

Letter to Smyrna (vv. 8-11)

**VERSE 8 "And to the angel [messenger] of the church in Smyrna write** (Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· [*conj and + art.w/noun dat.m.s. angelos messenger + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ekklesia + prep en + noun loc. Smyrna + aor.act.imper.2s. grapho write*]):

**The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this** [Τάδε λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν· [*demon.pro.acc.nt.p. this one here; "this" better "these things" + pres.act.ind.3s. lego say + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. protos first + conj and + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. eschatos last + rel.pro.nom.m.s. hos who + aor.dep.ind.3s. ginomai become; "was" + adj.nom.m.s. nekros dead + conj and + aor.act.ind.3s. zao to live; "has come to life" or "and lives" ]):*

**ANALYSIS: VERSE 8**

1. Again, the letter is addressed to the pastor-teacher of the local church at Smyrna.
2. Smyrna (modern Izmir, Turkey) lay almost directly north of Ephesus, a distance of about forty miles.
3. The city was exceptionally beautiful and large (c. 200,000 pop.) and ranked with Ephesus and Pergamum as "First of Asia."
4. Known as the birthplace of Homer, it was also an important seaport that commanded the mouth of the Hermus River valley.
5. Smyrna was a wealthy city where learning, especially in the sciences and medicine, flourished.
6. An old city that was mythically founded by an Amazon who gave her name to it.
7. Smyrna repeatedly sided with Rome in different periods of her history, and thus earned privileges as a free city and assize (self-governed) town under Caesar Tiberius and successive emperors.
8. Among the beautiful paved streets traversing it from east to west was the "Golden Street," with the temples to Cybele and Zeus at either end and along were temple to Apollo, Aschlepius, and Aphrodite.
9. Smyrna was also a center of emperor worship, having won the privilege from the Roman Senate in AD 23 (over eleven other cities) of building the first temple in honor of Tiberius.
10. Under Domitian (AD 81-96) emperor worship became compulsory for every Roman citizen on threat of death.
11. Once a year a citizen had to burn incense on the altar of the godhead of Caesar, after which he was issued a certificate.
12. Barclay (*Seven Churches*, p. 29) quotes a request for such a certificate, and the certificate itself.
13. "To those who have been appointed to preside over the sacrifices, from Inares Akeus, from the village of Theosenis, together with his children, Aias and Hera, who reside in the village of Theadelphia. We have always sacrificed to the gods, and now, in your presence, according to the regulations, we have sacrificed and offered libations, and tasted the sacred things, and we ask you to give us a certification that we have done so. May you fare well."
14. To which was appended: "We, the representatives of the Emperor, Serenos and Hermas, have seen you sacrificing."

15. Such an act was probably considered more as an expression of political loyalty than religious worship, and all a citizen had to do was burn a pinch of incense and say, “Caesar is Lord.”
16. Yet most Christians refused to do this.
17. Perhaps nowhere was life for a Christian more perilous than in this city of zealous emperor worship.
18. About sixty years later (c. 156), Polycarp was burned alive at the age of eighty-six as the “twelfth martyr of Smyrna” (IDB, 4:393).
19. His words echo through the ages: “Eighty-six years have I served Christ, and he has never done me wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” (Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 4.15.25).
20. There was a modern-day parallel to the predicament to this when the Japanese invaded Korea in 1936-40 and ordered Christians to worship at Shinto shrines.
21. Many Christians refused and were imprisoned and tortured (Keun, Han Woo, *History of Korea*, ed. GK. Muntz tr. Lee Kyuen-Shik [Seoul: Eul-Woo, 1970] p. 496).
22. A large and hostile Jewish community at Smyrna was prominent in Polycarp’s death and no doubt troubled the church in John’s day.
23. Concerning the founding of the church we have no information.
24. The speaker identifies himself as “Him who is the first and the last, who died and came to life again” (see comments on 1:17-18).
25. The “first and the last” might remind these persecuted and ostracized Christians that they belong to the Lord of eternity and creation and history.
26. He is in control regardless of the manifestations of evil that are in the world.
27. Adjusted believers were occupied with Him who was both first in everything and who would have the final word in everything.
28. He who is “the First and the Last” is also the one “who died (lit. “became a corpse”) and “came to life again.”
29. To a congregation where imprisonment and death loomed, the prisoner (Christ) who died and came back to life again can offer the same to those who are His as well as the “crown of life” to those who do not deny Him.

#### Commendation (v.9)

**VERSE 9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)** (Οἶδά σου τὴν θλίψιν καὶ τὴν πτωχείαν, ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ, [*perf.act.ind.1s. oida know + pro.gen.2s. su “your” + art.w/noun acc.f.s. thlipsis tribulation, pressure, distress + conj and + art.w/noun acc.f.s. ptocheia poverty (extreme); strictly the life of a beggar + conj alla but + adj.nom.m.s. plousios rich, wealthy + pres.act.ind.2.s. eimi “are”*], **and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan** [καὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτοῦς, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγή τοῦ Σατανᾶ. [*conj and + noun acc.f.s. blasphemia abusive speech; slander + prep ek + art.w/pres.act.part.gen.m.p. lego say + adj.acc.m.pl. Ioudaios Jews + pres.act.infin. eimi “are” + pro.acc.m.3p. heautou “they” + conj and + neg ouk + pres.act.ind.3p. eimi “are not” + conj alla but + noun nom.f.s.*

*sunagoge synagogue; assembly for worship + art.w/noun gen.m.s. Satana lit. Adversary, Satan]).*

#### ANALYSIS: VERSE 9

1. The speaker's knowledge is threefold: (1) He knows their "tribulation" (2) their "poverty," and (3) the "slander" (translated "blasphemy" directed against them).
2. The first item "tribulation" refers to their corporate pressure in a very hostile environment.
3. A major aspect of suffering that positive volition encounter is because of our stand for the truth of BD (cf. Matt. 13:21: "yet he has no firm root in himself, by is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he is offended/stumbles."; cp. 24:9).
4. The sufferings directly related to adherence to the truth are to be faced with peace, courage, and +H (Jn.16:33: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."; cp. 1Thess. 3:3).
5. Paul was sure to warn all new converts of the eventuality of "tribulations" associated with being an adjusted believer (Acts 14:22: "strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of heaven.").
6. Tribulations/afflictions produce endurance/perseverance (Rom.5:3).
7. The command associated with tribulation is to endure (Rom. 12:12).
8. God has promised to provide us with comfort/encouragement according to the intensity of our sufferings (1Cor. 1:4).
9. Remember God is in control, even if we despair (1Cor. 1:8).
10. All of it is rewardable: (2 Cor.4:17: "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond comparison.").
11. Those who afflict us will be repayed in kind (2Thess. 1:6).
12. When persecution comes our way we are in good company (Heb. 10:33).
13. The impoverishment (item #2) of the believers in the church is clearly material, because of the words which quickly follow: "but you are rich."
14. They were rich in faith (cp. Jam. 2:5), which means they possessed true wealth in the form of resident BD, and they were applying what they had learned under great pressure producing SG3.
15. Persecution for the faith produces eternal reward (Matt. 5:12: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.").
16. Why were the members of this church so poor in such a prosperous city?
17. No doubt they were blacklisted, and economic sanctions were imposed against them by the local business community.
18. The third item is the "blasphemy" or "slander" directed against them by "those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan."
19. The standard explanation of the statement, "who say they are Jews and are not," is that it reflects the biblical distinction between those who are merely racial Jews, but not regenerate Jews; and hence, not Abraham's genuine descendants as per Rom.9:6: "...For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;" (cp. Rom.9:8: "That is, it is not the children of the

- flesh (i.e. racial only) who are the children of God, but the children the promise are regarded as descendants.”; cf. Gal. 3:16).
20. Also, the slander or blasphemy is usually taken as verbal attacks against the Christian in the city.
  21. As in accusing them of disloyalty to the ruling authorities by refusing to participate in the Caesar worship.
  22. Along with this came a bevy of false charges, including atheism for denying the validity of the gods; the promotion of cannibalism in connection with the Lord’s Table.
  23. But is it not possible that the blasphemy specified here is indeed blasphemy against God on the part of these Jewish impostures?
  24. In other words, by identifying God with their beliefs and practices, they were guilty of blasphemy.
  25. Blasphemy is usually taken as ascribing something to God that He is not the sponsor of.
  26. This would include any doctrine or practice that God is not the author of, which is ascribed to Him.
  27. Taken in this fashion, the reference by Christ, has to do with the particular things espoused by this “synagogue of Satan.”
  28. It seems in this present context that the primary instigators of reprisal against dissent Christians came from the “synagogue of Satan,” as Christ refers to it.
  29. Now to the question as to whether the Jewish leaders in the community and in the local synagogue(s) were attacking Christians for their refusal to engage in idolatry, we must consider how they would want to be in a position of promoting the very thing that their faith forbade.
  30. Jews and Christians were monotheists and both would not support the practice of idolatry.
  31. If the Jewish establishment in Smyrna were going to attack Christians before the Roman pagan authority, it would seem, they could not successfully criticize them for something they opposed.
  32. Clearly, they could slander them for any number of things, but not their refusal to participate in idolatry.
  33. The natural reading of the text suggests that these people were not Jews in any sense of the word.
  34. Rather could they have been Gentiles masquerading as the elect of God?
  35. Also, they are organized into some kind of a society that had considerable influence over local politics.
  36. The organization in question was devoted to Satan.
  37. It would not appear that this would be an apt designation for the typical Jewish synagogue within the Diaspora.
  38. Another significant clue as to the identity of this group is found in the letter to the church at Philadelphia.
  39. In 3:9 where the selfsame expression is used in connection with this society.
  40. There we have “I will cause *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, but lie— I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and *make them* know that I have loved you.”
  41. This order continues to exist into the 6<sup>th</sup> era of the church, if we accept the teaching that the seven churches represents seven eras of the CA.

42. That this order worships Satan, would point to an occult order, operating clandestinely alongside the mainline religions of any particular era.
43. The Jewish claim is based on the occult teaching that they are the elect of God, the chosen ones to lead humanity into the light.
44. In ancient times the Greek Eleusinian mystery cult promised greater degrees of illumination.
45. Like its modern counterparts the initiate took an oath of secrecy which bound them to loyalty to the cult and its members above all else.
46. These individuals were often to be found in high places within the government.
47. These mystery religions practiced a system of secret signs, handshakes, pseudonyms, etc., concealing their true purposes behind an allegorical and ritualistic cloak.
48. The modern form is what is called Freemasonry, and like its ancient counterpart controlled the trade guilds.
49. In the writings of the Mason, Mackey ("Manual of the Lodge"), he traces Masonic doctrine back to "the ancient rites and mysteries practiced in the very bosom of pagan darkness..." (Albert G. Mackey, "Manual of the Lodge," Macoy and Sicles, 1802, p. 96).
50. According to Mackey in *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* the Eleusinian mysteries exerted a powerful influence on the secret societies of the Middle Ages such as the Rosicrucian and Knights Templar Order.
51. These orders were responsible for English Freemasonry (1717) and French Freemasonry (1725).
52. In Mackey's encyclopedia we find this statement, "Each lodge is and must be a symbol of the Jewish Temple, each master in the chair representing the Jewish king, and every freemason is a personification of the Jewish workman."
53. Masonic lodges are laid out after the pattern of Solomon's temple, and Gentiles dressed like Jewish priests bow down before a replica of the Ark of the Covenant.
54. The following quotes are from men who attained the highest levels within the "synagogue of Satan."
55. "Every Masonic lodge is as temple of religion; and its teachings are instructions of religion" (Albert Pike, 33<sup>rd</sup> degree).
56. "The Blue Degrees are but the court of portico of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine that he understands them...their true intention is reserved for the Adept, the Princes of Masonry" (Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma").
57. From the first degree and upward each Mason is urged to "seek the light!". The average Mason spends his entire career "moving to the light." Concerning this light, Pike gives the answer: "Lucifer, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the light, and with its splendors intolerable blinds feeble sensual, or selfish souls? Doubt it not!"
58. "Freemasonry is a fraternity within a fraternity...an outer organization concealing an inner Brotherhood of the elect...it is necessary to establish the existence of two separate and yet interdependent orders, the one visible the other invisible. The visible society is a splendid camaraderie of 'free and accepted' men enjoined to devote themselves to ethical, educational, fraternal, patriotic, and humanitarian concerns. The invisible society is a secret and most mysterious arcannum arcandrum [defined as 'a secret, a mystery] ~Manly P. Hall 33<sup>rd</sup>, "Lectures of Ancient," p. 433.

59. "When a Mason learns the key to the warrior on the block is the proper application of the dynamo of living power, he has learned the mystery of his craft. The seething energies of Lucifer are in his hands and before he may step upward, he must prove his ability to properly apply energy." ("The Lost Key of Freemasonry" Manly P. Hall, p. 48).
60. "Masonry makes no profession of Christianity...but looks forward to the time when the labor of our ancient brethren shall be symbolized by the erection of a spiritual temple...in which there shall be but one altar and one worship; on common altar of Masonry on which the Veda, Shatra, Sade, Zeda-Avesta, Koran and the Holy Bible shall at who's shrine the Hindu, the Persian, the Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Egyptian, the Chinese, the Mohammedan, the Jew and the Christian may kneel." ("The Kentucky Monitor" Fellowcraft Degree, p. 95).
61. "...the literal meaning (of the Bible) is for the vulgar only" (Albert Pike "Digest of Morals and Dogma," p. 95).
62. "The true name of Satan, the Kabalists say, is that of Yahweh reversed; for Satan is not a black god..for the initiates this is not a Person, but a force, created for good, but which may serve for evil. It is the instrument of liberty and free will." (Pike "Morals and Dogma," Master Mason/3<sup>rd</sup> Degree p. 102).
63. "All truly dogmatic religions have issued from the Kabala and return to it; everything scientific and grand in the religious dreams of the Illuminati, Jacob Boeheme, Swedenborg, Saint Martin, and others is borrowed from the Kabala; all Masonic associations owe to it their secrets and their symbols." (Pike "Morals and Dogma," 28<sup>th</sup> Degree p. 741).
64. "Though Masonry is identical with the ancient Mysteries, it is so only in this qualified sense: that it presents but an imperfect image of their brilliancy, the ruins of their grandeur..." (Pike "Morals and Dogma" Fellowcraft Degree p. 22).
65. These quotes indicate that ancient and modern mystery religions owe much to Jewish mysticism.
66. In the ancient Eleusinian Mysteries the Gentile participant was given the title "Jew."
67. In "Societies and Their Infiltration into the Seven Churches of Revelation" by John Daniel, he makes the observation that the Masonic cult is worldwide and has been instrumental in the persecution of Christians through the centuries.
68. The communist revolution in Russia was responsible for the slaughter of millions of Christians.
69. Masonic symbols have been witnessed on the corpse of some of these victims.
70. British Intelligence attributes the revolution in Angola, Africa in the 70's as Masonic revolution which murdered many Christians.
71. The murder of thirteen white missionaries at the Elam Mission Station revealed mutilated bodies with Kabalistic symbols carved on them.
72. The Chinese Revolution was headed by Grand Orient Freemason Mao Tse Tung.
73. In "New World Order: The Ancient Plan of Secret Societies" by William T. Still, he argues that Masonry is behind America's involvement in the United Nations.
74. In the Tribulation the Antichrist will openly worship the god of Masonry (cp. Dan.11:38, 39) while suppressing all other faiths.
75. Satan is the master angel of light and because of this he is able to fool believers (2Cor. 11:4).

76. The Word of God makes it clear that there are unscrupulous types that will use the name of Christ and the ruse of Christianity to advance their own evil agendas, when in fact these individuals are unbelievers (Matt. 7:21-23).
77. The obvious application to all positive believers is to lock into God's vehicle for the dissemination of the truth, which is the adjusted local church, and avoid those who make a profession of faith, but will not conform themselves to true godliness, but only adhere to a form of godliness, denying the dynamic behind godliness, which is, sound doctrine.

### Encouragement (v.10)

**VERSE 10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer** (μηδὲν φοβοῦ ἃ μέλλεις πάσχειν. [*neg. of numeral one; nothing; as in "fear nothing" + pres.pass.imper.2s. phobeomai fear, be afraid + rel.pro.acc.nt.p. ho what + pres.act.ind.2s. mello be about to + pres.act.infin. pascho suffer*]).

**Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison** (*interj. idou behold + pres.act.ind.3s. mello be about + pres.act.infin. ballo throw + art.w/nom.m.s. diabolos slanderer; devil + prep ek + pro.gen.2p. su "some of you" + prep eis into + noun acc.f.s phulake prison*), **so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days** [ἵνα πειρασθῆτε καὶ ἔξετε θλίψιν ἡμερῶν δέκα. [*conj hina so that + aor.pass.subj.2p. peirazo test + conj and + fut.act.ind.2p. echo have + noun acc.f.s. thlipsis tribulation + noun gen.f.p. hemera day + adj.gen.f.p. deka ten*]).

**Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life** (γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς. [*pres.dep.imper.2s. ginomai become + adj.nom.m.s. pistos faithful + prep as far as, until + noun gen.m.s. thanatos death + conj and + fut.act.ind.1s. didomi give + pro.dat.2s. su + art.w/noun acc.m.s. stephanos wreath; "crown" + art.w/noun gen.m.s. zoe life*]).

#### ANALYSIS: VERSE 10

1. Since no fault worth mentioning attaches itself to the church at Smyrna, so the speaker immediately proceeds to issue directives and encouragement to the membership.
2. Having made them aware that He is totally cognizant with respect to the source of the persecution against them (v. 9), he proceeds to encourage them as they move into the most intense phase of their corporate testing.
3. While Satan's emissaries employ covert tactics to make positive believers look bad in the eyes of the cosmos, these things do not go unnoticed by the Lord.
4. The command "do not fear what you are about to suffer" is literally "do not fear one thing you are about to suffer."
5. The singular is immediately followed by the plural of "the things."
6. For Smyrna things were about to take a decided turn for the worse.

7. What started as a typical verbal attack upon this assembly of believers was about to turn very ugly.
8. They had already suffered much as a result of the economic distress put upon them for refusing to knuckle under to the demands of the cult of the Emperor.
9. The enemy that they had to conquer was STA sponsored fear.
10. And Christ tells them to isolate this sin.
11. They are commanded to walk into this phase of their testing with no fear whatsoever.
12. They are told that there is not one thing among all the things they will face that is worthy of the mental attitude sin of fear.
13. Christ proceeds to inform them that “some” in the church will be “cast into prison,” and that this phase will last “for ten days.”
14. The arch enemy is here designated “the devil” which means “the slanderer.”
15. His other biblical title is “Satan,” which means “the adversary” (v.9).
16. Satan is always behind the scenes seeking to stir up aggression against God’s interests (1Pet. 5:8; Eph.6:12).
17. It is obvious from the example of Job that Satan is limited in his ability to do everything he might were it not for God’s superior power.
18. Nothing happens to us unless God allows it; and if he allows it, it is for our good (cf. Lk. 21:12-20).
19. This police action against select individuals within the assembly was designed to frighten the rest into submission to tyranny of the local government.
20. No doubt, the city officials wanted to report to Rome total compliance with the mandate of universal Emperor worship.
21. Economic persecution hadn’t accomplished this within the Christian community.
22. So the decision was made to ratchet up the cost for non compliance.
23. Human life would hang in the balance.
24. The enemy never takes into consideration the resolve and commitment of those who would rather die than deny the Lord and lose their crowns.
25. God’s purpose in permitting this to happen is so that the corporate body “may be tested.”
26. As with personal testing, it is designed to accomplish endurance so as to finish the race (Jam.1:3,4).
27. The ten days of persecution, characterized by imprisonment and execution, began sometime shortly after they received this letter.
28. Something happened to dramatically end this test for the local church.
29. Whatever transpired to bring relief to these believers was no doubt a great source of encouragement.
30. Especially when they witnessed the Lord’s words being literally fulfilled.
31. Christ’s second command is that those who were to come under the death test were to “be faithful until death.”
32. This would require a conscious decision on the part of each individual within that assembly to not agree to any terms of release and to die in fellowship.
33. For those who were destined to seal their phase 2 witness with their blood, there is the promise that they will receive “the crown (lit., “wreath) of life.”
34. The *stephanos* represents the epitome of eternal reward.
35. It is only for those who run the race according to the rules crossing the finish line (physical death or the Rapture) in good order.

36. This highest of all rewards is only for those who avoid exiting Ph 2 in reversionism.
37. The NT background for the wreath is the Olympic (and Isus) games (cf. 1Cor.9:25).
38. It is referred to as “the crown of life” (Jam.1:12; Rev.2:10), “the crown of glory” (1Pet.5:4), “the crown of exultation” (1Thess. 2:19), “the crown of righteousness” (2Tim.4:8), or simply “the crown” (Phil. 4:1; Rev.3:11), and “the prize” (Phil. 3:14; Col. 2:18); and “gain Christ” (Phil. 3:8).
39. There is nothing within the immediate grammatical contexts where this Ph 3 reward is found that indicates that there is more than one wreath in view.
40. It is also referred to as “the prize” (cf. Phil.3:14, Col.2:18; 2Tim.2:5; 1Cor.9:24).
41. Paul equates “the prize” with “the wreath” in 1Cor. 9:24-25.
42. Again, the crown/wreath is attained by simply being under the directive will of God at the point of exit from this life.
43. Reversionism culminating in the sin unto death forfeits the crown (cp. Rev. 3:11 “let no one take your crown”).
44. The crown will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ when all SG3 is distributed.
45. The ten days as applied to the Smyrian era has been taken as either ten waves of persecution beginning with Nero, or the final ten years under Emperor Dioclesian (c. 303).
46. He instigated a very aggressive attack against Christianity that last for 10 years; after that the empire adopted a much more tolerant approach to the Church.
47. The Smyrnan era lasted some three centuries.

#### Exhortation and Promise (v.11)

#### **VERSE 11 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches**

(ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. [*art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.nt.s. ous ear + aor.act.imper.3s. akouo hear + indef.pro.acc.nt.s. tis what + art.w/nom.nt.s. pneuma spirit + pres.act.ind.3s. lego say + art.w/noun dat.f.p. ekklesia*]).

**He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death** (ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῆ ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου. [*art.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. nikao be victorious; “overcomes” + double neg ou me + aor.pass.subj.3s. adikeo be harmed by + prep ek + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thanatos death + art.w/adj.gen.m.s. deuterios second*]).'

#### **ANALYSIS: VERSE 11**

1. The general exhortation to all the churches is identical.
2. All the churches are to pay close attention to “what the Spirit says to the churches.”
3. God the Holy Spirit is designated “the Spirit of truth,” and resides in all believers, having been sent to lead positive volition into the realm of revealed truth (Jn.14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1Jn.4:6).
4. A significant part of what the Spirit “says” is the Revelation.
5. The local church is the prescribed environment for the dissemination of the realm of BD.
6. While truth is disseminated by individuals and organizations outside the local assembly, the desired effect, which is bringing believers to maturity, is not achieved, because, for one reason, the whole realm is not found in these places.
7. The only chance that this can happen is within the local church.

8. So what is good and necessary for one local assembly is so for any other.
9. The promise to Smyrna is salvation.
10. In other words, the achievement of the blessing specified is contingent upon having accomplished just one thing, namely, the salvation adjustment.
11. Unlike the crown of life, this hurdle only requires the overcoming specified in 1Jn. 5:4: “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world— our faith,” wrote the apostle John.
12. “The second death” is a synonym for eternal condemnation view from the vantage point of spiritual death.
13. The imputation of Adam’s original sin is a judgment that passes upon all his natural descendants based on the fact all men are carriers of the ISTA.
14. Since God must judge all sin and sinful conditions, He judges the newborn with spiritual death based on possession of the ISTA.
15. The ISTA is the genetically engineered old sin nature.
16. It is made up of biochemical material, and is sometimes designated “flesh” (Gal. 5:16-21).
17. So Adam’s original sin is imputed to all his descendants based on the fact all his descendants possess at birth the ISTA/OSN (Rom. 5:12-21).
18. The death that precedes the second death is the death Adam died when he partook of the forbidden fruit.
19. We call this spiritual death, which is separation from God in time.
20. Those who die physically and are still under the curse of spiritual death come immediately under the second death, which is eternal separation from God in hell/LOF.
21. Physical death, which is the exit of the soul from the body, is the transition between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> deaths.
22. Whatever ravages the physical body might experience, believers are reassured that they can “not be hurt” by it.
23. Again, this contingency has absolutely nothing to do with experiential faithfulness, but everything to do with believing in Christ for eternal life.
24. At the point of saving faith the condemnation associated with spiritual death is forever lifted (Jn. 3:18; cp. 1Jn.3:14).
25. So ends the shortest letter of the seven.