

The First-Century Church
"The Church in Smyrna"

Introduction:

1. The New Testament contains a tremendous amount of information that was written "about" as well as "to" various congregations in the first century.
2. By "rightly dividing" this information we can know the Lord's will for His church today.
3. This lesson is a study of the message that the Lord sent to the congregation in Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11).
4. We learn from this message that the Lord requires His church to "be faithful."

Discussion:

- I. (vs.8) THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS MESSAGE
 - A. (vs.8a) This message 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 who described Himself as "*the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.*"
 1. Jesus endured cruel treatment when He was killed.
 2. However, 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.
- II. (vs.9) THE LORD KNEW THIS CHURCH'S SITUATION
 - A. He knew:
 1. this church's "*works*"
 2. this church's "*tribulation*" [trials]
 3. 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. that this church was being blasphemed by followers of Satan who are also mentioned in the message to the church in Philadelphia (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) THE LORD 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*" (21:8).
- IV. APPLICATION
 - A. The Lord wants us to listen to this message (vs.11a).
 - B. The church in Smyrna suffered as a result of doing the Lord's will -- His people can expect the same today (2 Timothy 3:12).
 - C. The Lord still offers encouragement to His followers who face persecution.
 1. 1 Corinthians 10:13
 2. Hebrews 13:5-6
 - D. The Lord will bless those who remain true to Him (Matthew 25:21).