

1 QUICK RECAP

Last week our Lord's letter to the Church in Ephesus commended them for many things. The glowing report turned south in a hurry when the One who knows the hearts of men revealed that they had forsaken their first love.

Jesus graciously called them back to intimacy with the Father (and showed them the way back!) and gave them great hope in spite of their grave error.

2 IN A LITTLE WHILE...

Revelation 2:8-11

3 VS. 8 SMYRNA, THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Again, these churches are actual congregations but representative of the Body of Christ. Today Smyrna (which means myrrh) is known as Izmir, Turkey. In Bible times it was the crown of Asia, the most beautiful city in Asia Minor, and the center of science and medicine. Fiercely loyal to Rome, Smyrna became known for its emperor worship. Polycarp, pastor of the church at Smyrna, was later burned alive for refusing to worship Caesar.

4 INTRO TO JESUS

In each of the seven letters, we see Christ telling us things about Himself. As we have seen with the various descriptive names of God, our worship grows in authenticity when we see God for who He has revealed Himself to be.

In the same way, Christ gives us plenty of reasons to be in awe of who He is...

5 "THE FIRST AND THE LAST..."

He was here before any of this began, and He'll still be standing when all that currently looks so imposing is no more.

Kingdoms (Covid. Chaos. Cancer. Confusion. Crime. Captivity to addictions) will rise and fall, but Christ remains

(Heb. 13:8)

In this context of the letter, this was an especially comforting introduction. Indeed, "Be at rest, O my soul!"

6 VS. 9 HE SEES EACH TEAR THAT FALLS...

"I know"

...your current situation

...your afflictions

...your poverty

...their slander

Consider Ps. 139; Isa. 40:27-31; Rom. 8:26-27

7 VS. 10 I ALSO KNOW

...it's going to get a lot worse before it gets better.

But it will get better!

Peter – Luke 22:31-32 (Consider the audience of his epistles)

Job – Job 1

James 1:2-4; 2 Cor. 12:7-10

Persecution for ten days? Only brief

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8

“Be faithful, even to the point of death”

• John 16:1-4, 33

• Acts 1:8 (Eng. ‘witness’ is Gr. ‘martyr’)

The crown that is eternal life awaits!

By His grace there is one with your name on it.

“In a little while, we’ll be with the Father”

9 **VS. 11 THE SECOND DEATH?**

Born once, die twice. Born twice, die once!

The first death is only physical.

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both the soul and the body in hell.” Matt. 10:28

The second death is spiritual and eternal (Rev. 20:14)

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• For more Scriptural info on living for the glory of God in the face of persecution, check out Daniel 1-6 and 1 & 2 Peter

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• For more info on the part of the Church that is currently facing severe persecution (and how you can pray or what you can do,) please visit www.persecution.com or speak with our very own Laura Krajcik