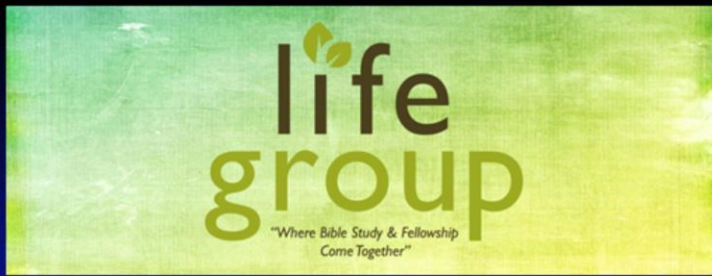


Welcome to the Worship Celebration of



SIMPLY BIBLICAL | FAMILY INTEGRATED



LIFE Group ...

6:30 pm at the Thomas' home on Wed. evenings

**Bring your Bibles, your Notebook, an
Expectant heart and a prayerful-thankful attitude
to Experience the Presence, the Power and the
Purpose of Jesus Christ, together**



Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4



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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**.””

Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4



The Agora of Smyrna (columns of the western stoa)

Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4



The Map of the SEVEN churches in Western Turkey (Ancient “ASIA MINOR”)

Notice where SMYRNA is ... on the COAST – at the Head of a very large natural BAY / HARBOR . . .

SMYRNA is NORTH of EPHESUS (which also is near the COAST)

Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4

SMYRNA - “sweet smelling” (“sweet smelling sacrifice” or “sacrifice of myrrh [incense]” → modern day – Turkish City of **Izmir** – place of many massive persecutions, even up to the 1920s



The Great Fire of Smyrna, September 14th, 1922

One of the more recent kinds of persecutions, massacres, and/or slaughters against Christians in that city and its surrounding regions occurred under the dying days of the Ottoman Empire, the predecessor of the modern state of Turkey. This disaster relates to an event called the “Great Fire of Smyrna”. When all of the events surrounding this tragedy were over, thousands upon thousands were dead, most of whom would have been considered Christians, of Armenian and of Greek descent. It seems that the Turks allowed this to happen, or some even go as far to say that this was a premeditated way of getting rid of the last unified community of Christians in that area, so that the Islamic Empire of the Ottomans’ would continue to expand. But, in fact, in just a couple of years after this and other massacres perpetrated by Ottoman forces, the very Empire surrendered and disbanded the Caliphate and their desire for “World Domination”, in 1924. The fact still remains of this most recent and seeming final tragedy of Christians being massacred in Smyrna, this last time, was at the hands of Muslims.

Today, Izmir has a very nice museum that relates to its ancient Smyrnan history, especially regarding its Agora

(for more, please go to: <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN/belge/2-19978/eski2yeni.html>).

Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4

1. There are **ONLY TWO** churches that Christ does **NOT** have any condemnation toward, two churches that He does **NOT** call to Repentance, but fully commends them and encourages them. What are those two churches? **Smyrna & Philadelphia**
2. In each introduction to each of the 7 churches, Jesus Christ is introduced in Symbolic Language that draws from the Symbolic Imagery that we saw of Jesus Christ in Chapter 1.

These things says **the FIRST** and the **LAST**, who was dead, and **CAME TO LIFE**

Since, Jesus Christ, Himself, faced **Death** victoriously, so would they. This **hints at** what that church, specifically, would face, but also hints at the period in Church History, the period of **10 Massive waves of Persecution and Martyrdom**

Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4

3. Jesus knows everything about His local churches

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.

He knows Our **Faithful Service** in His Name, for His Name's Sake is always noticed ...

He does not and Will **NOT** Forget ... → Jesus is Encouraging this Local Church

He says that they are **RICH**, but how?

They are in **abject poverty** because of **Massive Persecution**.

Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4

4. Syangogue of Satan → Satan = Adversary, Enemy, Opposition/Opposer ...

This hints at those who say that they are following God (ref.: “synagogue”), but in fact are in Opposition to True Biblical Christianity. Roman Empire “undercover agents”, Jewish folks faking it and then betraying – turning them into the “State” ... similar to what was seen in the USSR, Hitler, Stalin, Mao (China), etc... So, this **doesn’t necessarily mean Jewish Satan Worshippers**

**Can you think of any Modern-Day Examples?
Maybe some of Recent History?**

Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4

- 5. KEY that unlocks Revelation chapters 2 & 3 – 10 Days in Prison . . . it never happened. WHAT??? → Revelation 2:10
This unlocks the MYSTERY of the SEVEN CHURCHES.
What do they REPRESENT?**

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for TEN DAYS you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

It turns out those folks of the church in Smyrna were NEVER thrown into prison for 10 days. That never happened. (church history has much documentation for this period of time, BTW)

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So, what does this “10 DAYS” refer to?

- It Refers to **The DEVIL** being behind this
(his demonic spiritual forces are behind this)
- It is for a period of **10 time periods** (i.e. “days”)
- It relates to suffering, persecution, prison and death
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Online Ref: <http://www.bibleprobe.com/10persecutions.htm>

Between about 67 AD or so until about 312 AD or so ... there were **10** Specific and Horrific Periods of Persecution against Christians, that the church had never experienced up to that point by the Roman Empire. With each subsequent persecution, they were each worse, exponentially.

Thus, the Church of Smyrna, doesn't just represent a specific local church family in History, but it Prophetically Represents a Period of Time in Church History (remarkably accurate prophetically).

This Helps us see that each of the SEVEN CHURCHes of Revelation 2 & 3 Represents different Periods (or overlapping Periods) of Time (or Ages) within the overall Church Age.

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Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11) → represents the Early Church Fathers Period of Church History – from 67 AD or so until about 312 A.D. or so

→ SMYRNA is the **KEY** that **UNLOCKS** the Prophetic Mystery of the SEVEN Churches

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6. What can we learn (applications)?

- a. Jesus knows everything we are going through. (this is personal and per each local church)
He knows, remembers and applauds our **FAITHFULNESS** to Him
- b. He encourages us to be **Faithful and Victorious**, but most of the time He does **not** stop the source of the suffering, tribulation, and/or persecution (sometimes He does, but not always) – **Faithful in what?**
- c. There will always be **OPPOSITION** until Jesus comes back – but He will provide the **Victory ...** and that could mean being **Faithful Unto Death** in some cases (in Smyrna's case, for sure) – **if we are silent – how can anyone Oppose us?**

Jesus Christ Evaluates His Churches – prt 4

6. What can we learn (applications)?

d. Our Reward for being FAITHFUL is Jesus Christ– being with Him forever, ruling and reigning with Him forever → Not Hurt by the 2nd Death → Receive the Crown of LIFE
You see that, being with Jesus Christ, personally, intimately is our Reward.

“I will give you the crown of life ...” Jesus will personally give ... that's closeness.

Does, Jesus Christ, right now, consider you Faithful to Him, unto Death? (ponder on that)

JESUS WANTS US ... and HE WANTS US to be VICTORIOUS and to be BLESSED ... BLESSED ONLY in Relationship with HIM

See y'all Next Time we Gather...
@ LIFE Group and/or Here Next Week



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