

REVELATION STUDY 02.05. 2024 REVELATION 2. 8-11. SMYRNA

And unto the angel of the ecclesia in Smyrna write; "These things says the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which you shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days: be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Ecclesias; He that over- comes shall not be hurt of the second death. (Rev 2:8-11)

Smyrna is not mentioned in any other book of the Bible than Revelation. The gospel was most probably introduced to the notice of the people of Smyrna by the apostle Paul during his time at Ephesus. Though there is little written about the Smyrnian Ecclesia it seems to have been a noticeable congregation the second century, through its connection with Polycarp, a member of its Star-Angel, who was burnt at the stake, because he would not call Caesar "Lord," nor sacrifice to his divinity. This occurred about A.D.167, some seventy years after the Apocalypse was revealed.

Ignatius, who had been of note in the Star-Angel of the ecclesia at Antioch for 37 years, 26 years of which he was contemporary with the apostle John, came to Smyrna on his way to Rome A.D. 107, where he was sent by order of the Emperor Trajan, "to be thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people." While at Smyrna he wrote a letter to the Ephesian ecclesia, in which he referred to, "Onesimus who exceedingly commends your godly order; and living according to truth, and that *no heresy dwells with you.*" The thing referred to as "heresy" at that crisis, was Nikolaitanism. Hence the words of Ignatius are equivalent to saying, that Onesimus testified that "*no Nikolaitanism dwelt with them.*" It had not then as yet got into the Ephesian ecclesia, as the Spirit testified some eleven years previous, saying, "you hate the deeds of the Nikolaitan, which I also hate." Rev2.6 (The word Nicolaitan

means “ruling or lording it over the people” whereas the Lord Jesus laid down his life for the sheep”

I know your works and tribulation ‘frequent troubles’ and poverty so many who have responded to the Gospel call find that they are poor, but On the other hand we find that the well to do people in this life are only concerned with what they think they can have now, and following the example of the Lord Jesus is not at the top of their agenda. The Smyrnians were poor outwardly but they had received the promise of eternal life if they faithfully followed the teaching of the Lord Jesus. As the apostle James points out, “Hearken, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (Jam 2:5) Life in the truth is never easy, and where brothers and sisters can help others, it does not go unrecognised by the Lord Jesus for we have his assurance from his parable to his disciples recorded by Matthew; “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungry, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry, and fed *you*? or thirsty, and gave *you* to drink? When did we you a stranger, and did not take you in? or naked, and clothed *you*? Or when saw we see you sick, or in prison, and we came unto you? And the King shall answer and say to them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brothers, you have done *it* unto me. (Mat 25:34-40 KJV)

Not far from the ecclesia in Smyrna there was evidently a synagogue where Jews who rejected the Lord Jesus assembled together with their proselytes and these are described by the Spirit as blasphemous people and members of Satan’s Synagogue of whom we learn elsewhere in the scriptures made their boast in the Law of Moses but did not in fact keep it. Such as these persecuted true Christians. The message of the Lord Jesus to his faithful servants was,

“Do not be afraid of such people, yes some of these servants of the diabolos’, were false accusers, slanderous like those who caused Jesus to be crucified”. Yes some of these adversaries will cast some of you into prison, and this is where Peter’s good advice come in Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1Pe 4:12-13)

Jesus reveals that they would indeed have tribulation ten days, that is representative days of years and refers to the persecution by the Emperor Trajan from the year 98 to 117 B.C. The actual devil who would cast the believers into prison was **the civic authorities** as Peter and Paul indicate in their advice to the believers “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfastly in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (1Pe 5:8-9)

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. (2Ti 4:16-18)

Pliny the pro-Consul in Bithynia wrote his celebrated report on the Christians to Trajan who approved his policy A.D. 102. This is the first time in the Apocalypse that Representative Time is introduced, the prophetic Day for a Year. The persecution of Christians by Trajan lasted ten years.

He that overcomes shall not be hurt by the Second Death. The second Death is that which occurs after the resurrection of all those in past ages who have known the truth and have had the responsibility to keep its requirements faithfully. These will be judged at his appearing. Those who have not kept it will be rejected

after due punishment has been imposed upon them, ending in death.

Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

(2Co 5:9-10)

³¹ Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Act 17:31 KJV)