers who make up these seven churches.

Not only did God have a report card on them, but God also has a report card on the churches today and on everyone who has ever lived.

Think about it!

The bible speaks of at least five books that are recorded in heaven about humanity.



**The Book of the Living**  
**The Book of Tears**  
**The Book of Remembrance**  
**The Book of Works and Deeds**  
**The Book of Life/The Lamb's Book of Life**

These seven churches should be view from three perspectives. From a historical view, from a homiletical view or life application view, and from a prophetic view.

*Seven Design Elements or features In Each of the Letters*

We will use these seven design elements or features as we study these letters to the seven churches.

- **Name of the Church-** if you research the name of these churches it coincides with the condition of the church at the time of this writing.
- **Title Chosen of Jesus Christ** - The chosen title for Christ fits the condition of the Church. Who He would have to manifest as to take the church to the level where it should be.
- **Commendation-** most of the churches Jesus had something good to say about them.
- **Concern-** Jesus lays out the concern that He has about most of the churches.
- **Exhortation-** He encourages them to keep doing good, and in some cases to do better.
- **Promise to the Overcomer-** There is a promise attached to most of the letters if they overcome or hold fast.
- **The emphasis that the letters were written to everyone.** *“He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

*So, as we take a look at these churches let's look at these design elements.*

## **The Book of Revelation**

### **The Letter to the Church at Smyrna** **Revelation 2:8-11**

**Smyrna, The Persecuted Church:** *There was no rebuke for this persecuted church. Although they were continually under physical hardship, the people of Smyrna were promised that they would not be hurt by the second death. They were encouraged to stay faithful, even when facing physical death.*

#### **Letter to Smyrna**

**Revelation 2: 8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write;**



The name “Smyrna” comes from the Greek word “Smurna” from the Hebrew root that is translated “myrrh,” associated with suffering and death.

### **A little history about Smyrna, they were deeply involved in Pagan Worship.**

*Smyrna was richly embellished with temples and splendid buildings, and the perfection and symmetry of those encircling Mount Pagos resulted in the title “the crown of Smyrna.” Smyrna was a beautiful, but it also had a tremendous culture sin of Pagan and idol worship.*

*At the foot of the mountain stood the temple of Zeus, the father of the gods, reputed to be the lord of the sky, rain, clouds, and thunder. Along the Golden Street stood the shrines of Apollo the sun-god, Aphrodite the goddess of love and beauty, Aesculapius the god of medicine, and finally, close to the sea, Cybele, a Phrygian nature goddess. At the Agora (the commercial and political center) were statues of Poseidon the sea-god, and Demeter the goddess of corn.*

*They worship a variety of fallen gods, pagan deities, and statues. Because these gods were of fallen origin and opposed to the true and almighty God, they couldn't bring life but only death.*

*In addition to the usual deities, Smyrna was instructed by the Romans, and they readily accepted Caesar worship. Caesar didn't mind them worshipping other gods, as long as they acknowledge him as being the number one God, the number one deity of worship. They Pledge their Allegiance to him once a year by simply taking a pinch of incense and put it on the altar of fire at his temple.*

*Many believers refused and were punished even killed. Believers were also blamed for any catastrophe that happened in that city at that time. From floods to earthquakes, to famine and pestilence.*

*In 196 B.C. the Smyrnaean's erected a temple to the DEA. Roma, the goddess of Rome, and they subsequently built a temple to Tiberius as well.*

***Let's take a look a Smyrna's report card.***

### **Seven Design Elements or features. (Smyrna's Report Card)**

#### **Name of the Church**

Smyrna which means **Suffering” or “Death”**

**Revelation 2: 8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write, These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;**

#### **Title of Christ:**

The **“First and the Last”** The phrase **“First and the Last”** appears seven times in the bible.

Christ is telling them even though you are going through a hard time I'm forever with you even until death.

If you do die for not worshipping idols, you will have eternal life.



*This Church can be a great example to all Christians today who are going through hardships. And maybe not have a lot of resources physically. Know that God is with you know that God made you for a person to go through whatever you are going through and be victorious at the end.*

### Commendation

**8. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.**

Notice Jesus always talks about the good the churches have done first.

- a. Jesus says that He knows their works, He commends them in the same way He commended the Church of Ephesus.

*I'll say this again as I have said before. Works has nothing to do with our salvation. Jesus finished the work for our salvation on the cross. But our works has a lot to do with the reward that we will receive when we stand before Jesus Christ after the rapture, and our work has a lot to do with the reward we are receiving now in this lifetime. **Mark 10:30***

- b. **Tribulation:** Tribulation = *thlipsis*. 1) a pressing, pressing together, pressure. 2) metaphor for oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits.

*Not the specific the “Great Tribulation” Jesus talked about in the Gospels and in this book.*

Jesus is talking about the tribulation that we all have to face depending upon the cultures that we live in.

The pressures of life: We all shall have tribulation, trouble, persecution (**John 16:33; 2 Tim 3:12, etc.**).

- c. **“Poverty but rich”:** **2 Corinthians 8:9** You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.

Word for poverty in the Greek: *ptocheia* -which means the state of one who has nothing at all; implies beggary.

*Smyrna, was I church made up of people who had very little natural resources.*

But Jesus commends them because they allowed the Grace of God to make them rich in faith, and courage.

*They were able to be fruitful in the work of the Kingdom, despite persecution, hardship, and limited resources.*



We must all asks ourselves are we allowing circumstances, culture, hardship and/or the unknown keep us from being fruitful for the kingdom?

*God won't necessarily reward us for doing what we want to do, but He will reward us for using our gift to do what He has given us an opportunity to do.*

**Revelation 2:9 I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan.**

The city was very pagan probably with a lot of violence.

*There are a lot of churches today that says they are birth by Jesus but are really birth by satan. This is why we need to be like the Berean Church. Act 17:11*

**Jews “Who Are Not”**, these are churches established by the “Tares” Sown in the Early Church.

They were hated by unconverted Jews and the Romans for following Jesus Christ.

Note: These leaders were deliberately planted by Satan to oppose the church.

History records these Tares preached.

- a. Legalism: denial of Christ’s completed work. Christ finished the work file salvation on the cross
- b. Gnosticism: denial of Christ’s humanity. Denying Christ humanity puts a limitation on what we expect Christ to do to us, for us, and through us.
- c. Caesar worship: denial of Christ’s Lordship. Denying the lordship of Christ gives us the unfortunate vulnerability of choosing someone else or something else to lead and to guide us.

**John 16:33; 2 Tim 3:12.** As Christians we go through times of suffering/persecution for Jesus. If you haven’t, could it be you are a closet Christian.

These believers didn’t have to go through much of the suffering or persecution they went through. It could have been relieved by simply a pinch of incense and offer it to Caesar.

Because they didn't pledge their allegiance to Caesar, many was burned to the stake and put on display for all the other people of the city of Smyrna to see.

### “Exhortation

**10 Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days.**

Notice Jesus allowed the devil to cause these Christians to suffer even though he did not have any criticism about them.



Just because we go through tough times, doesn't always mean we are doing something wrong.

Smyrna truly suffering for righteousness' sake. **1 Peter 3:14-17 (NLT) But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. 15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. 16 But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. 17 Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!**

*[Note: No "Criticism" in this letter.* The Lord has no word of complaint. They were satisfying His heart.

**"10 Days"** some say this means a short period of times and other say it was a long period of time. In my study I didn't really come to a clear conclusion.

**Revelation 2:10 But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life.**

#### *Crowns Promised*

"Crown": The term is *stephanos*, not *diadem*. "Crown are rewards for works (not salvation).

**James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

*At least five crowns mention in the bible -*

- Crown of Life (**Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10**) for those who have suffered for His sake.
- Crown of Righteousness (**2 Tim 4:8**) for those who loved His appearing.
- Crown of Glory (**1 Pet 5:4**) for those who fed the flock.
- Crown Incorruptible (**1 Cor 9:25**) for those who press on steadfastly.
- Crown of Rejoicing (**1 Thess 2:19**) for those who win souls.

**Revelation 2:11 (NLT) "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.**

#### **Promise to the Overcomer**

*Notice that the "Promise to the Overcomer" comes after the "Hear that hath an ear" phrase.*

**Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.**