

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

chapter 2:8-11

Lesson 3

The church of Smyrna was chosen by our Lord for the second of the seven letters. Smyrna was about 35 miles to the north of Ephesus. Smyrna was a wealthy city, second only to Ephesus in the entire area and, like Ephesus, a seaport. Unlike Ephesus, which today is uninhabited, Smyrna is still a large city. The city was materially prosperous; those of the church were not. Yet, Jesus viewed them as the *rich*. May we be found to be living in God's riches.

OBSERVATION: Read Revelation 2:8-11

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *Jesus* and the *Holy Spirit*.
Key Words: *Jesus* (note: Jesus is the one who is speaking), (Holy) *Spirit*, *Satan*, and *overcomes*
3. The contrasting word *but* is used twice in verse 9. Mark the word and record what is being contrasted.
4. Make a list of what these verses clearly reveal about Jesus.

5. On your observation worksheet, underline (in different ways or colors) and list below the phrases which reveal:
 - a. their situation
 - b. the actions Jesus called for
 - c. the promises:
 - for faithfulness
 - to overcomers

DESCRIPTION OF JESUS: Read Revelation 2:8

1. What church was to receive the message of Revelation 2:8-11?
2. Find Smyrna on the map below and circle it.



3. Record the attributes of Jesus described in verse 8.
 - a. How does this description help you know it is Jesus that is speaking?
4. *I am the First and the Last.* Jesus referred to Himself as the *First and the Last* in Revelation 1:11 and 17. This refers to His eternal character. Record the words of Isaiah 44:6.
 - a. What does this verse reveal about Jesus (*his redeemer*)?

5. ...*who was dead, and came to life* (Revelation 2:8). This description of Jesus is similar to that of Revelation 1:18. What does it say?
 - a. What is meaningful to you about this title?

THEIR SITUATION: Read Revelation 2:9

1. Make a list of the *works* Jesus commended the church for.

2. Notice that Jesus *knew* of their *tribulation* and *poverty*. In your own words, how do you tend to view a body of believers, or even one believer who is struggling with *tribulation* and *poverty*?
 - a. Although Jesus *knew* of their condition, He did not offer a solution or an escape. Rather, He declared them to be *rich*. Record the words of the following verses:
2 Corinthians 6:10 (for context read verses 4-10)

James 2:5
 - b. How does this challenge the belief of those who believe God's desire for Christians is material wealth and well-being?
 - c. Share some of the ways a believer is *rich*.
 - d. What does it say to you that Jesus *knew* their *tribulation* and *poverty*, yet viewed them as *rich*?

3. What did Jesus say about the so-called *Jews* in *Smyrna*?
 - a. Who are true *Jews* (of the circumcision) according to Philippians 3:3?
 - b. Jesus knew their *blasphemy*. The word *blasphemy* has been defined as "verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander; wounding someone's reputation by evil reports, evil speaking." Again, Jesus only stated that He was aware of this, but offered no means of relief. Look at 1 Peter 2:21-23 and record the *example* left by Jesus.

Challenge: Reflect upon the words Jesus used to identify Himself in Revelation 2:8. What are your thoughts as to why He might have chosen to reveal Himself as He *who was dead and came to life*?

4. Considering what Jesus *saw* in the church in Smyrna, how would you describe this body of believers?

THE PROPHECY: Read Revelation 2:10

1. Jesus not only had no words of relief for the believers in Smyrna, He had a prophecy for them. What was it?
 - a. Their suffering was to continue; their *tribulation* would include *prison* for *some* of them. According to this verse, there was a purpose in the *tribulation*. What was it?
 - 1.) Record the words of 1 Peter 1:6,7.

- a.) Although Jesus stated this *tribulation* would come from *Satan*, God would use the *tribulation* for a purpose and He would be in charge of its duration. What comfort do you find in this?

THE ADVICE: Read Revelation 2:10

1. Jesus had no rebuke for the believers in Smyrna. He did have advice. What two things did He tell them to do?
2. What do the following verses teach us about *fear*?

Deuteronomy 31:6

Isaiah 41:10

Challenge: There are over 365 verses on *fear* in the Bible. List a few of your favorites.

- a. Jesus told them that He both knew of their present and future situations. Even though they seemed dismal, how does knowing that He knows bring comfort to you?

3. *Be faithful unto death.* Describe the kind of *faithfulness* you think God was seeking from them.
 - a. Consider your life. Describe what *faithfulness* should look like in your present situation or calling.

THE PROMISED REWARDS: Read Revelation 2:10b,11

1. What is the promised reward mentioned in Revelation 2:10b?
 - a. What further information is revealed about this *crown* in James 1:12?
 - b. The church in Smyrna was known for *poverty* and *tribulation*. There were also those who were apparently falsely accusing them. Yet, Jesus spoke of rewarding them for the way they were handling their situations. What does that say to you?
 - c. What are your thoughts when you contemplate the day Jesus places a crown on your head?
2. What reward is promised to *overcomers* in Revelation 2:11?
 - a. What is the second death? Revelation 20:14
 - b. If someone asked you, “will you escape” the second death, what would you tell them?
 - 1.) What answer would you give them if they asked you, “how do you know that?”.
3. Close this portion of the study by reading the words penned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:53-58. What is your response?

REVIEW: Read Revelation 2:8-11

1. How can a person in *poverty* be considered *rich*?
2. The church in Smyrna was experiencing both physical and verbal persecution. What response to both do you think Jesus saw in this body of believers?
3. What kind of persecution or trial do you think would most tempt you to be unfaithful to God's calling? Why?
4. How do the promises of God give you courage and strength in the face of trials?
5. How have you been personally challenged or inspired by this lesson?

*Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.
Over such the second death has no power,
but they shall be priests of God and of Christ,
and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

- Revelation 20:6

Observation Worksheet

Revelation 2:8-11

⁸ "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: ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ 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.' "