

Bible Prophecy and the book of Revelation, Lesson 3

7 Letters to the 7 Churches, The Church at Ephesus

Ephesus represents the age of the early church which lasted from Jesus' ascension to about 100 A.D. Smyrna represents the martyr church age that followed from 100 A.D. to 313 A.D. at the Edict of Constantine.

↪ **General Description of the city and its Characteristics**

- ✓ 48 miles north of Ephesus on the coast of Turkey/Asia minor. Today in Turkey, it is the city of Izmir, the 3rd largest city in Turkey. It has an excellent harbor made up of an inner and outer harbor; the inner one could be chained off.
 - ✓ Homer, the author of Illiad and the Odyssey, was born, lived, and died in this city.
 - ✓ It had a symmetry of temples around its Mt. Pagos called the "Crown of Smyrna"; at the foot of this mountain was the temple of Zeus. It readily accepted Caesar worship.
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- ✓ **Revelation 2: 8-17.** Remember everything is important here: names, description, Jesus' name, etc... This letter has death all over it, even Jesus' title. Smyrna means Myrrh which was an early perfume used for embalming; at Jesus' death, Nicodemus gave 100 pounds for Myrrh to be used for His burial.
 - ✓ Was a gift at Jesus' birth Gold = Royalty, Frankincense = Priesthood, Myrrh = Death and Suffering. Only Myrrh gives up its fragrance when it is crushed. **2nd Corinthians 2:14-16.**
 - ✓ How does the fame of Jesus spread through us? The word Martyr is a Greek word which means "Witness."
 - ✓ **Verses 8-9** "I know..." He knows our suffering and is in it with us. "Tribulation" means to press or crush or put under extreme pressure.
 - ✓ "Poverty", they thought of themselves as impoverished, but they were rich. They had a misconception of themselves. They could have stopped their suffering with one pinch of incense!!
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- ✓ "Synagogue of Satan" = **John 8: 17-18, 19, 37-47, 56-57**
 - ✓ Their "Blasphemy" was trying to bring believers under the Law. Persecutions in the book of Acts were primarily Jewish instigated.
 - ✓ **Verse 10** After the Parthian wars, a major empire-wide persecution of believers was inaugurated.
 - ✓ The emperors who persecuted the believers were not consecutive over the 214-year period of time but were 10 in total. Nero, under whom Peter was crucified upside down; Paul was beheaded. Nero burned Rome because he didn't like some of its architecture and blamed it on believers.
 - ✓ Domitian had John exiled. Trajan had Ignatius burned at the stake. Marcus Aurelius had Polycarp burned at the stake.
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- ✓ Septimus Severus had Ireneus killed. Diocletian, the worst emperor, reigned from 303 to 313 A.D.
- ✓ No promise from Jesus that they would escape their suffering. Christians greatly increased in number during this time!!! **"Blood of the Martyrs is the seed bed of the Church."**
- ✓ **Verse 11** Everything is in terms of death; Jesus knew that this church would be dying for Him.
- ✓ This is the age when the ICTHUS was invented, "Jesus Christ God's Son Savior."
