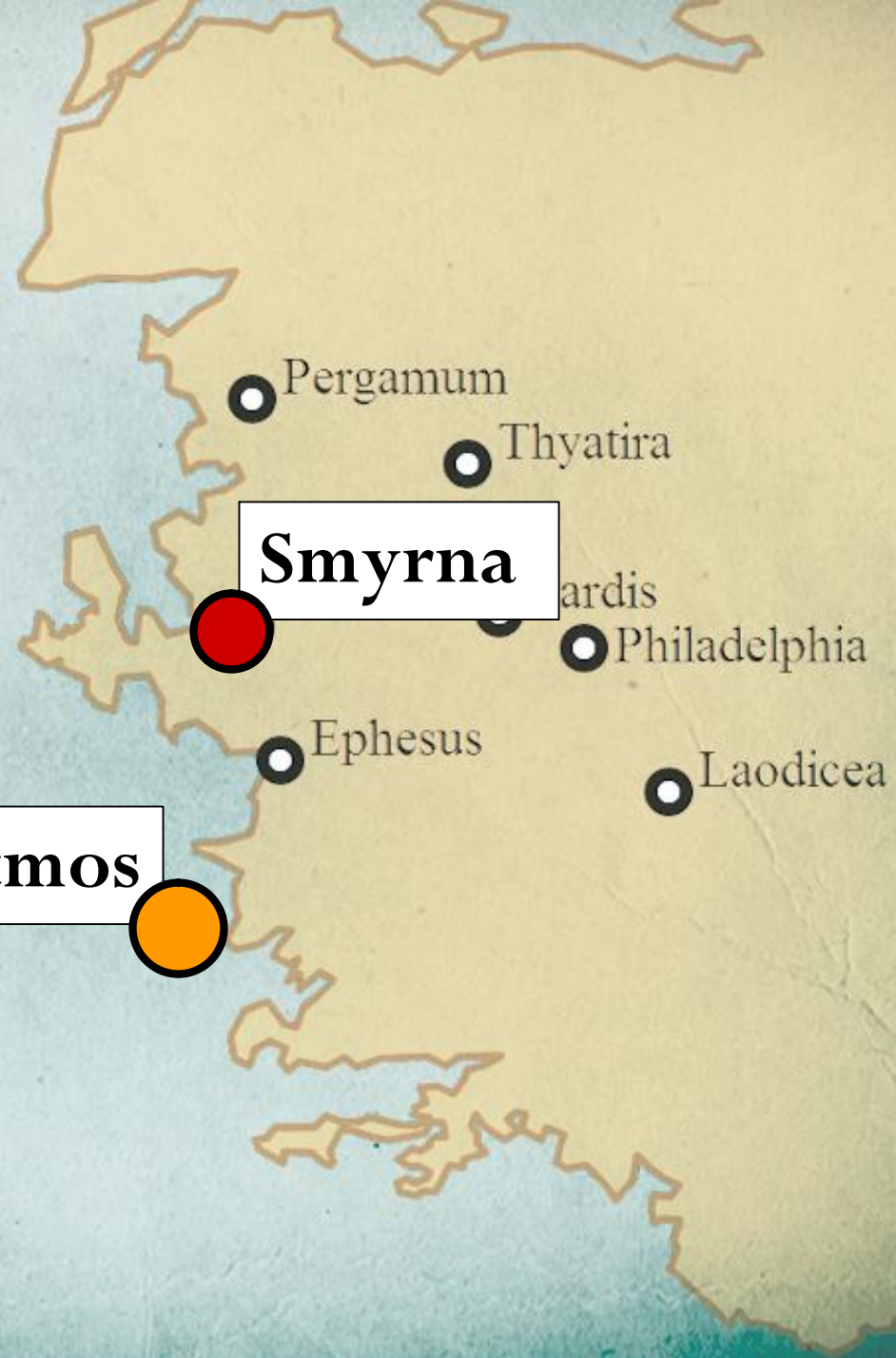


**LETTERS
FROM GOD**

A Brave Church
Revelation 2:8-11

Modern Day Country of Turkey



Smyrna

Patmos

7
LETTERS
FROM GOD

Izmir

Smyrna



City of Smyrna

- Beautifully planned city with an acropolis 500 feet high. Center of Ceasar worship.
- Temple to goddess of Rome. Smyrna worshiped an eclectic mix of gods, including Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Asklepios, and, especially, Cybele.
- People required to worship at temple and receive a certificate to prove it.

City of Smyrna

- Jews were exempt and resented Christians who sought exemption.
- Under Emperor Domitian, it became a capital offense to refuse to offer the yearly sacrifice to the emperor
- Polycarp was martyred here.

Lessons from Jesus on the nature of suffering for Christians.

Revelation 2:8, 9

- Followers of Jesus should expect persecution and suffering because of their faith.

Smyrna= Hebrew word for myrrh, used as perfume for living and dead.

Acts 14:19,20, 22

But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city.... strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, **“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”**



I Timothy 3:12 To Ephesus

Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.



Lessons from Jesus on the nature of suffering for Christians.

Revelation 2:8, 9

- Jesus knows about all the ways we will suffer. Vs. 8, 9

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.



Isaiah 44:6, 7 Jesus = Yaweh, God

“Thus says the **LORD**, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.



Hebrews 2:14,15 Jesus

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.



Lessons from Jesus on the nature of suffering for Christians.

Revelation 2:8, 9

Through **Tribulation** = pressure or anything that burdens our spirit.

II Corinthians 7:5, 6

For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were **afflicted** on every side: **conflicts without, fears within**. But God, who comforts the **depressed**, comforted us by the coming of Titus;



Lessons from Jesus on the nature of suffering for Christians.

Revelation 2:8, 9

Through **Poverty** = extreme poverty, destitution.

Hebrews 10:34

For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and **accepted joyfully the seizure of your property**, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.



**Lessons from Jesus on the nature
of suffering for Christians.
Revelation 2:8, 9**

Through **Blasphemy**=

blapto to injure

pheme is speech.

Speech that injures.

Slander, defamation, abuse.



Lessons from Jesus on the nature of suffering for Christians.

Revelation 2:8, 9

- *Our suffering can reveal to us a richness of our faith. Vs. 9*

James 2:5

*Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be **rich in faith** and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?*



II Corinthians 6:4-10

But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God;



II Corinthians 6:4-10

by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, **as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.**



Counsel from Jesus on how to deal with suffering.

Revelation 2:10-11

- Do not fear your suffering since Jesus will control it. Vs. 10, 11

'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.'



Do not fear your suffering since Jesus will control it. Vs. 10, 11

- He controls the purpose of suffering: to *test* us.

Test: a temptation to sin, used of testing as permitted by God, and of the believer as one who should be in the realization of his own helplessness and his dependence upon God.

- He controls the degree of suffering: *“ten days”*



II Corinthians 4:7-8

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are **afflicted in every way, but not crushed;**



John 10:28, 29

And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.



Counsel from Jesus on how to deal with suffering.

Revelation 2:10-11

- Be faithful until death to receive Christ's reward. Vs. 10, 11

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.'



Matthew 10:22

You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has **endured** to the end who will be saved.



Matthew 24:13

“But the one who **endures** to the end, he will be saved.



I John 2:19

They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.



Revelation 20:13-15

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. **This is the second death, the lake of fire.** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.



RESPONSE TIME

Prayer

- There are people available to pray with at our prayer booth in the back.

Communion

- We have elements of the bread and the cup as you remember Christ's death.

Giving

- You may bring your gift of offering before the Lord to the stations.

