

Lesson: The Church of SMYRNA

We will begin by studying SEVEN things about the city of Smyrna.

1. During the Roman era. It was a very progressive city of Asia Minor and known as the “Crown of Ionia.” It had wide paved streets and beautiful buildings like the Homerium. It was known for its schools of science and medicine. On the slopes of Mt.Pagus, it had a theatre, which seated 20,000.
2. One of its claims to fame was the birthplace of the famous poet Homer. It had a building named after him, Homerium, and a statue in honor of him.
3. It had a seafaring harbor and was located on one of the chief highways to the interior. Therefore it was a prosperous city of import and export trade.
4. Smyrna was a culture of religious tolerance **until** a Christian church was planted there. “In the 23 AD, a temple was built in honor of Tiberius and his mother, Julius, and the Golden Street connecting the temple of Zeus and Cybele, is said to have been the best in any ancient city.” (ISBE, pg.2818) It had Amazon, the warfare female, on their coins.
5. It had a large Pharisaical Jewish population. John makes reference to persecution by the Jews of the synagogue of Satan (Rev.2:9). The church suffered great persecution from others religions of Smyrna.
6. The church of Smyrna had great pastor-teachers like John and Polycarp (member of John’s church). The Jews wanted to throw Polycarp to the lions but the Romans choose rather to burn him at the stake. It is recorded that the Jews carried the wood to burn Polycarp on the Sabbath day in violation of their law.

His famous prayer from the stake has been recorded, “I thank you that you have graciously thought me worthy of this day and of this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of martyr’s in the cup of your Christ.”

7. This was one of two super grace churches of Asia Minor. This Christian church has remained faithful from its founding in the first century AD until 2003AD. Today the population of the city is 250,000. It is one of the largest cities in Asia Minor.

We will study the second church in its order of listing in Revelation (2:8-11) by the five point study outline. It is the shortest letter with the longest faithful history.

- *Salutation To Smyrna* (2:8a): 7 point study
- *Celebrityship of Jesus* (2:8b): two titles - (ho protos kai ho eschatos) and (ginomai nekros kai zao)
- *Appraisal of church* (2:9-10): Praise (2:9-10) and Problem (none): persecution, poverty, prison, prize
- *Phase II Victory* (2:11a): cycling of the word of God through the faith system (two imperatives –me phobeo/ p.p.impv/ stop being afraid) and (ginomai/ p.m.impv/ pistos/ start being faithful) (2:10)
- *Phase III Reward* (2:11b): (Special Phase III Reward for the super grace church (2:10- prize/ ton stephanos tes zoe)