

October 19, 2023

The Lord wants you to live in His liberty and freedom.

Seven Letters of Love: Part 2

To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of Him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death. —Revelation 2:8–11 (NIV)

Letter 2: To the Church in Smyrna - Smyrna was a Greek city located at a strategic point on the Aegean coast of Anatolia. Due to its advantageous port conditions, its ease of defense, and its good inland connections, Smyrna rose to prominence. The modern name of the city is Izmir. Jesus has nothing but commendation for this church. This was a very poor church in the world’s standard, and it was located in one of the most pagan areas of the world. It has been said that the churches of the first three centuries were marked by material poverty and spiritual power; the churches of our day are marked by material wealth and spiritual weakness: *Today, Christians are cursed with material things that are not conducive to their spiritual development.* (W. A. Criswell) Jesus said, “Yet you are rich.” This highlights a divine principle that—regardless of one’s economic state—knowing Jesus Christ brings wealth in this life and in the life to come; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing everything. (2 Corinthians 6:10 NIV) *Oh, that God’s people in this twentieth and twenty-first centuries could realize the principle our Savior is here setting forth to the church of Smyrna. Riches can never be provided by this world! Our oneness with Jesus Christ determines the realization of our wealth in this world. The closer we are to Jesus Christ today, the richer we are. The further we are from Him, notwithstanding the balance of our bank account, the poorer we are. Christian, on this basis, how much are you worth?* (Tim LaHaye) They were afflicted with many false teachers who had claimed to be Jews but were really not. Any church that preaches a Gospel other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a synagogue of Satan, regardless of what it is called. Many so-called Christian churches today are like the Jews at Smyrna—they are not Christians at all and are condemned by the Savior Himself because they preach a message other than the one laid down in the Word of God. In reality, they are the synagogue of Satan, not the Church of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, Jesus commands them to be faithful, even to the point of death: “And I will give you the crown of life.”

Dear Father, help us heed these words today. Life is not about power, position, pride, or possessions; it is about You and having a relationship with You. Help us, Lord, to keep our eyes and our hearts in the place of worship for You. In Jesus’s name, Amen.