



## REVELATION SERIES

### *The Seven Letters*

#### **Smyrna: When Suffering Knows your Name**

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**Big Idea:** For a Christ-follower on earth, suffering is not the exception but the norm. Yet, God promises grace to persevere.

#### **Revelation 2:8-11** ESV

**8** "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. **9** "'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **10** 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. **11** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

#### **Jesus relates to your suffering.**

Hebrews 12:2 *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* 3 *Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

**Do not be afraid.** 10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer.

Suffering doesn't last forever. In the eternal scheme of things, it is short.

*James 1:2-8 "Consider it all joy..."*

*1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

God has a reward for you. *2 Timothy 4:8 1 Peter 5:4*

#### **The Second Death cannot touch you.**

11 The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.

Polycarp: martyred c. 156 A.D.

## The Seven Letters

### **Smyrna: "When Suffering Knows Your Name"**

#### **Revelation 2:8-11**

**Facts** Smyrna means "myrrh", the substance used for perfume and often for anointing a dead body for aromatic purposes

Who say they are Jews (9) They were Jews physically, but not true Jews, pagans (Rom 2:28) who allied with other pagans to put Christians to death in order to continue to build the emperor-worship cult.

Synagogue of Satan: With the rejection of the Messiah, Judaism becomes as much a tool of Satan as emperor worship.

Second Death: 1<sup>st</sup> death is physical; 2<sup>nd</sup> death is spiritual & eternal (20:14)

#### **Enemy** Names for Satan

Satan: adversary; Abaddon: Destruction (Rev 9:11)

Devil: (diablos) slanderer or accuser (Rev 2:10; 12:10)

Angel of light (2 Cor 11:14); Tempter (Matt 4:3)

Lucifer Isa 14:12-14; Anointed cherub (Ezek 28:14)

Beelzebub: Prince of demons (Matt 12:24), Belial (2 Cor 6:15)

God of this age (2 Cor 4:4)

Prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:1-2)

Evil one: (ponerou) (2 Thess 3:3); Wicked One (Eph 6:16)

Roaring Lion (1 Pet 5:8); Dragon (Rev 12:9)

**Victory** How does the description of the Christ affect what He does and says? (8)

What spiritual challenges did the Smyrna church face? Today? (9)

In what ways can believers be poor and rich at the same time?

What does it mean to you that Christ knows how you are afflicted and knows all about your suffering (past and future)?

What are the contrasts between Christ (8) and Satan (9-10, John 10:10)?

What impact can Satan really have on the believer (9-10; Matt 16:18)?

What is God's instruction for us when we are persecuted?

How do believers have victory over the second death?