

## Message to the church at Smyrna

Rev. 2:8-11

The message to the church at Smyrna is found in Revelation 2:8-11. To them, Jesus presents himself as the “**First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life**” (2:8). He says this to assure those who were themselves facing death that He was resurrected and so would they be if they always remained faithful to Him even until death.

At the outset of the message Jesus says: “I know.” He always knows what each church and individual Christians are thinking, saying, feeling, and doing. He lets the Christians at Smyrna know that He is aware of –

- Their Works;
- Their Tribulation;
- Their Poverty (but you are rich);
- Blasphemy of so-called Jews “who...*are* a synagogue of Satan”;

Jesus knows that the church at Smyrna is under tremendous pressure and stress from many quarters. Yet they are faithful under tribulation. Jesus says, “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich)” (2:9). So, even though they are materially poor, Jesus says that they are rich – spiritually. Spiritual riches are more important to Jesus than material riches. The Jews always dogged the steps of Christians in the first century and discouraged them in every way possible. Jesus refers to them as “a synagogue of Satan” (2:9).

The church at Smyrna is about to be tested by the impending suffering they are about to face. “The devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested” (2:10). Some of them would be imprisoned and even killed. Jesus tells them not to fear any of the things that they are about to suffer. He says, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (2:10). This is a promise of eternal life to those who always remain faithful to Christ even though they may have to die for their Lord.

Jesus concludes His message to the church at Smyrna with this promise: “**He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death**” (2:11). Their future is secure forever.

Lesson: As Christians, we will face tribulation, persecution, scorn, and ridicule from scoffers. Our Lord said: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:10-12). No matter what we face in life for our Lord’s sake, we have our Lord’s assurance: “Do not fear ... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death” (Rev.2:10, 11). Heaven and eternal life are reserved for faithful overcomers. This is a promise from the ONE Who cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

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