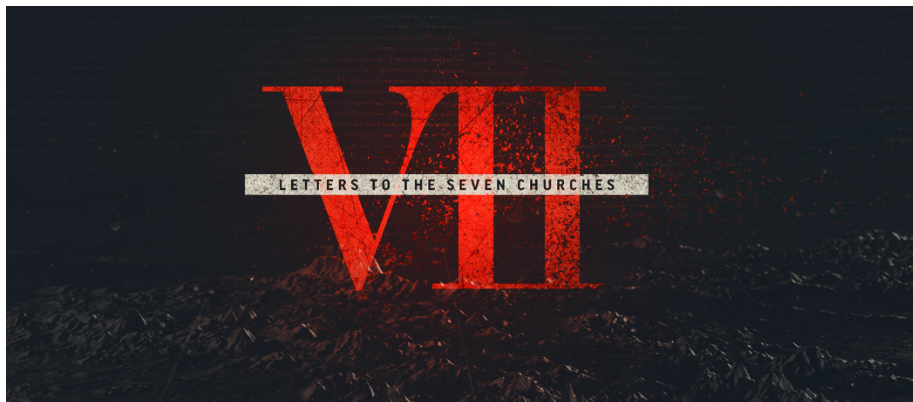




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The Church in Smyrna

Revelation 1

- Jesus is the author and His power is evident.
- Jesus is present with His church.

The Message to the Church in Smyrna

⁸ "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. This is the message from the one who is the First and the Last, who was dead but is now alive: ⁹ "I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan. ¹⁰ Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death." **Revelation 2:8-11NLT**

- Smyrna is one of only two churches that receives no correction from Jesus.
- We saw that Ephesus had lost their first love, but not Smyrna.
- Ephesus is gone, no church, only ruins.

Ancient Smyrna was located on the western coast of Asia Minor in what is modern-day Turkey now named İzmir. It was a beautiful, prosperous and influential city, but filled with pagan worship and under Roman rule.

Smyrna also had a strong devotion to Rome and the emperor. That created enormous pressure for Christians. The fundamental issue was lordship. During Domitian's reign (AD 81-96), emperor worship became compulsory for every Roman citizen on penalty of death.

- Rome expected allegiance to Caesar; to burn incense and declare Caesar was God.
- Christians confessed: "Jesus is Lord."

REMEMBER WHO JESUS IS

Jesus identified Himself as *"the one who is the First and the Last, who was dead but is now alive."*

Christ's servants need not fear those that can only kill the body.

Instead, Jesus essentially says:

- "I know what you're going through."
- "I know what it has cost you."
- "I know what you're facing."
- "And I want you to remain faithful."

The Church at Smyrna was persecuted, suffering, and impoverished.

JESUS KNOWS EVERYTHING

- The city of Smyrna imposed sanctions on the Christians to keep them poor and beat down.

"I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich!"

- They were materially poor but spiritually rich.
- Their riches included faith, faithfulness, endurance, and devotion to Christ. "They were poor in what the world counts, but rich in what heaven counts."

In stark contrast to the Church at Laodicea...

¹⁷ You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. **Revelation 3:17 NLT**

- The Jews and the Romans persecuted the Church.

⁹ I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan. **Revelation 2:9 NLT**

- They claim to be children of Abraham and to be God's people, but they hated Jesus so therefore they hated God.

JESUS IS GREATER THAN OUR FEARS

¹⁰ Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life. **Revelation 2:10 NLT**

- Jesus doesn't say: "I'm going to keep you from suffering."
- Jesus says: "Don't be afraid of it."
- There are moments when following Jesus costs us something.

¹¹ *“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.”* **Revelation 2:11 NLT**