

Spring 2010
Study Questions for Revelation Series

Text: Revelation 2:8-11

Preaching Date: February 14, 2010

Key Sentence:

The risen one promises that faithful suffering is followed by eternal life.

I. The words of the risen one. (Revelation 2:8)

II. The fact of suffering. (Revelation 2:9-10)

III. The crown of life. (Revelation 2:10-11)

NOTE: There are several different small groups doing different kinds of studies of Revelation that follow Bob's preaching scheme. This study guide includes:

I. A list of basic inductive study questions, for those who study the text on their own.

II. A section of questions pursuing specifics of this text.

III. A section of questions pursuing personal reflection and application.

The first section will remain the same each week, while the last two sections will be tailored to the specific text.

I. Inductive Study

Pray: seek God's direction and wisdom. Make the study a conversation with God.

Read: Read the passage several times in different versions.

Write down what stood out to you from this initial reading.

Observation:

What is the context? What came before? What follows?

Who is mentioned in the passage? Who is the audience?

Mark the key words and phrases; study them using dictionaries or computer tools.

Mark statements that teach using comparison/contrast, metaphor, or cause/effect.

Break the section into logical pieces and write the main thought of each piece.

Interpretation:

Look for promises that are made, commands that are given, examples that should or should not be followed.

Pursue cross references on specific words and Biblical concepts. Carefully record what you learn from other Scriptures about these key words or ideas.

Summarize the section in one good sentence.

Where does this section fit in the big idea of Scripture: God's redemption plan.

Application:

Are there any commands that you need to obey; sins that you need to avoid; promises that you need to claim; examples that you need to follow.

Write a specific response to this passage, applying the teaching to your own circumstances and relationship with God.

II. Study Questions

Brief Background: Smyrna, the only city of the seven churches still in existence, is modern Izmir, in Turkey. It was known as one of the most beautiful cities of the Roman world. It also had one of the largest Jewish populations of the ancient world. Finally, it was known in antiquity as a city that had risen from the dead: it had been totally destroyed in about 700 B.C. and rebuilt after about 400 years of desolation.

1. What does Christ say of himself as the letter begins (verse 8)? What do these phrases say about his nature as God? His nature as man? His work?

2. What characterizes the church at Smyrna in the first phrases of verse 9? What is the Bible Dictionary or lexicon definition of these two words?

3. What do the following verses teach you about the word 'tribulation' or 'afflictions:' Matthew 13:18-21 (21), 24:8-13 (9), John 16:21, Acts 11:19-20 (19), Acts 14:21-22 (21) Romans 5:1-5 (3), Romans 8:35.

4. What does 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (especially verses 2 and 9) teach you about the word 'poverty.' How then can Jesus say that the believers in Smyrna are rich? (compare James 2:5, Revelation 3:17-18)

5. How can 'so called Jews' be a 'synagogue of Satan?' Look at John 8:39-44 and Romans 2:12-29 for insight. It is likely that most of the persecution in this period, though allowed by the Romans, was still being initiated by Jewish communities antagonistic to the Christians. (Compare Acts 14:1-5, 18:5-6, 19:13ff, 21:27, 1 Cor 1:22-24, 2 Cor 11:24).

6. Verse 10 uses a third word to describe what the believers at Smyrna are experiencing: testing. What do the following verses teach about this: Matthew 4:1-3, Matthew 16:1, Acts 16:7, 1 Cor. 10:9-13, 2 Cor 13:5, Galatians 6:1, Hebrews 2:18, 4:15)

7. What is the 'crown of life' offered to the believers at Smyrna? What do the following verses teach you about the crown of life and eternal life? (James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, Mark 8:35, John 12:25, John 5:24-25).

8. The letter to the church at Smyrna offers no rebuke or call to repentance. It does, however, contain the other elements common to the seven letters:

To:

From (based on images in chapter 1):

Commendation ('I know . . . '):

Rebuke and call to repentance ('Yet I have this against you'):

Reward ('to him who overcomes'):

Exhortation ('hear what the Spirit says to the churches'):

III. Application Questions

1. What comfort do you personally find in the description of Jesus in verse 8?
2. The church at Smyrna was both persecuted and poverty stricken? Can you think of places in the world today where the church is undergoing the same trial? Is there a correlation between persecution, poverty and the fact that this is one of only two churches Jesus does not rebuke?
3. You are probably neither afflicted nor poverty stricken in the same way the church at Smyrna was, and yet you do undergo trials and testing. What do these verses tell you to do in those time? (Notice especially the verbs.)
4. How can you be rich even in times of testing?
5. What difference does it make that Jesus promises you eternal life?