



## +INTRODUCTION

Even though the city of Smyrna was smaller than it's neighbor, Ephesus to the south it nonetheless rivaled it, in it's prosperity, due to it's mass trade, resulting from it's natural seaport and it's high standing with the Emperor of Rome.

Smyrna derives it's name from a valuable resin called, myrrh, which was very popular in the ancient world, believed to have healing abilities due of its strong antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. It was also used as an embalming agent. This dark-brown resinous sap would normally be hardened on the outside and soft on the inside. When the substance was crushed or compressed it would often give off a fragrant aroma. The word, 'myrrh' in the Hebrew is similar to the word 'marah' (bitter).

The name Smyrna and what it represents is an appropriate term, as it relates to the Church which resided there. As the Church in that city began to grow and have an impact, so did the hostility of the cities' inhabitants. Jesus wrote, "I know your tribulation". Sadly, this church very early on began to suffer, and yet Jesus clearly states that he's aware of it, and lovingly

identifies himself as One who suffers alongside them by saying, "I, died and came to life". We are promised in the bible that, those who live Godly will suffer persecution or opposition [2 Tim. 3:12].

In the case of this church in Smyrna they suffered in at least three ways:

- +physically (tribulation),
- +financially (poverty) and
- +emotionally (slandered) [Rev. 2:9]

yet, they were admonished to be faithful, even unto death, for they would receive from Jesus great honor, as depicted by being offered the crown of life.

Following the pattern set by Jesus, and echoing the very name of their city, the most fragrant aroma ascended from their lives through this painful process of crushing. It was in their time of trial that they shined brightest. In less than 70 years after this letter was sent, one of the apostle John's own friends Polycarp, (a local pastor) would have been bound to a stake in the center of town and burned to death. His martyrdom would emanate a wave of encouragement to fearful saints to be bold, and to stand strong in the face of trials.

## +READ (Revelation 2:8-11)

Read this passage out loud together as a group/family before asking any of the below questions.

## +OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Consider Jesus' words, "who died and came to life" (2:8). Why do you think Jesus said this? How does this encourage you in the midst of tribulations and trials? Read 2:9 and expound upon what you think the sufferings of "tribulation", "poverty" & "slander", were like. As you read through each of the 7 letters to the churches observe how each follows or deviates from the basic pattern below:

1. Address (what is the letter addressing?)
2. A title/s of Jesus (what title from chapter 1 is repeated here?)
3. Commendation (what does Jesus commend them for?)
4. Criticism (what does Jesus criticize them for?)
5. Counsel (how does Jesus counsel them?)
6. Command (what command/s does Jesus give to them to follow?)
7. Promise (what is promised to them?)

## +APPLICATION

Read, 1 Peter 4, and notice that suffering & trial are promised to all followers of Christ. This chapter parallels the experiences of the church in Smyrna. Prayerfully consider, how you can make much of God while going through these difficulties? Jesus suffered well, how can we suffer like Jesus? How do we often waste our suffering?

Ask those in your group if any are suffering and/or going through various trials, and pray for each other.

## +MEMORY VERSE

Rev 2:10 ...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.



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+What is a community group?

Community groups are small gatherings of believers (non-believers are welcomed too!) that meet regularly for accountability, friendship, study of the word of God and prayer. Community groups are an essential part of the mission of Calvary SLO Church. They're a place where we learn more about the life Jesus wants us to live together. They're the place where we wrestle with the truths of the Bible and encourage one another toward the life God intends. Each community group is unique and molded by the people who attend it. Most community groups gather weekly and involve food, dialog, prayer, discussion for applying the Bible to practical living, and loving service to one-another. They're meant to be an organic and authentic expression of the church, actively acting like the body of Jesus.



+Why should I join/start a community group?

God is a Trinitarian God who is one & three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. We have been made in the image of God, which means we have been designed for community & friendship. Often times we suffer when we are not actively in community, because life in our broken world is complex and and there are many temptations to go at it alone. Our encouragement is for you to gather with a small group of friends, family or roommates on a weekly basis and use the study notes provided to press into the Bible by having a time of discussion and prayer. Mix it up a bit, these times together should be encouraging to each other.

+Why should I consider becoming a part of the Calvary SLO Community Group Team?

We are enthusiastic about all levels of community, however there are definite benefits to leading a Calvary SLO Community Group, such as but not limited to: leadership counsel and guidance / spiritual covering, equipping and training, promotion of your group thru means of website, bulletin, special Sunday announcements, etc. We love having groups available in all areas of the county, available for all walks and seasons of life, and the variety of various structures and styles. Simply contact Pastor James at james@calvaryslo.com, or 805.543.8516 x3.

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+Resources

There are many resources available to help you study the book of Revelation. At the same time there are many resources espousing misguided apocalyptic views, which fuel more of a sense of fear & paranoia than praise, directed toward Jesus. Aside from that there are many different lenses by which Christians have historically viewed this book, most of which are born from diligent study and a high regard for the inspiration of the bible.

The books listed below are only a small handful of helpful resources, pastor Bryan has found beneficial in his studies of this great book, and happen to view Revelation through the lens of a historical pre-millennium view (more on the various millennium views to come).

EASY



Be Victorious  
by W. Wiersbe

INTERMEDIATE



Because the  
Time is Near  
by J. MacArthur



Revelation: The  
Christians Ultimate  
Victory (study guide)  
by J. MacArthur



Revelation  
by D. G. Barnhouse

EXPERT



The Book of  
Revelation  
Robert H. Mounce

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