

**THE JESUS FILES – PART II**  
**“Smyrna – The Persecuted Church”**  
**Revelation 2:8-11**

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Not much is known about the founding of the church at Smyrna, but it is well documented that the believers lived in a hostile environment enduring much persecution. In the West, it is difficult for us to understand what it must have been like to live under such hostility because we haven't been persecuted. Today's teaching will expose the reality of what many believers in the world face – harsh persecution.

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**#1. JESUS' SELF-DESCRIPTION, v. 8**

- A. Jesus is the first and the Last
- B. Jesus died and came to life again
- C. Jesus is Indestructible

**#2. JESUS KNOWS ALL ABOUT BELIEVERS' \_\_\_\_\_, v. 9**

- A. I know your afflictions (*Gr. thilpsis*)
- B. I know your poverty, but you are rich, Jam 2:5, Luke 16:11
- C. I know about the slander of the Jews, but they are not true Jews, Romans 2:28-29, John 8:44
- D. I know they are a synagogue of Satan

**#3. JESUS ISSUES A WARNING – GET READY TO \_\_\_\_\_, v. 10**

- A. The suffering is not to be feared, Mat 10:28
- B. The Devil is the instigator behind the suffering
- C. The Devil will put some of you in prison
- D. This is a test of their faith / faithfulness
- E. This will last 10 days – literal or figurative period of time

**#4. JESUS \_\_\_\_\_ US FOR OUR FAITHFULNESS TO HIM, v. 10**

- A. The call to martyrdom: Be faithful even to the point of death, James 1:2-5
- B. The reward – I will give you the crown of life, James 1:12
- C. The one who dies for Jesus is the victor

**#5. JESUS PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMERS, v. 11**

- A. The Spirit is speaking to all the churches
  - B. The overcomer: one who is faithful to Jesus even to death
  - C. The overcomer will not experience the 2<sup>nd</sup> death, Rev 20:6, 11-15
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**APPLICATION POINTS**

- A. Every day is a test of your \_\_\_\_\_
- B. God \_\_\_\_\_ trials / tests to come into our lives
- C. Every test of your faith can produce \_\_\_\_\_
- D. God uses the \_\_\_\_\_ for his purposes
- E. A persecuted church is a \_\_\_\_\_ church
- F. A persecuted church is a \_\_\_\_\_ church
- G. A persecuted church is usually a \_\_\_\_\_ church
- H. A persecuted church usually grows \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were some of the characteristics of Smyrna?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is “the First and the Last”? (v. 8)
3. Discuss the meaning of the Greek word *thlipsis*, which is translated in the NIV as afflictions.
4. What did Jesus mean when he said in spite of their poverty that they are rich? (v. 9)
5. What was the nature of the Jews slandering the believers? (v. 9)
6. Jesus said they are not really Jews. What is the definition of the true Jew? (Romans 2:28-29)
7. Jesus knew that they were going to suffer extreme persecution for 10 days, why didn't he put a stop to it?
8. What is the nature of the test they would face? (v. 10) What does it mean to be faithful?
9. What is the victor's crown, or the crown of life? (v. 10)
10. What does it mean for the believers in Smyrna to be overcomers?
11. What is the second death? (Rev 20:6, 11-15)
12. What is your takeaway from this teaching?

# *Welcome*

*to*

# *Hillcrest Church*

  

## *Love, Acceptance & Forgiveness*

*Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.*

*Revelation 2:10*

*August 27, 2023*  
*Pastor Bruce Guckelberg, PhD*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### TODAY

Pastor Bruce is continuing his series titled "The Jesus Files." Today's message focuses on the church at Smyrna, which was a heavily persecuted church (Rev 2:8-11).

### CELEBRATION OF OUR NEW ROOF, SEPTEMBER 10th

After the service we will celebrate God's provision of a new roof over cake and ice cream. God has done wonderful things in 2023 and it's time to celebrate and thank the Lord.

### NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH WALKS

The next walks are August 31 at 6:30 and September 9 at 11am. Meet at church and venture out into the neighborhood to invite people to Hillcrest.

### ICE CREAM OUTREACH SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 6:30PM

Join us at Garbolino park to connect with our neighbors and eat ice cream. What's not to like about ice cream!

### ONLINE GATHERINGS

The Prayer Meeting: Tuesday at 7pm with Pastor Tim Brooks  
The Bible study: Wednesday at 6:30 – 7:45pm with Pastor Bruce.  
Go to the online meeting room on our website ([hillcrestRoseville.com](http://hillcrestRoseville.com)) to access either gathering.

### PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have a need for prayer don't hesitate to call Pastor Tim Brooks at (916) 872-5207 or email: [timnealbr@gmail.com](mailto:timnealbr@gmail.com)

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Our offering box is in the back of the sanctuary. You can place your tithes and offerings there, or you can visit our website and give online ([hillcrestroseville.com](http://hillcrestroseville.com)).

## THE BUILDING FUND

We appreciate your donations to this fund, which enables us to continue making upgrades to the building. Our next project is upgrading our outdated electrical system.

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## THE CITY OF SMYRNA

The original city of Smyrna was built as a fortress by the Greeks and was destroyed by the Lydians around 600 B.C. It was rebuilt in 290 B.C. by one of the successors of Alexander the Great. It was a city that was very loyal to Rome. In 23 B.C. it won the rights from Rome, before 10 other cities, to build a temple to the emperor Tiberius.

Smyrna was located about 35 miles to the north of Ephesus on the Aegean Sea and had a vibrant economy rivaling that of the Ephesians. Smyrna considered itself the "First City of Asia." One feature of the city was the Street of Gold which curved around Mt. Pagus and boasted a variety of temples, the most impressive of which were dedicated to Cybele and Zeus.

The city, which was proud and beautiful, was thought to have been the birthplace of the poet Homer. There was a stadium, library, and the largest public theater in all of Asia. Smyrna boasted a population of about 200,000. Given the large Jewish contingency in Smyrna and the city's loyalty to Rome it was a place of open hostility to the Christian population. The bishop Polycarp's martyrdom in Smyrna is well documented. The church at Smyrna is a picture of a church that lived under persecution.

There is much we can learn from the church in Smyrna about enduring hardships, because we all face varying degrees of trials in life.