

Scriptures and Doctrine :: The church in Smyrna and it's message to us.

The church in Smyrna and it's message to us., on: 2016/7/23 12:32

Revelation 2:8-11

Message to Smyrna

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death."

Out of the seven churches in Revelation there were two that Jesus commended without rebuke. One was the church in Philadelphia in Revelation 3. The other is the church in Smyrna found in Revelation 2:8-11.

In 4 short verses Jesus commends and encourages a church that was under persecution. Some say the church in Smyrna represents the persecuted church down through the ages. The church in Smyrna certainly represents the persecuted church of today. The characteristics we see in this group of believers 2000 years ago. We see in the persecuted church today.

But one thing we see a church that has poverty and tribulation. This is certainly indicative of many of our brothers and sisters who are suffering persecution in the restricted nations. In places such as Pakistan or North Korea the Christians do have poverty. Oftentimes they are at the lowest strata of society. Those who persecute them call them dogs and enemies of the state.

And these precious saints do have tribulation. Again in places like Pakistan, North Korea, Eritrea, India, and other nations hostile to Christ. The Christians do undergo intense persecution and tribulation.

And yet Jesus says he is aware of the persecutions that were taking place in Smyrna. By implication Jesus knows the persecutions of these suffering saints today. He weeps when they weep. He feels the pain that they are feeling in their beatings. He understands the isolation and solitude they experience. Because Jesus went through it in the Garden of Gethsemane. So Jesus is very aware of His suffering church. My question would be are we aware of His suffering church?

Yet Jesus said that the church in Smyrna was rich. They were not rich in the temporal things of this world. But they were rich in the eternal riches of Jesus himself. They surely must have been rich in the Word of Jesus Himself who was dwelling in their hearts. The church at Smyrna was certainly rich in the glory that awaited them in heaven when they would pass into martyrdom.

Certainly in the persecuted church today they too are rich in the things of Christ. The Word of Jesus is certainly dwelling in them richly. I believe in the Person of Jesus Himself. The persecuted church will certainly be rich in the glory that awaits them as they suffer for our Lord here on earth.

Jesus told His little flock that they were not to fear what they were about to suffer. He said they would be tested. He said they would be put into prison by the devil for 10 days. But they were to be faithful even until death. And then there would certainly be a crown of life waiting for them.

Some commentators have suggested that to be put in prison for 10 days meant that the Christians were given that time to recant their faith in Christ. Often that recantation was to be under torture. But if at the end of ten days the Christians did not recant their faith. They for sure it would be put to death. Thus the verse that says be faithful even until death.

The persecuted believers in Christ today take to heart the same exhortations. They see persecution is of Satan. They say it is a time of testing to prove themselves faithful to Jesus. They see it as a time to be faithful even until death. They see it as an opportunity to gain that crown of life that the Lord Jesus Christ has promised to them. This is why are persecuted brothers and sisters cry out to us in the west to pray that they will be faithful in the midst of their trials and tribulations. Even faithful until death.

The church at Smyrna did not receive any rebuke of Christ or disobedience. But was commended. We see the persecuted church today is not rebuked by Christ. But is commended for her faithfulness.

But what of us in the West? What of us in America? Somewhere the American evangelical Church falls within the other five churches of Revelation 2 and 3. These churches that Jesus rebuked.

One wonders why the church in Smyrna was not rebuked by Jesus? Was it because they were crying out for revival? Or was it because they were taking up the cross of Christ to follow Jesus? Was it because they were laying everything down for the Lord Jesus Christ?

I believe the reason Jesus did not rebuke the church in Smyrna was because they were taking up the cross of Christ and crucifying all of themselves to Him. And they were laying everything down for Him.

I cannot help but think we have it backward in America. We are crying out for revival. But in essence are we crying out for revival so that we may escape the way of the cross? Are we crying out for revival so that we may be spared persecution? Are we trying out for revival so that we may preserve the status quo? Have we made revival the idol and despise the centrality of the cross?

Brothers and sisters I do not see in the New Testament that God is ever promised to answer prayers for revival. But for sure He will answer the prayer of a heart that will be broken before Him. He will answer the prayers of those hearts that will cry out to him for a Crucified Life. He will answer the prayers of those that long for such a crucified life so that Jesus will live in them.

Dear saints I suggest humbly that our prayers should not be for revival, or for visitation. But our prayers should start with the habitation of the Holy Spirit living in our hearts. Our prayers should be that we be the vessels and the light of Christ that shine in the darkness against this crooked and perverse generation.

Let our prayers be that we live crucified repentant lives before God. Let our prayers be that we live broken lives before God. For if we are dead to ourselves then Christ will surely live in us. Christ what surely shine in us. Then we may see the moving, the visitation of the Spirit that we long for. But even if we do not see this. We can certainly be those vessels that burn with the light of Jesus.

Let us repent of an idolatrous praying for revival. Rather let us pray that we will be the repentant vessels of the Holy Spirit that live out the reality of Jesus Christ in our lives.

This is posted from the foot of His cross.

Re: The church in Smyrna and it's message to us. - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2016/7/23 13:56

If you don't cry out for revival you will not have it. Of course there are conditions to revival, as Arthur Wallis has written;

"Although God is the source of all revival, there are conditions that He expects His people to fulfill before they are ready to receive the outpouring of the Spirit."

"Here then is the first great condition of revival, that brokenness of heart that is sensitive to the least touch of the Spirit, and that has only to know the will of God to do it. One may cross fallow ground and not see where the feet have trod – no impression has been made. But when the plough and the harrow have done their work, and the soil is soft, then the print of the foot is clearly seen. When our hearts are sensitive, responsive, and impressionable to the movements of God across our lives, we may be sure that the fallow ground is broken."

"God not only revives 'the spirit of the humble' but also 'the heart of the contrite ones.' When in humility we take our rightful place before God, He can then deal with us as He was unable to deal with us before. The heart is now ready for that breaking up out of which revival flows. To the soul humbled before God, or at least ready to be humbled, there comes a fresh revelation of the infinite holiness of God and the exceeding sinfulness of sin."

Some good practical thoughts there for our consideration in praying for revival..

There is a crying out for revival out of a love for Jesus and to see His name lifted up again, and for the love of souls that are perishing without Him. I wouldn't discourage praying for revival just because some might do so to be spared suffering.

In Christ,

Re: , on: 2016/7/23 15:16

Jer 31:18 I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bull unaccustomed to the yoke: TURN THOU ME, AND I SHALL BE TURNED; for thou art the LORD my God.

Even if you are not wholly desiring revival in your heart to the point that you want, pray for God to "turn you". It is His "working in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

He is faithful and always takes the little we give Him and gives us back so much more, as I am sure many can attest to.

Re: Rom and Julius, on: 2016/7/23 17:18

For sure it is a heart matter. It is Jesus dwelling in one's heart through faith. It is Jesus living in one's heart by His Holy Spirit.

I believe in the end times it will be Jesus dwelling in the hearts of individual believers as opposed to a corporate falling of the Spirit of large groups of people.

Simply my thoughts.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2016/7/23 18:00

/I believe in the end times it will be Jesus dwelling in the hearts of individual believers as opposed to a corporate falling of the Spirit of large groups of people./

Yet can't we be at least a bit confident that the church's calling at the end of the age will be to obtain to a corporate filling and fullness perhaps unlike it has ever witnessed before except for maybe the days of the early church. It won't be something we can come up with or work up but will have to be the result of the Holy Spirit working within us. The spirit is willing but the flesh is just unable to go where God is desiring to take us. So individual fillings will be part of the plan to bring the corporate church to a new place.

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;

10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

12 saying, “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?”

14 I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:9-14)

More may be saved toward the end than perhaps at any time in history. It's not hard to see the church's role here as being present and prepared to preach the gospel in a corporate manifestation of power and anointing not seen since the early church. I'm not thinking it will be individual based.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2016/7/23 19:52

Again poppy cock..

So now those people yearning and crying out for revivle are called idolatrous by blain ,,you brother need to repent and stop playing Satan who is the acusser of the brethern , stop acting like the prophert to the western church ,wile leting your eschatology dictatate and create an unbibical theoligical world view that obviously doesnt line up with the revival that have been seen in south america ,and other parts of usa in the last sixty years .

Brother this sight promotes revivle,,your being contentious posting this in this sight , dont expect many amens ..

Re: , on: 2016/7/23 20:29

The Church corporately will be persecuted all over the world and therefore it shall be a mighty witness to it's Head dwelling within them and expressing Himself through them as a unified Body.

Hag 2:9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

Re: David, on: 2016/7/23 20:39

Brother agreed that there will be a multitude that no one could count from every nation, and all tribes and peoples and tongues. Many call this the end time harvest. Jesus tells us that in Matthew 24 the gospel will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to all the nations and then the end will come.

But can we say the preaching of the gospel and the saving of souls is the same as revival? Take China which some are saying is the book of Acts in operation. There's no denying that upwards of fifteen thousand people a day are coming to Christ. That equates to about a hundred fifty thousand people a month coming to Christ. For sure many souls are being saved in China. But can we say that China is really experiencing revival?

Some say that revival impacts all sectors of society. History tells us that a lot of the reforms that came out of England in the nineteenth century were the result of the Wesleyan revivals that took place. We are not seeing this in China or certainly Iran. If anything has more souls that are being saved the more the devil will ramp up persecution.

There's no denying that in the end times a great harvest will come forth. I am not expecting a great revival though. Even in America. There will be a revived remnant which for sure will move an apostolic power. And there may be many souls saved in America. But I do not expect a revival to occur in this nation.

When I was involved briefly in the IHOP movement we were told that the football stadiums would be filled with people seeking Christ amidst signs and wonders. But as one sister wisely remarked we are more likely to see the football stadiums filled with remnant saints getting ready to be hauled off to the FEMA death camps. That is if we are found worthy to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brother simply my thoughts.

Re: , on: 2016/7/23 20:47

We will have to wait and see, bear,,, how the Word is performed.

I don't think anyone knows exactly what is going to happen. Expect the unexpected.

Re: Julius, on: 2016/7/23 20:51

Agreed brother the church will be persecuted all over the world. There will be a remnant bride that God is raising up among the nations who will walk in holiness and power. But that bride will also be persecuted even as unto death.

The faith remnant bride will be living a crucified life as unto Christ. They will be dead to the things of this world and alive as unto Christ. As they are crucified to themselves Jesus will live in them.

As Paul declared in Galatians I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. As we pick up the cross and crucify yourself daily. Then Jesus would surely live in us.

This is why it is far better to pray that we be a habitation of the Holy Spirit. We be a habitation, a vessel that He will live in. As opposed to praying for an external move, a visitation of the Holy Spirit.

Simply my thoughts.

Re: Julius, on: 2016/7/23 20:54

Again I agree bro. Expect the unexpected. And as brother Todd said. Let's just sit here a little while and see what happens.

Again my thoughts bro.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2016/7/24 0:04

Bear-

I am not exactly sure how you are distinguishing a bunch of separate individual personal revivals from corporate revival, because surely a bunch of believers experiencing personal revival will morph into a corporate revival. That's how the body of Christ works- in fellowship.

Revival can take different forms. What you describe in regard to China may not be revival- perhaps because they don't need revival- they are already running on all cylinders so to speak.

Re: , on: 2016/7/24 0:26

...and unto the Church in Smyrna....

There is no getting around the fact that Jesus did write to Churches in the book of Revelation, not individuals...

Unless all individuals in Christ are loners, TMK has a very good point. Believers in true expressions and gatherings of Christ (Churches) are bound together to the Head. I'm not talking about worldly churches, but those that are praying and seeking and walking in the Lord, daily obsessed with His agenda, not man's.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2016/7/24 1:08

I so pose that this can all be explained away

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=VtIPhH0L2HQ>

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2016/7/24 1:23

You know to say that when a revivle comes it must change society as it did in the first great awkening is to confuse an awkening ,with a revival, not all revivals are awakenings ..

When we look at the first revival in the book of acts ,it never changed the face of the roman or jewish society, it may had some effect , but as a whole it still remained the same , shouldn't we let the bible define what a revival can look like ,rather then being dogmatic ,or rather then teaching that a revival must fit our personal definition. The pharsesses did that didn't they , lets not follow in there footsteps

Re: , on: 2016/7/24 1:28

In the Book of Acts, the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit brought about 3,000 souls into the Kingdom of God. They had travelled to Jerusalem and were Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, all hearing the in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. (Acts 2:9-11)

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2016/7/24 1:47

Exactly julius ,we dont read anywhere were it was an awakening like the first great awkening ,,apart from the growth of the church ,the jewish and roman society remaind hostile and unbelieving ..

Re: , on: 2016/7/24 1:57

No, what happened was severe persecution from the Jews (think Saul), came upon the church. Eventually, they were scattered from Jerusalem.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2016/7/24 2:54

Yep thats right ,and , so ,what point are you making ..