



## Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

# Short Study 039: Letters to Seven Churches 2 – Smyrna

(Alternative Study)

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Read Revelation 2:8-11

**Introduction.** This is the second of the seven letters addressed to churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). As we observed when we studied the first letter – to Ephesus (Study 032), the messages are just as applicable to 21<sup>st</sup> Century churches and individual Christians as they were to their original recipients.

There are several subtle allusions in the letters to situations and incidents in the cities. Therefore there are insights to be gained from reading about the cities in a Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia.

Smyrna is one of the two churches about which the Lord had nothing bad to condemn (the other was Philadelphia).

- 1. Sender** (v8). The Lord describes Himself in two ways. What are they? Think of two single words that He could have used to say the same thing.
- 2. What the Lord Knows** (verse 9). The Lord mentioned three problems the church at Smyrna was experiencing. What were they? How could they be rich whilst in poverty?
- 3. Prewarning and Assurance** (v10). What does this tell us about Christians suffering, and the devil's influence? Is the "prison" literal or metaphorical? If the latter, what might it be? "Ten days" can mean a short, predetermined time, so this might be assurance their suffering has a limitation.
- 4. Promise** (v11). What is the "second death"? Who will be saved from it?

**To think about:** What does it mean to you to realise that the Lord knows what you are going through?

**To dig deeper:** What might be the subtle allusions in his letter (see Introduction)? What do scholars reckon the "Crown of Life" and the "Synagogue of Satan" to be?