

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH: SMYRNA – REV. 2:8-11

SERIES: WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY TO OUR CHURCH?

¹⁸ "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. **Matthew 16:18 (NASB)**

1. THE FRUIT OF PERSECUTION

- Christians should expect to face persecution of one kind or another.

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

2 Timothy 3:12 (NASB)

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; **1 Peter 4:12 (NASB)**

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **James 1:2-4 (NASB)**

⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. **2 Corinthians 12:9 (NASB)**

2. SMYRNA – THE CITY AND THE CHURCH

- The most beautiful city in Asia Minor.
- Home to temples honoring Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Asclepius and Cybele, also for Caesar and Rome, to cover all the "religious bases."

⁸ "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: **Revelation 2:8 (NASB)**

⁶ "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me. **Isaiah 44:6 (NASB)**

¹⁸ For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;
1 Peter 3:18 (NASB)

⁹I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.
Revelation 2:9 (NASB)

3. THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

⁹ 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Revelation 2:9 (NASB)

- The Jewish community in Smyrna hated Christians because of the gospel of Christ and the Christian belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

¹⁷ "But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." ¹⁸ And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:17-18 (NASB)

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Romans 2:28-29 (NASB)

4. A LEGACY OF PERSECUTION

- The letter to the church in Smyrna does not contain rebuke or condemnation but it does include a warning ... of more persecution.

¹⁰ "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. **Revelation 2:10 (NASB)**

- **Polycarp** – For "eighty and six years have I served Him, (Christ), and He never did me any injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

5. THE PRIZE OF PERSEVERANCE

¹⁰ "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. **Revelation 2:10 (NASB)**

²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one."

John 10:27-30 (NASB)