

The Lord's Message to a Church Facing Tribulation
(Revelation 2:8-11)

Introduction:

1. In Revelation 2-3 the Lord had John write a message to each of the 7 congregations in Asia.
2. These verses contain the Lord's message to the congregation in Smyrna.
3. This morning we showed from vs.10 that the Lord's people must be faithful.
4. This evening we are studying the entire message.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.8) THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS MESSAGE
 - A. (vs.8a) It was addressed to *"the angel [messenger] of the church in Smyrna."*
 - B. (vs.8b) Although John wrote this message, it was actually spoken by the Lord.
 1. He described Himself as *"the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive."*
 2. By describing Himself as:
 - a. *"the first and the last,"* He declared His eternal existence (see 1:8)
 - b. the One *"which was dead, and is alive,"* He showed that He overcame death.
 - 1) Jesus endured cruel treatment when He was crucified.
 - 2) He persevered, He faced death, and He overcame it.
 - C. In the introduction to this message to the church in Smyrna, Christ let this congregation know that He was familiar with ill treatment and tribulation.
- II. (vs.9) CHRIST KNEW THIS CHURCH'S SITUATION
 - A. Let us consider the things that the Lord knew.
 1. He knew this church's *"works."*
 2. He knew this church's *"tribulation"* [trials].
 3. He knew this church's *"poverty."*
 - a. From a financial standpoint, this church was poor.
 - b. From a spiritual standpoint, this church was rich.
 - c. Contrast this with the church in Laodicea (3:17).
 4. He knew that this church was being blasphemed.
 - a. This blasphemy was coming from some who claimed to be *"Jews,"* but they were actually followers of Satan.
 - b. This *"synagogue of Satan"* is also mentioned in Revelation 3:9.
 - B. In addition to knowing what this congregation was going through, Jesus was able to empathize with it (1 Peter 2:21-24).
 - C. After He informed the congregation in Smyrna that He knew what it was going through, . . .
- III. (vs.10-11) CHRIST EXHORTED THIS CHURCH TO REMAIN FAITHFUL
 - A. It is interesting that the Lord did not remove this church's trials.
 - B. Let us notice what He did.
 1. The Lord told this church not to *"fear"* the things it would suffer.
 - a. This church was already facing trials.
 - b. There would be additional trials -- the devil would cast some of them into prison.
 2. The Lord told this church that its tribulation would last *"ten days"* [a relatively short time].
 3. The Lord encouraged this church by promising *"a crown of life"* to those who remained faithful (James 1:12).
 4. The Lord also promised that those who overcame would not be hurt by *"the second death"* (Revelation 21:8).

Conclusion:

1. The Lord wants us to listen to this message (vs.11a).
2. The church in Smyrna suffered because it did the Lord's will -- we can expect the same (2 Timothy 3:12).
3. The Lord still offers encouragement to His followers who face persecution (Hebrews 13:5-6).
4. The Lord will bless those who remain faithful to Him (Matthew 25:21).