

# The Revelation

by Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish



Revelations 2:8-11

## Introduction

- Smyrna was known to be the most beautiful city in the Roman province of Asia. There was a steady gentle west wind coming off the Mediterranean that always kept the city cool.
- Smyrna was one of the world's first planned communities. It was founded as a Greek colony as early as 1000 BC. It was destroyed by invaders around 600 BC and was untouched until 200 BC when it was rebuilt with a grand plan.
- Like Ephesus, it was a wealthy trading center. It had a small harbor, but it was somewhat inland, so it was safe and convenient (think Philadelphia).
- To the east end of the city rose a high hill called the Pagos. The top of the hill was ringed with temples and buildings owned by the city's nobles. The entire hilltop complex was known as The Crown.
- The "necklace" of The Crown was street that ran north and south just below the Pagos, called the Street of Gold. It started with the Temple of Zeus on one end and ended with the Temple of Cybele, the mother of the gods, on the other end.
- Also like Ephesus, it was a free city. It's fierce allegiance to Rome went back at least to 200 BC.
- Smyrna had all the markings of a great Roman city: stadium, theaters, a great library, magnificent temples. The Romans themselves most appreciated the people and their municipal pride. The city also had a very large Jewish population which was very wealthy, once giving 10,000 denarii for the beautification of the city (a single denarius equaled a day's wage). A wealthy, influential Jewish population was the source of the church's pain.

## Vs 8

- First and last: how Jesus introduces Himself to John in 1:17
- Was dead and has come to life: how the people of Smyrna sees its own history

## Vs 9

- Your tribulation: “thlipsis” – pressure, being crushed under the weight of a rock; a life or death kind of pressure.
- Your poverty: “ptocheia” – one who has lost everything, who holds nothing at all. Their persecutors had robbed them of every material thing, but their faithfulness had laid up treasures in heaven, making them spiritually rich.
- The source of the church’s pain was the Jewish community (see Acts 13:44-50 and the church in Antioch).
- A synagogue of Satan: John 8:44
- Blasphemy: the Christians are cannibals (communion), practice immorality (agape meals-Love feast), anti-family (Matt. 12:47-50), atheism (believe in a God you cannot see), disloyal (would not declare “Caesar is Lord”), fatalist (pointed to the judgement).

## Vs 10

- Do not be afraid: Ps. 23
- Prison: a prelude to death (remember the women in Ben Hur?)
- The devil, not God is doing this.
- 10 days: God will not allow the suffering to last forever, some will die perhaps, faithful unto death, but the church will emerge stronger.
- The crown of Life: other NT crowns – James 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Thess. 2:19; 1 Peter 5:4
  - There are two Greek words for crown: diadema (royal crown) and stephanos (crown of victory and joy)
  - In each of the NT uses about it is always stephanos.

## Vs 11

- He who has ears...
- The second death: occurs nowhere else in the NT; if the first death is physical death, then the second death is the negative judgement of God (“Depart from me, for I never knew you” Matt. 7:23).
- For the faithful, John totally agrees with Paul (Romans 8:38,39)