

praise is not of men, but of God.” (Rom. 2:28-29). “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.

“For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” (Rom. 9: 6-7). “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:28-29).

As this message is prophetic, the time mentioned in it must also be regarded as prophetic, and would denote ten years. And it is a noticeable fact that the last and most bloody of the ten persecutions continued just ten years, beginning under Diocletian, from A.D.303 to A.D.313.

“Paul declares that this crown (of life) is to be given at the day of Christ's appearing (2 Tim.4:8): at the last trump (1Cor.15:51-54); when the Lord shall himself descend from heaven (1Thess.4:16,17); when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, says Peter (1Pet.5:4); at the resurrection of the just, says Christ (Luke 14:14); and when he shall return to take his people to the mansions prepared for them, that they may ever be with him. (John14:3). "Be thou faithful until death;" and having been thus faithful, when the time comes that the saints of God are rewarded, you shall receive a crown of life. (DAR 381.1).

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"? (Matt.10:28). The Smyrnians might be put to death here; but the future life, which was to be given them, man could not take away, and God would not hence they were to fear not those who could kill the body, - to "fear none of the things which they should suffer;" for their eternal existence was sure. (DAR 381.2).

Smyrna signifies myrrh, fit appellation for the church

of God while passing through the fiery furnace of persecution, and proving herself a "sweet-smelling savor" unto him. But we soon reach the days of Constantine, when the church presents a new phase, rendering a far different name and another message applicable to her history. According to the foregoing application, the date of the Smyrnian church would be A.D.100-323. (DAR 383.2).

References

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THE LOUD CRY HERALD MINISTRY
Box 315, Katima Mulilo, Namibia, 9000
Website: www.theloudcryherald.com
Email: josh@theloudcryherald.com

The church of
Smyrna

It will be noticed that the Lord introduces himself to each church by mentioning some of his characteristics which show him to be peculiarly fitted to bear to them the testimony which he utters.

To the Smyrnan church, about to pass through the fiery ordeal of persecution, he reveals himself as one who was dead, but is now alive. If they should be called to seal their testimony with their blood, they were to remember that the eyes of One were upon them who had shared the same fate, but had triumphed over death, and was able to bring them up again from a martyr's grave.

THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA

The second church is SMYRNA meaning myrrh, or sweet smelling savor and covering the history between 100-323 A.D. To the Smyrnan church, about to pass through the fiery ordeal of persecution, he reveals himself as one who was dead, but is now alive. If they should be called to seal their testimony with their blood, they were to remember that the eyes of One were upon them who had shared the same fate, but had triumphed over death, and was able to bring them up again from a martyr's grave. (DAR 380.1).

THE CHARACTERS OF BELIEVERS

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Rev. 2:9).

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." (2 Cor. 12:12).

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." (James 5:10). Also read Acts 5:1-13.

POVERTY AND RICHES

"I know thy poverty," says Christ to them, "but thou art rich." Strange paradox this may seem at first. But who are the truly rich in this world? - Those who are "rich in faith" and "heirs of the kingdom." The wealth of this world, for which men so eagerly strive, and so often barter away present happiness and future endless life, is "coin not current in heaven." A certain writer has forcibly remarked, "There is many a rich poor man, and many a poor rich man." (DAR, 379).

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. 2:9-11).

Smyrna signifies "myrrh," denoting that the church in this age would be a sweet-smelling savor to God, while passing through the fiery ordeal of persecution; which has always served to keep out pride, popularity, and self-dependence - the bane of true faith, piety and devotion. This state reached down to Constantine, covering the period of what is called the ten persecutions. See Buck's Theological Dictionary, pp. 332, 333.

"For want of room we can give here only his statement of the last. "The tenth began in the nineteenth year of Diocletian, 303. In this dreadful persecution, which lasted ten years, houses filled with Christians were set on fire, and whole droves were tied together with ropes and thrown into the sea. It is related that 17,000 were slain in one month's time; and that during the continuance of this persecution, in the province of

Egypt alone, no less than 144,000 Christians died by the violence of their persecutors; besides 700,000 that died through the fatigues of banishment, or the public works to which they were condemned."

The tribulation of "ten days," mentioned in the testimony to the Smyrna church, may well apply to the last of the ten persecutions, which continued ten years; yet some apply it to all ten. The continued scenes of martyrdom and dreadful cruelty continually before this church were sufficient to keep hypocrites and worldlings out of the church; and the constant expectation that some dreadful death would end their probation, led them to purity of life.

There is no fault found with this church. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life," was the only hope of this holy church. (RH, Vol 8, October 16, 1856, p 188).

"The letter to the Church in her second phase, is wholly commendatory. This shows that, while individuals had continued in the apostasy mentioned in the first letter, yet the Church herself had heeded the counsel given by the Head of the Church, and had repented and returned to "the first works."

"The time of this phase of the Church's experience is definitely suggested in the letter itself, by the statement that she should "have tribulation ten days."10 This refers to the ten years of persecution in the reign of Diocletian, from A. D. 303-313; which was ended by the Edict of Milan, issued by the two emperors, Constantine and Licinius, March, A. D. 313.11 (Alonso T. Jones, Ecclesiastical Empires, p 5-6).

THEY ARE JEWS, AND ARE NOT

That the term Jew denotes some character which was approved by the gospel standard. Paul says: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose