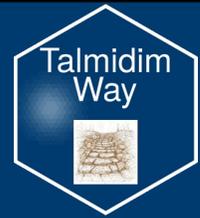


Cultural, Historic, and Geographic Context



## Revelation Backgrounds 7

Smyrna

Revelation 2:8-11

1

**Acts 17:11 (KJV)**

**These (Bereans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are from the Complete Jewish Bible by David H. Stern. (Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 1998).

Unless otherwise noted, images courtesy of the Satellite Bible Atlas and the Pictorial Library of Bible Lands (BiblePlaces.org)

2

## Topics

- Smyrna
  - Background
- Sevenfold structure of each letter:
  - Name of the city
  - Specific attributes of Messiah
  - Praise - "I know..."
    - Jews who say they are not
  - ~~Judgment~~
  - Encouragement
  - Promise to the Overcomer
  - "He who has an ear..."

3

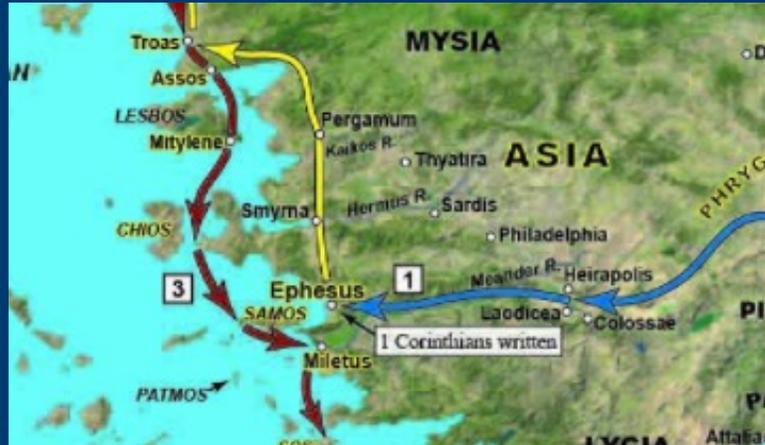
*Revelation 2:8-11(CJB)*

"To the angel of the Messianic Community in Smyrna, write: 'Here is the message from the First and the Last, who died and came alive again: (9) "I know how you are suffering and how poor you are (though in fact you are rich!), and I know the insults of those who call themselves Jews but aren't—on the contrary, they are a synagogue of the Adversary. (10) Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Look, the Adversary is going to have some of you thrown in prison, in order to put you to the test; and you will face an ordeal for ten days. Remain faithful, even to the point of death; and I will give you life as your crown. (11) Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities. He who wins the victory will not be hurt at all by the second death." '

4

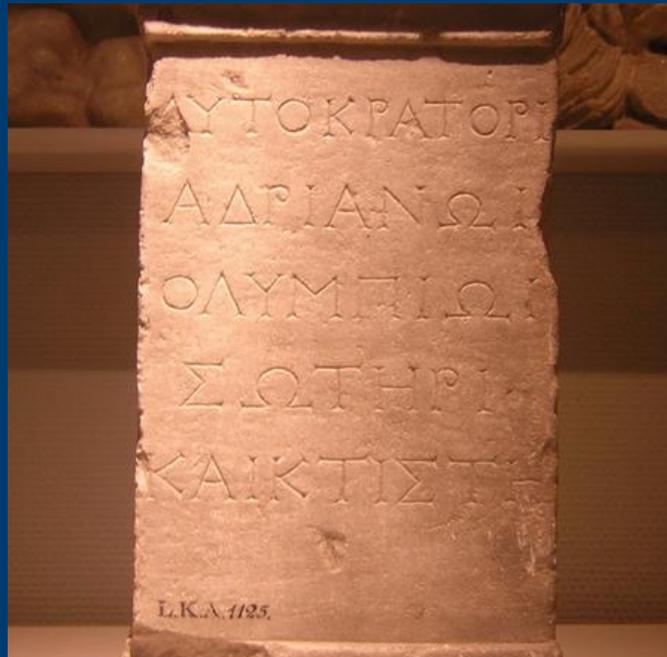
## Smyrna Geography

- Harbor town
- Competed with Ephesus but never matched the commercial success of their southern rival (the harbor also silted eventually)
- Destroyed by earthquake and rebuilt multiple times
- Fiercely loyal to Rome



5

*Hadrian Olympian, Savior Founder*



Inscription to Hadrian at Smyrna - 128 CE

6



Smyrna agora arches

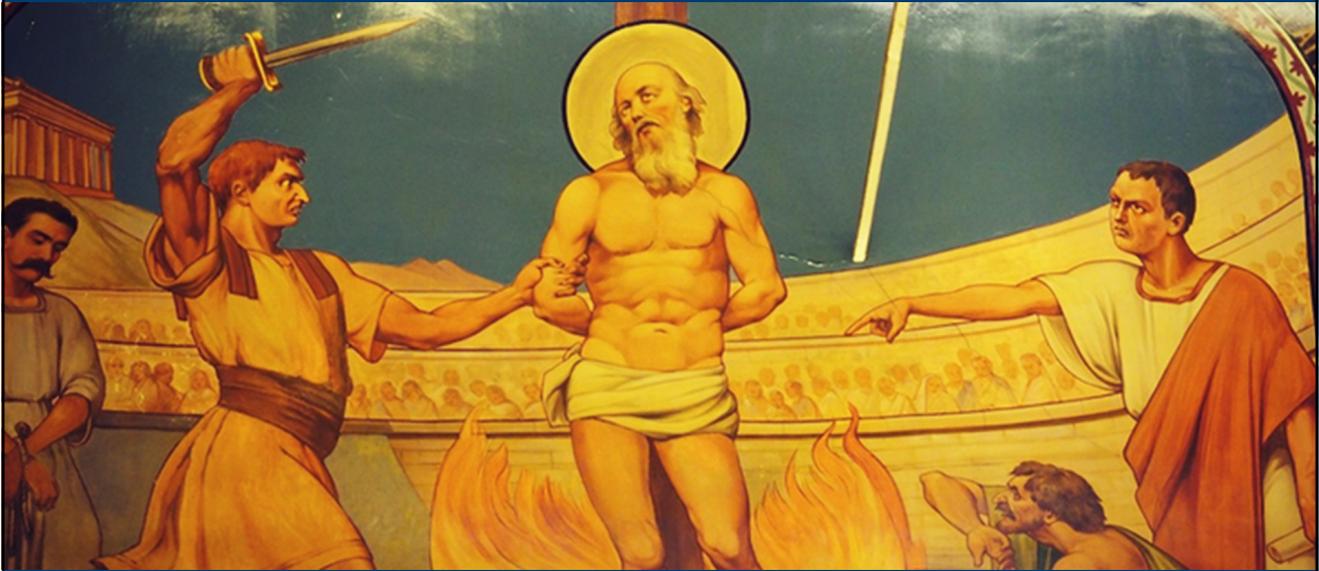
7



Smyrna Shalom synagogue

8

The Martyrdom of Polycarp



Commercial agora at Ephesus

18:19

9

## Revelation 2

(8) "And to the angel of the (ecclesia) Messianic Community in **Smyrna**, write: 'The words of **the first and the last, who died and came to life.**



## References

Isa 41:4 Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he

Joh 19:39 Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight

Isa 60:6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD. (note: no Myrrh)

10

Revelation 2	References
(9) “ I know how you are <b>suffering</b> and how poor you are (though in fact you are rich!)	Jas 1:2-3 Regard it all as joy, my brothers, when you face various kinds of temptations; (3) for you know that the testing of your trust produces perseverance.

## Tribulation – θλιψιν (thlipsis)

11

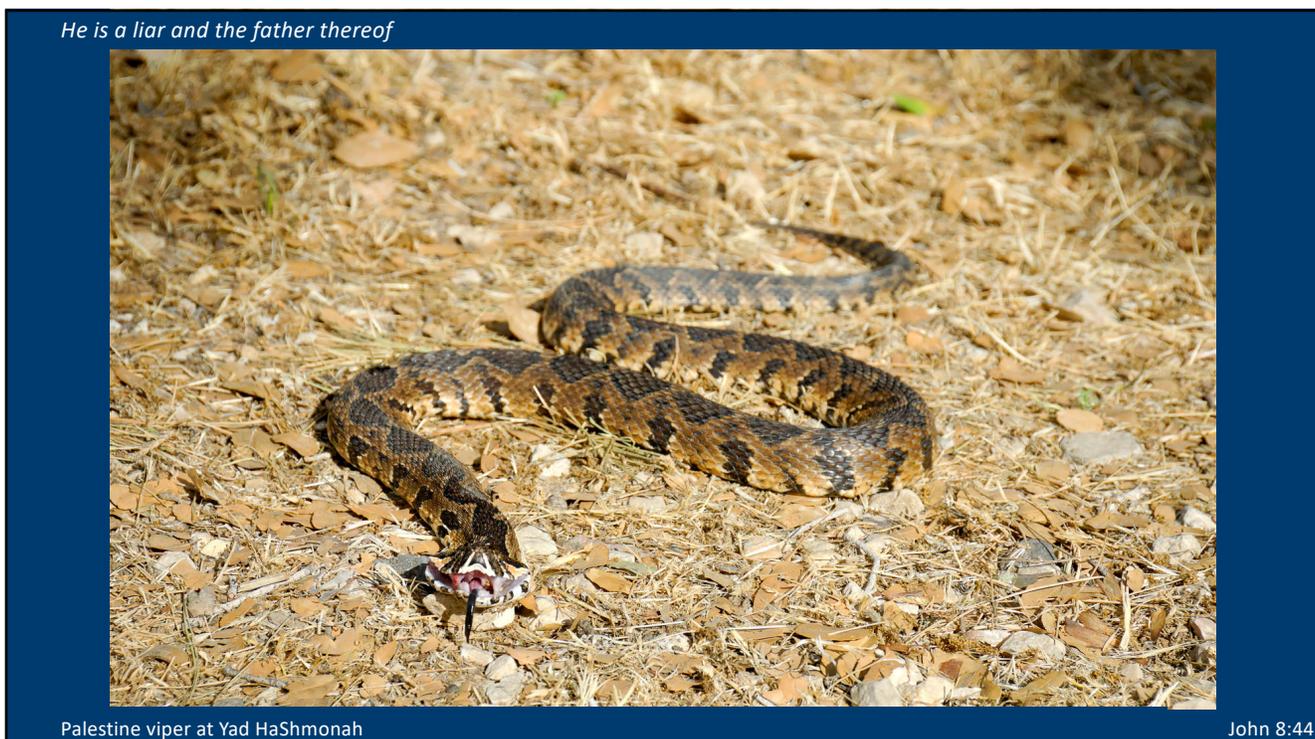


12

Revelation 2	References
(9) “ I know the insults of those who call themselves Jews but aren't—on the contrary, they are a synagogue of the Adversary (Satan).	John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. 2Sa 12:14 (KJV) Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

Primary Rule of Bible Interpretation: When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense (or you'll end up with a pretense that is likely nonsense).

13



14



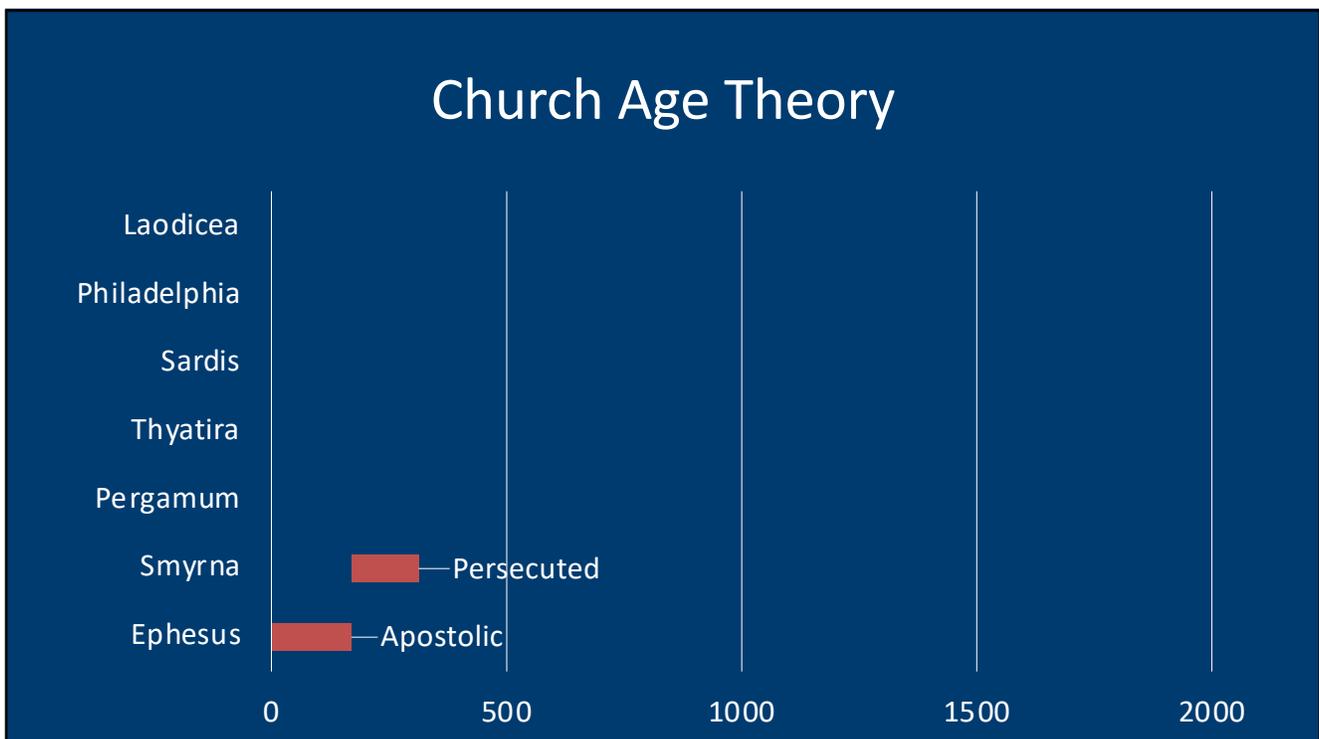
15

Revelation 2	References
<p>(10) Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Look, the Adversary is going to have some of you thrown in prison, in order to put you to the test; and you will face an ordeal for ten days. Remain faithful, even to the point of death; and I will give you life as your crown.</p>	<p>"Fear not" ~150x</p> <p>2Ti 3:12 And indeed, all who want to live a godly life united with the Messiah Yeshua will be persecuted,</p> <p>Jas 1:2-3 Regard it all as joy, my brothers, when you face various kinds of temptations; (3) for you know that the testing of your trust produces perseverance.</p>

16

Revelation 2	References
(11) Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities. He who wins the victory will not be hurt at all by the second death." '	<p>Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.</p> <p>Rev 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.</p> <p>Rev 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.</p>

17



18

## Possible Parable Connection: Smyrna = wheat/tares

Matthew 13	Explanation
<p>24 Yeshua put before them another parable. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;            25 but while people were sleeping, his <b>enemy</b> came and sowed <b>weeds</b> among the wheat, then went away.            26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads of grain, the <b>weeds also appeared</b>.            27 The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?'            28 He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants asked him, 'Then do you want us to go and pull them up?'            29 But he said, 'No, because if you pull up the weeds, you might uproot some of the wheat at the same time.            30 <b>Let them both grow together until the harvest</b>; and at harvest-time I will tell the reapers to collect the weeds first and tie them in <b>bundles to be burned</b>, but to <b>gather the wheat</b> into my barn.' "</p>	<p>Enemy: Accuser/adversary            Weeds: those who look like faithful but, on the contrary, are imposters            Weeds appearing: time of persecution</p> <p>Let them grow together: the wheat will have to suffer from the weeds for a time            Weeds: pulled from the ground then burned - 2nd death            Wheat: pulled from the ground, then gathered into the Master's House (no second death)</p>

19

## Possible Paul Connection: Philippians

### Joy through Suffering

- **Php 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.**
- Php 1:12-13 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, (13) so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.
- Php 1:14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.
- Php 1:18-21 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, (19) for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, (20) as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. (21) **For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**
- Php 1:27-28 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, (28) and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.
- **Php 1:29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,**
- **Php 2:2-4 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. (3) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (4) Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (speaks to the importance of being who you say you are – if say we follow God, we need to act like it).**

20

## Possible Paul Connection: Philippians

### Joy through Suffering

- **Php 2:7-8** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- **Php 2:15-16** that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, (16) **holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. (and get your crown!)**
- **Php 2:17** Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.
- **Php 3:7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.
- **Php 3:10-11** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
- **Php 3:14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- **Php 3:20-21** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

21

## Possible Paul Connection: Philippians

### Joy through Suffering

- **Php 4:4-8** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. (5) Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; (6) do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (7) And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (8) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.
- **Php 4:13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
- **Php 4:22** All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

22

	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamum	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
To	Darling; desired	Myrrh; death					
From	Holds 7 stars/ walks among lampstands	First/last dead/alive					
+	Don't tolerate evil; Persevered; Acts 17:11	Suffering (pressing, tribulation) and insults					
-	Lost love they had at first	N/A					
+	Hates deeds of people who do things their own way instead of God's	Do not fear suffering; remain faithful					
Ear	Before promise	Before					
Promise	Eat from Tree/Life	Not taste 2nd death					
Age	Apostolic (70-170)	Persecuted (170-312)					
Parable	Four Soils	Wheat/tares					
Paul	Ephesians	Philippians					

23

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