

THE REVELATION

Rags and Riches

Revelation 2: 8-11

It is interesting that of the seven churches of Asia whom Jesus addresses, just two of them receive commendation only — no correction is given — the second (Smyrna) and the sixth (Philadelphia). In terms of size, commerce, and significance, these two cities and congregations are the poorest and least significant of the seven, and yet, Jesus gives them the highest commendation. While concerning Laodicea, the wealthiest and most prosperous congregation, Jesus has nothing good to say. It should give us pause. God does not assess value the way we do, nor does He measure success with the same rule.

I. This History of the City and the Church

- A. Jesus' salutation: death and resurrection
- B. The decline of Smyrna and the rise again to vitality
- C. The birth of the congregation and the tribulation that has come

II. The Synagogue of Satan

- A. The apostasy of the Jewish people and collusion with Rome in persecution
- B. Hatred and violence in the extreme; how jealousy destroys reason
- C. Willful opposition to God's purposes = alignment with Satan
 - 1. John 8: 42-44 — *you are of your father the devil*
 - 2. Matthew 16: 21-23 — *get behind me Satan* (said to Peter)
 - 3. 1 Samuel 15: 23 — *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft*

III. Suffering and Victory

- A. I know your tribulation
 - 1. Poverty (but you are rich)
 - 2. Blasphemy by the Jews (slander)
- B. It is going to get worse!
 - 1. Do not fear
 - 2. The devil will cast some of you into prison for a short season
 - 3. But I will give you the crown of Life!

Conclusion: The Overcomer — The one who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death

