

Hurstbourne Baptist Church; September 27, 2020
Sermon Notes: Revelation 2:8-11
“To the Church in Smyrna”

The Second Letter: Revelations 2:8-11

- Addressed to the Angel of the Church in Smyrna (2:8)
- Addressed from Jesus (2:8)
 - a. Jesus is “the first and the last” (cf. Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, and 48:12).
 - b. Jesus is the one “who died and came to life” (cf. Rev. 17-18, 2 Timothy 1:10, 1 Corinthians 15:12-26, 50-58).
- A Word of Commendation (2:9-10)
 - a. I know your **tribulation**.
 - b. I know your **poverty**.
 - c. I know you are **slandered**.
 - d. I know your **imprisonment**.
- **Note:** Jesus gives no word of criticism to the Church in Smyrna.
- **Note:** Jesus gives no call for correction to the Church in Smyrna.
- Instead of criticism or correction, Jesus provides these two instructions:
 - a. Do not **fear**.
 - b. Be **faithful** unto death.
- A Call to Hear (2:11)
 - a. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
- A Promise of Blessing (2:10-11)
 - a. “I will give you the crown of life” (2:10).
 - b. “The one who **conquers** will not be hurt by the second death” (2:11).

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- “The church [was] the object of condemnation and slander from the Jewish synagogue. Judaism was a legal religion under the Roman Empire, and the Christian movement for many years lived under the protection of the Jewish banner. Presumably, however, the Jews who belonged to the synagogue of Smyrna, which had a large Jewish community, were reporting the Smyrnan Christians to the local authorities, declaring that they weren’t members of the synagogue, weren’t truly Jews, and didn’t deserve legal protection. But such Jews were not really God’s people, says John. Instead they were a ‘synagogue of Satan.’ John’s words are quite astonishing and may even sound hateful and anti-Semitic to our ears. But we need to recognize that John himself was Jewish and had no animus per se against Jews. Indeed, he would probably be shocked to learn that these words have been used down through the ages to persecute and mistreat Jews. When John wrote these words, the Jews in Smyrna had social and political power while the church was at the bottom of the cultural ladder. John didn’t write these words to incite hatred against the Jews. He wrote them to comfort the church. Believers of Christ in Smyrna might have been tempted to join the local synagogue to escape persecution. John warned them against such a move: it would have meant joining with those who renounced Jesus as the Christ, so they must resist that temptation at all costs” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expository Commentary*, 574).
- “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.... let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (1 Peter 4:12-16, 19).
- God “seeks the fellowship of his people, and sends them both sorrows and joys in order to detach their love from the things [of this world] and attach it to himself” (Packer, *Knowing God*, 79).