

THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA

Rev.2:8-11

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Some suggest seven churches of Asia represent every type local congregation that can exist. Whether true or not I am sure we can find ourselves portrayed many ways as we study these letters
- B. Last time we noted that the church at Ephesus had one grievous fault. She had left here first love (Christ)
- C. Smyrna major city on West coast of Asia Minor (Turkey) about 40 miles north of Ephesus. Good harbor facilities, at end of major road, and surrounded by rich farmland.
- D. Second of seven addressed in Revelation, one of two of which Lord spoke no negative word, also Philadelphia
- E. Smyrna gave its loyalty to the Romans at an early stage (about 195 B.C.) and never wavered.
- F. Polycarp, a pupil of apostle John, a prominent leader in Smyrna a famous Christian martyr burned at the stake in Smyrna about A.D. 156. Said of Polycarp when brought before judge, and commanded to abjure and blaspheme Christ, he firmly answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong, how then can I blaspheme my king who hath saved me?" He was then adjudged to the flames, and suffered cheerfully for Christ his Lord and Master.
- G. It is not known when the church was established here (The letter here in Rev. is only mention of it in the Bible)
- H. Possibly established during Paul's 2-years at Ephesus. Acts 19:10 All Asia heard the word (only 40 miles apart see map & theater) What lessons can we learn?

DISCUSSION:

I. THESE THINGS SPOKEN BY (V. 8)

- A. The one that is first and last Heb 12:2 - The author (beginner, first); The finisher (ending, last); Who was the first and last – JESUS (Diety)
- B. One who died 2Cor 5:14,15 - Christ died for all; They which live, do not live unto themselves; But unto him which died for them
- C. One who was raised 2Cor 5:15 - Died for them and rose again; Declared to be the son by resurrection Rom.1:4; Begotten us by the resurrection 1Pet 1:3
- D. We can conclude then that he had a right to speak these things.

II. COMMENDATIONS OF THE LORD (V. 9)

- A. Thy works

1. All things open before God Heb 4:13
 2. Give account 2Cor 5:10 - Christ knows OUR work; Are we doing all we can
- B. Thy tribulation (suffering)
 1. Count it joy Jas 1:2,3
 2. If live godly - suffer persecution 2Tim 3:12
 - a. A barometer to judge our lives by
 - b. If not suffering - likely not living godly

- C. Thy poverty (said that they often lost their jobs because of being a Christian)
 1. Many times our pocket book means too much
 2. If we have to become poor to be able to serve God we ought to be willing to Matt 6:33
 3. They were poor yet rich (spiritually) 2Cor 8:9
 4. Our treasures should be in heaven Matt.6:20

III. CHRIST KNEW THOSE WHO BLASPHEMED (V. 9)

- A. Claiming to be God's chosen people yet speaking against the Lord
- B. To be a Jew (God's people) today the change must come from the heart Rom 2:28,29
- C. They are of the synagogue (assembly) of Satan
 1. Not with Christ - against him Matt 12:30
 2. Watch for the Devil 1Pet 5:8

IV. EXHORTATIONS OF THE LORD (v. 10-11)

- A. Fear none of these things
 1. They would be cast into prison
 2. Be tried - have tribulation ten days (represents a period of time not literally ten days) Matt 16:25
 3. Lord is our helper - not to fear what man can do to us Heb 13:6; Matt 10:28
- B. Faithful unto death
 1. Many afraid to put the kingdom first Matt 6:33
 2. Be loyal though it means death (Berkeley ver.)
- C. He that hath ears let him hear -take heed and understand

CONCLUSION:

- A. Here we see a church that is poor yet rich spiritually against whom the Lord had nothing.
- B. In 889 AD history says there were 70,000 professing Christianity
- C. Why was this church not charged with any fault?
- D. They were working, enduring tribulation, and were not afraid of what man could do to them
- E. They were serving Christ and God faithfully, even though it might mean their death. They were remembering their first love.