Smyrna: The Persecuted Church

Summary: Poor and persecuted church located in a beautiful city of wealth, commerce with a large Jewish population. Famous for schools of medicine and science.

Smyrna ancient Greek word for “myrrh” a natural gum or resin. Used as anointing oil (Exodus), perfume (Esther). Used for pain relief, oral health, young skin, boosting the immune system.

Myrrh + Wine offered to our Savior on the Cross Mark 15:23, Christ refused to not dull the suffering, modeled for us that we can deal with suffering through the power of His presence.

Leadership in Smyrna: Polycarp, student of the apostle John, later became the bishop of Smyrna during the 2nd century, and Polycrates friend of Polycarp became bishop in Ephesus.

Strong connection to the apostolic age evidenced in the difference between the Christians in Asia and those in Rome.

Churches in Rome celebrated Easter as a replacement for Passover. Not adopted in Church in Asia

**Commendation**: Revelation 2: 8-9 Christ knew their works bearing tribulation and suffering. Understand that one may be rich in the Spirit but poor in the world’s eyes. Matthew 6: 20-21

Christ knew the tribulation and suffering at the hands of Jewish pretenders, hostel Jews creating a “synagogue of Satan”. 2 possible explanations: Ethnic Conflict 1. Gentiles who called themselves “Jews” (i.e., the chosen people of God). Never converted. Worshiped the Roman emperor. 2. Biologic Jews who never became “Messianic” Romans 2:28-29

**Instruction**: Revelation 2:10A Do not fear and be faithful when confronted with persecution and death. Matthew 5:11-12

Revelation 2:10 B The devil or slanderer is behind the persecutor threatening to throw us in jail for testing. Testing the believer’s loyalty, strength, faith, patience and character for a ‘short time’. Acts 16

**Promise:** Revelation 2: 10c “The crown of life” – Crown of Immortality, is a reward for those who stayed faithful until death. James 1:12

Revelation 2: 11 “Second death” eternal separation from the Father for those who are not His children. 1 John 5:4-5 NLT