

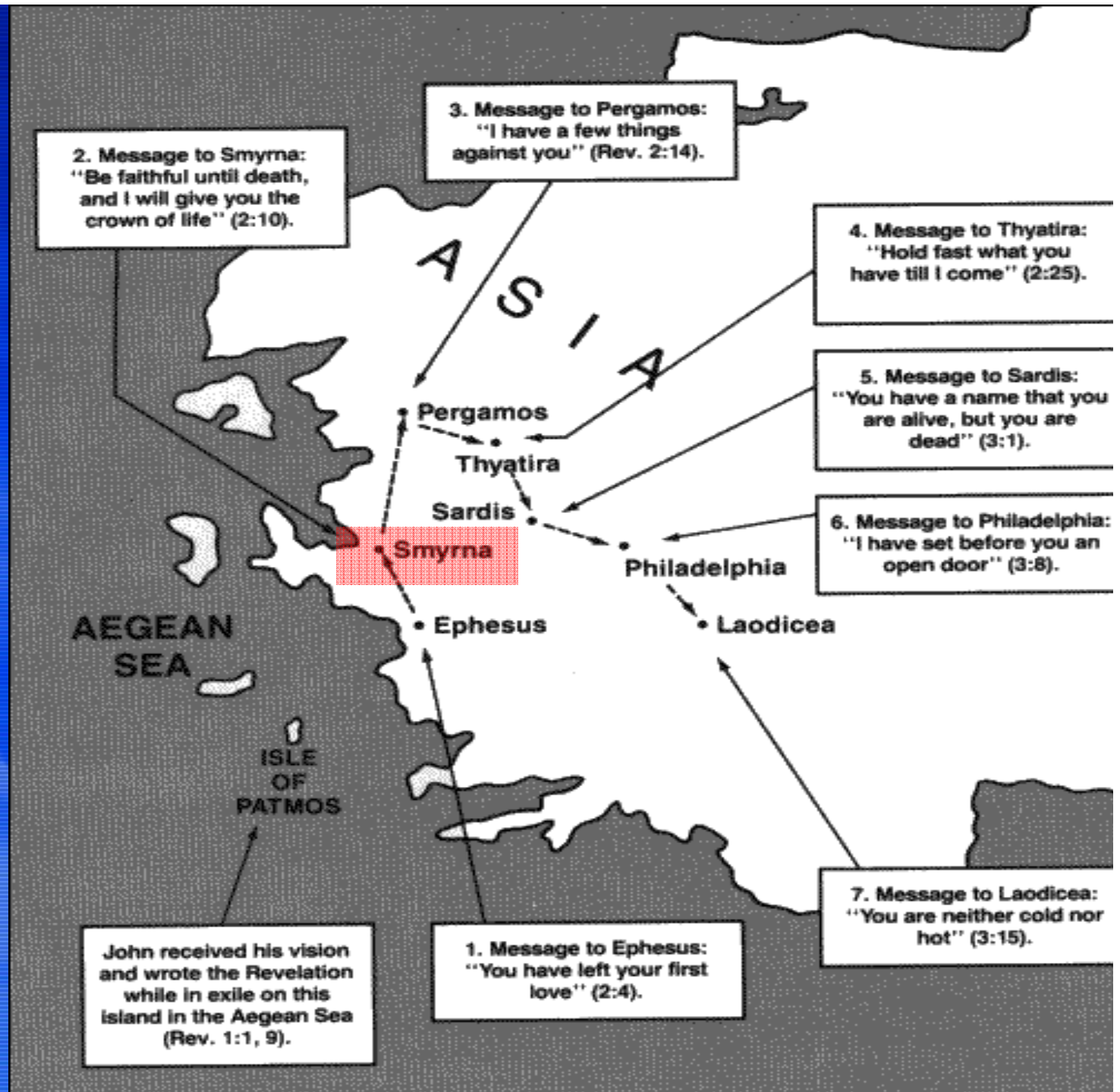
# The Suffering Church

**Revelation 2:7-11**

Series: What Type of Church Are We?



# The Seven Churches



# The Seven Churches Historically

<i>Church</i>	<i>Meaning of name</i>	<i>Symbolizing</i>
Ephesus	desire	the first century (apostolic)
Smyrna	persecution/death	the period of persecution
Pergamum	thoroughly married	the age of Constantine
Thyatira	continual sacrifice	the Middle Ages
Sardis	those escaping	the Reformation era
Philadelphia	brotherly love	the modern missionary movement
Laodicea	the people ruling	the apostate church of the last days



# Introduction

- **The Author - The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, Jesus is sending the message**
- **The Recipients – The church at Smyrna – more particularly to the pastor**
- **No fault, same as Philadelphia**



# Introduction

- Smyrna lay just 35 miles north of Ephesus on the west coast of Asia on the Aegean Sea. It was the loveliest of all the cities and was sometimes called “the Ornament of Asia,”
- There was a population of Jews in the city who were not only numerous, but influential



## Revelation 2:8-11 (NASB)

8 "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:

9 "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.



## Revelation 2:8-11 (NASB)

**10 '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.**



## Revelation 2:8-11 (NASB)

**11 '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.'**



# 1. Faithful in Suffering

9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich),

*Thlipsis* (tribulation) literally means “pressure,” and is the common New Testament word for persecution or tribulation.



# 1. Faithful in Suffering

9...and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not

Unbelieving Jews commonly accused Christians of cannibalism, immorality, breaking up homes, atheism, and political disloyalty and rebellion.



# 1. Faithful in Suffering

Not only was the Lord aware of the persecution the Smyrna church faced, but also of its poverty. Instead of using *penēs*, which denotes those who struggle to meet their basic needs, *ptocheia* (poverty) describes beggars, who live not by their own labor, but by the alms of others. They were destitute

(Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* [reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 128–29).



## 2. The Cause of Suffering

10...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.

The Lord predicted that the devil was about to cast some of them into prison. God's purpose in permitting that imprisonment was so that they would be tested.



## 2. The Cause of Suffering

**10...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**.**

Jesus promised that they would have tribulation for only ten days. Speculation has tried many ways to develop a meaning for ten days. Just note Satan's major assault on that local church would be intense, but brief. The same as with any attack.



# 3. A Word of Encouragement

**10...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

**Those who prove their faith by remaining faithful to the Lord until death will receive as their reward the crown (*stephanos*; the victor's crown) of life (James 1:12). The crown (reward, culmination, outcome) of genuine saving faith is eternal life.**



### **3. How the Church Can Change**

**11 '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.'**

**Though persecuted believers may suffer the first (physical) death, they will never experience the second death.**



# Do/will we Suffer?

**Of course...**

**Why? Testing sure...but how we handle our tribulations is key.**

**Remember because we confess Jesus before men with our faith and perseverance , Jesus will confess us before the Father (Matt. 10:32).**

