

# Smyrnaean Church Age Devotional Lessons

## Part 1

### Introduction and Review:

We have now studied the first three Messages that Brother Branham preached in The 7 Church Ages series.

- Do you remember what they are? The Revelation of Jesus Christ, The Patmos Vision, and the Ephesian Church Age
- Who was the Messenger to the first church age? Paul
- Do you remember the dates of the Ephesian Church Age? AD 53 - 170

Today we are starting on the second church age...The Smyrnaean Church Age.

### Lesson:

Let's listen to Brother Branham briefly describe this Church Age.

*Now, the second church age was called the church age of Smyrna. And it taken place, the Smyrna Age, was issued in at the same time the Ephesian Age went out. The Ephesian Age was from A.D. 55 to A.D. 170. The Smyrna Age come in at 170 and goes to 312. This church is a persecuted church; the one that wears the martyr's crown, is a church of tribulation. And God's promise to it, to the Elected Church in it, was to give it a crown of Life.*  
60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 5.

- How long did Brother Branham tell us this age lasted? From... A.D. 170-312

Let us turn in our Bibles to Revelation 2:8-11. We will read it once through, and then we will take it verse by verse. There are four verses here for the Smyrnaean Church Age.

*8 † And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;*

*9 † I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

*10 † Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

*11 † He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*

- Now, just like for the Ephesian Church Age (the first church age), the verses for each church are directed to the angel of that church age, but the Bible does not tell us who that angel is. It was a mystery for MANY years!
- People did not know who each of these seven angels were until THIS LAST Church Age (the Laodicean), when the angel of Revelation 10:7 would make all of these mysteries and things known.
- Who is that angel of Revelation 10:7? Brother Branham
- That is why we know who this angel of the Church of Smyrna is.

Listen close as Brother Branham tells who the angel messenger is for Smyrna.

*Now, the Smyrna Age, I believe with all the...that I have been able to find, was Irenaeus. 60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 7*

*The reason that I chose Irenaeus: because I believe that Irenaeus was more closer to the Scripture than Polycarp was. Because Polycarp leaned kind of towards the Roman idea of setting up an organization. And—and Irenaeus was firmly against it, he absolutely denounced it. And then, as we all know, the great issue was coming at the Nicene Council; one of the great issues was whether God was three or God was one. And Irenaeus took the side that God was God, now, just One. 60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 8*

- Who did Brother Branham say this angel was? Irenaeus
- Why did Brother Branham say Irenaeus was the angel? He stayed closer with the Scripture and was firmly against the Roman idea of setting up an organization. (Those Nicolaitanes)
- Brother Branham also says that Irenaeus had the SAME faith that Paul and the disciples had handed down. He had the SAME Scriptural teachings. (60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 13)

Let's continue reading the 8<sup>th</sup> verse.

- Here is God again introducing Himself to the next church age, this Smyrnaean Church Age. He always introduces Himself by putting forth something of His Deity. He is the ONE SAME God. He is God of every Church Age. (60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, Para 74) And He lets them know this.

Read Revelation 2:9.

- Let's listen to Brother Branham explain this.

*Let's get to the 2nd verse, or the...that'd be the 8, 9th verse. All right, now the persecution, the 9th verse:*

*I know thy works, thy tribulations,...poverty, (but thou art rich)...(Oh, my!)...I...(Now He's talking to the Church now, the real Church, not the others; they hated those deeds of the Nicolaitanes.)...I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but they are the synagogue of Satan.*

*Now, they were complaining. They were poverty-stricken. The...They had taken all they had. They had built up their little church like this, and being that they was such a little bitty group, they had pushed them out, the big church had, just smothered them out. And It said, "I know. I know you have to meet down on the corner, you meet in the alley, or anywhere else that you can." (And I've been in the catacombs where they have to meet; go down under the ground and meet, and things there.) "I know your tribulations, and I know your troubles, and so forth like that, but you're made rich through those tribulations." Oh, my! Tell me any time a persecution comes upon the Church, it strengthens it. Always it strengthens the Church, in tribulations. "I know your tribulations, but you're rich." Why? "You've held on to Me; you're rich. But your tribulations ain't hurting you." 60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 102-103*

- Whom was God talking to here? The TRUE Church
- So what was God telling His TRUE Church in this Smyrnaean Age?
  - I KNOW your tribulations and that you are poor, in poverty, and pushed out, BUT you are rich!
  - Those persecutions and tribulations those hardships actually strengthen you! You are being strengthened by them. God is saying you're rich! You have held on to ME!
- God is also saying I KNOW the works of these evil ones.
- Who remembers what the word Nicolaitane means? It means "to conquer the laity", to overcome the congregation.
- Now, in this Smyrnaean Church Age the Bible tells us these Nicolaitanes have a synagogue now. They are the synagogue of Satan.

We will get more into that in our next lesson when we will finish going over the last two verses for this church age

## Part 2

### Introduction and Review:

Today we are going to finish going over the second church age.

- What is the second church age? The Smyrnaean Church Age
- How long did this church age last? 170-312 A.D.
- Who was the angel messenger to this Smyrnaean church? Irenaeus

### Lesson:

- Did you know Brother Branham tells us that each church age name was associated with the nature of its character? Each church age's name had a specific meaning. For instance, let's hear Brother Branham tell us what Smyrna means.

*And this church was called Smyrna because it was dying. Smyrna means "bitterness." In other words, a root of bitterness was coming up and was choking it out, it was on its road out to myrrh. That's what they anoint bodies with, myrrh, see. It was myrrh, frankincense, as an ointment. Myrrh is used to—to anoint dead bodies after they embalmed them, and so forth. Associated with death, and the church was dying. 60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 89*

Read Exposition of the Seven Church Ages, p 113.

*The word Smyrna means, "bitter," being derived from the word, myrrh. Myrrh was used in embalming the dead. Thus we have a two-fold significance found in the name of this age. It was a bitter age filled with death.*

Let us turn in our Bibles to re-read the message John wrote to this Church Age, Revelation 2:8-11.

Last lesson we covered verse 8 and most of verse 9. This week we will finish verse 9 and go over verses 10-11.

Read Revelation 2:9.

- What did we say that synagogue of Satan was? Right, the Nicolaitanes.

*Now He said, Satan...Did you notice who He—who He classed as the one that was doing it? Now, this synagogue of Satan was the "Nicolaitanes." We know that. Wasn't it? Then it was an organization, a priesthood that was rising up that would make these people suffer, that would make these people suffer, and they were to be faithful to the Gospel unto death. 60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 111.*

Read Revelation 2:10.

- Remember Brother Branham said this was an age of bitter death. They were martyred for the Gospel's sake, but they were to be faithful UNTO death!
- Now Jesus is telling them here not to fear. He was warning them that there would be tribulation ten days.

Let's listen to Brother Branham describe these "ten days" and find out actually how long this time frame was.

*Now this "ten days" that they talk of here, the ten days. A day in the Bible represents a year. And the ten days was of the last "ten years" of the reign of this D-i-o-c-l-e-a-t-i-o-n, Diocletian. Diocletian, that was that great emperor that reigned in the last... Well, there's several emperors reigned during the Ephesian Church Age. And Nero, I believe, was one. And this Diocletian here was the last one that reigned, in the last ten years, and he was the bloodiest persecutor of all of them. He just sided in with this group and they—they murdered the Christians, and killed them, they burned them, they—they did everything, and it was ten years of the most bloody persecution. And his time and his reign was from 302 until 312. That ended the Smyrna Age, with the issuing in of Constantine. 60-1206 The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 112*

- A day in the Bible represents how many years? 1 year
- So it was 10 years of the bloodiest persecution. It was the last 10 years of the church age, but the Lord said He would give them a crown of life.
- What were the dates of this time? 302-312

Read Exposition of the Seven Church Ages, p 130.

*Every time the Lord uses those words, "Fear not," there is an engagement at hand which will involve great danger and suffering and deprivation. Now He does not say in a blunt, curt manner, "Tribulation is coming." That would frighten one. But like a mother who is about to turn out the light says gently to her child lest he be frightened, "Now don't be afraid, for the light will go out and it will be dark. But remember that I am here with you." So He says, "Don't be afraid of man or what he can do to you. I am with you, and My grace is sufficient for you. When you pass through the waters, they will not overflow you. Not even in death are you defeated. You are more than conquerors."*

Read Revelation 10:11.

- What is the second death? Let's hear Bro. Branham tell us.

*Here's what the Bible said, see:*

*...He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death.*

*The first death is separating from our loved ones. We're go in the Presence of God, never out of His Presence. See? Now, if there's a second death, then it'd have to be the death of the soul. And then he that overcomes the world, or overcomes the things of the world, has Eternal Life and shall not be touched by the second death. There you are, Eternal Life. 60-1206 The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 140-141*

- Even though this Smyrnaean Church Age had to wear the Martyr's Crown, and be killed in the flesh, they were given the promise that they wouldn't be hurt by the second death. They will have Eternal Life! Brother Branham teaches us that this same promise laps over to every overcomer of every church age.

To finish our lesson, listen as Brother Branham describes this church age to us.

*A persecuted church, God called them "persecuted." God looked upon their persecutions, and gave grace to bear it. He looked upon his tribulations, and gave them victory over death. Looked upon their poverty, and give them riches in Him. The Church of Smyrna passed through the fiery furnace of tribulations, but, was a sweet-smelling savour unto Him. That's that Remnant now, not the whole Smyrnaean church; just the Remnant I'm speaking of. The great ten days of tribulation means "ten years of the bloodiest persecution." 60-1206 - The Smyrnaean Church Age, para 27*