TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA

Revelation 2:9 “I know your affliction 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.”

Review

This is a letter to an actual church, dictated by Jesus, to be delivered to the church by a messenger (angel), with application possible for anyone willing to listen.

Jesus Describes Himself

Revelation 2:8b “These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.”

Revelation 1:17&18 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

Revelation 22:12&13 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

Isaiah 48:12-14 “Listen to me, Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand together. Come together, all of you, and listen: Which of the idols has foretold these things? The LORD’s chosen all will carry out his purpose against Babylon; his arm will be against the Babylonians.”

Isaiah 48:15&16 “Come near me and listen to this: From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there. And now the Sovereign LORD has sent me, endowed with his Spirit.”

Knowing Jesus is the First and the Last and that He overcame death is especially important to those facing persecution and possible martyrdom.

Affliction, Poverty and Riches

Revelation 2:9a “I know your affliction and your poverty – yet you are rich!

Revelation 3:17 “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”

James 2:5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him?

Luke 6:20 Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

Luke 6:24&25a “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.”

The Slander of the Synagogue of Satan

Revelation 2:9b “I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

Revelation 3:9 “I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars – I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.”

Galatians 2:15&16 “We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.”

Philippians 3:2-4a Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh – though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

Romans 2:28&29 A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person’s praise is not from other people, but from God.

Suffering and the Crown of Life

Revelation 2:10(NASB) “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

John 15:20a “Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”

Luke 6:22&23 “Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.”

Luke 6:26 “Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.”

2 Timothy 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

James 1:12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

Revelation 12:11(NASB) And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

This Is For Everyone

Revelation 2:11a(NASB) “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The Second Death

Revelation 2:11b(NASB) “He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.”

I John 5:4&5(NASB) For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world – our faith. Who is the one that overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:14&15 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Things to Remember

Jesus is the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the one Who died and came to life again, Who decides when a person dies, and where he goes when he dies.

It is very often true that those who are poor and afflicted are rich spiritually.

Beware of groups who claim to be Jews but are not, who slander those who believe in salvation by grace through faith.

Persecution and suffering are a normal part of the Christian life for those who try to lead godly lives.

The “crown of life” appears to be a present time reward for faithfulness to Christ under trial.

Overcomers, those who have trusted Christ, need not fear the second death.

The teaching in this letter is for everyone who will listen.