

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA  
Message 5  
Words:5772  
Scripture: Revelation 2:8-11

INTRO: I ran out of time in the previous message, and so let me give you the conclusion to that message as an introduction to this one. Here is how I was supposed to conclude: Well, we wrap up this message. We began this message with the criticism. Ephesus had left their first love. It is not clear nor are all agreed as to what that means. I tend to think it means keeping the vibrancy of first Christianity going. You would think if children grow up in a Christian home and are taught the truth from young, their chances of keeping Christianity strong would be much better than the first generation Christians, but it is not. It is much harder. Third generation Christianity is even harder to keep there. Usually by that time liberalism has set in and has a strong hold.

What was the counsel? First, remember! Remember from where you have fallen. They fell, as I see it, by simply letting go. This is the church of declension or letting go. This is the danger of every new Christian, every new church and every new Christian work. And there is one solution: Repent! A change of mind must occur, or the light of the church will be extinguished. And their repentance had to do with their works, and now they were to go back to where they were at the beginning, and do the first works.

You see, our second and third generation Christians may not be able to see what is wrong with the music, or the clothing, or the demeanor, or the talk, or the videos etc... that their parents are concerned about. How can you bring that generation to go back to where their parents were? You know that this is almost an impossible task. Both the family and the Church have a huge responsibility in this. He that has an ear to hear, let him hear.

But oh, how great is the comfort expressed to this church to the overcomer. By the way, in the book of Revelation, some overcomers overcame by being faithful to the death. Overcoming does not mean deliverance from death, it may mean deliverance by death. Now think of the tremendous honor of walking into the city, the New Jerusalem, and picking of the fruit that grows on the trees there, in the new Garden of Eden! And let me give a

huge warning here. By far the majority of mankind will not be there. And more concerning yet, the largest part of professing Christianity will not be there either! Study the Scriptures on that subject and I think that is what you will find. So I close with the words of the Apostle Peter, "Make your calling and election sure." How do you do that? Make sure you are truly saved, and then live right!

So, we have looked at the historical purpose of the letter to Ephesus. Now we want to briefly look briefly at the typical, prophetic and personal purpose and then go on to the letter to the church at Smyrna.

#### B. THE TYPICAL PURPOSE

So we look then at the typical purpose of the letter to the Ephesians. Its typical purpose is that throughout church history it has stood as a word to every church. The big danger is that of the church losing its first love. Maybe it is the trials we have gone through that have not allowed us to lose our first love yet. But from our experience in the past we can easily see that in ten years of easy going, we might be beginning to slip.

We might learn from this letter to seek to maintain our first works. Jesus commended them for their works, their labor and their patience. He commended them that they could not bear those who are evil and that they tested those who said they were sent by God and they found them to be liars. He commended them for their perseverance and patience and laboring without growing weary.

All of this we may all take to heart. The Lord is vitally interested in what is going on in every church. He knows exactly what our strengths and weaknesses are. We do very well to see the dangers that face second and third generation Christians. And we do well to take warning that if we do not live right, the Lord will ultimately remove our candlestick. On the other hand, if we overcome, we have a wonderful promise.

#### C. THE PROPHETICAL PURPOSE

If it is correct that these churches speak prophetically of the Church age, what time period does Ephesus speak of? Dr. Harold Willmington, in his book, "Basic Stages of The Book of Ages" says he thinks it covers the time from 30 AD, that is when the Church began, until 100 AD. That is a time period of only 70 years. However, at the end of that time period, all the original apostles had died. The church would now move into an age in which Christ and the apostles are no longer available to consult.

#### D. The Spiritual

And finally, what is the personal purpose of the words written to this church? We may all find something a little different. Almost all of us can apply the fact that we are in exactly the predicament this church was in age wise. We are mostly, second or third generation Christians. We face exactly the same danger they faced, leaving our first love.

We may, each one of us ask, when He says, "I know your works, your labor and your patience..." what does he know about me? What would he have to say about me? Could He say that I hate that which He hates? Could He say, "You check out every book, every video, every musician, before you accept them?" If he said, "You have done all this BUT..." What would follow the but?

And last, am I an overcomer? May I ask you, have you overcome anger? What are things like in your home when nobody else is around? Have you wronged someone and not taken care of it? Do you keep your eyes and ears where they should be? If so, you are not yet an overcomer.

## II. SMYRNA - Sir Roberta Anderson, the city of life

Intro: In this series on the seven churches of Asia, there is regular change from one church to another. We have come to the second church, the church of Smyrna. The fewest verses, 4; and the fewest words, 134 are given to this church. Yet there is much to be learned from this church. Sir Robert Anderson gives a name to each city

that catches the key idea of the church there. Ephesus he called the city of change. Smyrna he calls the city of life.

Here is an assignment for you. Find a Bible map or go on the internet and find a map that gives the place of each of these seven cities. If you look on a map you will see that you arrive at Smyrna first after you leave Ephesus. So we have a logical progression geographically, and a logical progression of the Church spiritually.

8 *"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:*

9 *"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.*

10 *"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

11 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."*

We begin once more then with the historical meaning of this letter to Smyrna in Revelation 2:8-11, and we begin again with the counselee, and that is Smyrna.

A. Historically (2:8-11)

1. The counselee (2:8a)

Our verse is chapter 2:8. It says,

*And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write...*

Since we have covered the meaning of the words, 'to the angel...' we go on to the city of Smyrna itself. You may go to your phones and check out where Smyrna is in comparison to Ephesus. We are going to go north

the direction of the sea but a long arm of land will go to our left out into the sea. And as we keep going, the sea will come inland again, and then a long arm of the sea will reach right inland, and Smyrna lies right at the tip of that inlet. One thing every writer regarding this city says is that it is a most beautiful city. Let me describe it for you in the words of Barclay. I was going to reduce this and put it in my own words, but I will just read what he says. The title he gives is:

*SMYRNA: THE CROWN OF ASIA Revelation 2:8-11*

Then he writes:

*IF it was inevitable that Ephesus should come first in the list of the seven churches, it was only natural that Smyrna, its great rival, should come second. Of all the cities of Asia, Smyrna was the loveliest. It was known as the ornament of Asia, the crown of Asia and the flower of Asia. The Greek satirist Lucian said that it was 'the fairest of the cities of Ionia'. Aristides, the Greek Christian writer, who sang the praise of Smyrna with such splendour, spoke of 'the grace which extends over every part like a rainbow ... the brightness which pervades every part, and reaches up to the heavens, like the glitter of the bronze of armour in Homer'. It added to the charm of Smyrna that the west wind, the gentle zephyr, constantly blew through its streets. 'The wind', said Aristides, 'blows through every part of the city, and makes it as fresh as a grove of trees.' The constant west wind had only one disadvantage. The sewage of the city drained into the gulf on which the city stood, and the west wind tended to blow the smell back upon the city rather than out to sea.*

*Smyrna was magnificently situated. It stood at the end of the road which crossed Lydia and Phrygia and travelled out to the far east, and it commanded the trade of the rich Hermus valley. Inevitably, it was a great trading city. The city itself stood at the end of a long arm of the sea, which ended in a small land-locked harbour in the heart of the city. It was the safest of all harbours and the most convenient; and*

it had the added advantage that in time of war it could be easily closed by a chain across its mouth. It was fitting that on the coins of Smyrna there should be the image of a merchant ship ready for sea.

The setting of the city was equally beautiful. It began at the harbour; it crossed the narrow foothills; and then behind the city there rose the Pagos, a hill covered with temples and noble buildings which were spoken of as 'the Crown of Smyrna'. One traveller has described it as 'a queenly city crowned with towers'. Aristides likened Smyrna to a great statue with the feet in the sea, the middle parts in the plain and the foothills, and the head, crowned with great buildings, on the Pagos behind. He called it 'a flower of beauty such as earth and sun had never shown to mankind'.

Smyrna's history was very much connected to its beauty, for it was one of the very few planned cities in the world. It had been founded as a Greek colony as far back as 1000 BC. Round about 600 BC, disaster had befallen it, for then the Lydians had broken in from the east and destroyed it. For 400 years, Smyrna had been no city but merely a collection of little villages; then the Macedonian general Lysimachus had rebuilt it as a planned whole. It was built with great, straight, broad streets. Strabo, the Greek geographer, speaks of the handsomeness of the streets, the excellence of the paving and the great rectangular blocks in which it was built. Most famous of all the streets was the Street of Gold, which began with the Temple of Zeus and ended with the Temple of Cybele. It ran across the foothills of the Pagos at an angle; and, if the buildings which encircled the Pagos were the crown of Smyrna, the Street of Gold was the necklace round the hill.

Here we have an interesting and a significant thing which shows the care and knowledge with which John set down his letters from the risen Christ. The risen Christ is called 'the one who died and came to life'. That was an echo of the experience of Smyrna itself. Smyrna had other claims to greatness. It was a free city, and it knew what loyalty was. Long before Rome was undisputed ruler of the world, Smyrna had thrown in

*its lot with Rome, never to waver in its faithfulness. The Roman statesman Cicero called Smyrna 'one of our most faithful and our most ancient allies'. In the campaign against Mithridates in the east, things had gone badly with Rome. And when the soldiers of Rome were suffering from hunger and cold, the people of Smyrna stripped off their own clothes to send to them.*

*Such was the reverence of Smyrna for Rome that, as far back as 195 BC, it was the first city in the world to build a temple to the goddess Roma. And in AD 26, when the cities of Asia Minor were competing for the privilege of erecting a temple to the godhead of Tiberius, Smyrna was picked out for that honour, overcoming even Ephesus.*

*Not only was Smyrna great in trade, and political and religious status; it was also a city where culture flourished. Apollonius of Tyana had urged upon Smyrna the truth that only the people can make a city great. He said: 'Though Smyrna is the most beautiful of all cities under the sun, and makes the sea its own, and holds the fountains of the zephyr, yet it is a greater charm to wear a crown of men than a crown of porticoes and pictures and gold beyond the standard of mankind: for buildings are seen only in their own place, but men are seen everywhere and spoken about everywhere and make their city as vast as the range of countries which they can visit.' So Smyrna had a stadium in which famous games were held each year, a magnificent public library, an Odeion, which was the home of music, and a theatre which was one of the largest in Asia Minor. In particular, Smyrna was one of the cities which laid claim to being the birthplace of the Greek poet Homer; it had a memorial building called the Homereion, and put Homer's head on its coinage. This was a disputed claim. Thomas Heywood, the seventeenth-century poet, wrote the famous epigram:*

*Seven cities warr'd for Homer, being dead,  
Who, living, had no roof to shroud his head.*

*In such a city, we would expect magnificent architecture; and in Smyrna there was a host of temples to Cybele, to Zeus, to Apollo, to Nemesis, to Aphrodite*

and to Asclepius. Smyrna had rather more than its share of a characteristic which was common to all Greek cities. The German historian Theodor Mommsen said that Asia Minor was 'a paradise of municipal vanity', and Smyrna of all cities was noted for 'its municipal rivalry and its local pride'. Everyone in it wanted to exalt Smyrna and had a personal desire to climb to the top of the municipal tree. It is not without significance that in the address of the letter the risen Christ is called 'the First and the Last'. In comparison with his glory, all earthly distinctions are worthless.

There remains one feature of Smyrna which stands out in the letter and which had serious consequences for the Christians there. The Jews were especially numerous and influential (verse 9). We find them, for instance, contributing 10,000 denarii to make the city beautiful. It is clear that in Smyrna they were particularly hostile to the Christian Church, no doubt because it was from them and from those interested in Judaism that Christianity drew many of its converts. So, we may well end this study of Smyrna with the story of the most famous Christian martyrdom which happened there.

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was martyred on Saturday, 23rd February, AD 155. It was the time of the public games; the city was crowded, and the crowds were excited. Suddenly the shout went up: 'Away with the atheists; let Polycarp be searched for.' No doubt Polycarp could have escaped; but already he had had a dream in which he saw the pillow under his head burning with fire; and, when he woke, he told his disciples: 'I must be burnt alive.'

His whereabouts were betrayed by a slave who collapsed under torture. They came to arrest him. He ordered that they should be given a meal and provided with all they required, while he asked for himself the privilege of one last hour in prayer. Not even the police captain wanted to see Polycarp die. On the brief journey to the city, he pleaded with the old man: 'What harm is it to say: "Caesar is Lord" and to offer sacrifice and be saved?' But Polycarp was adamant that for him only Jesus Christ was Lord.



When he entered the arena, there came a voice from heaven saying: 'Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man.' The proconsul gave him the choice of cursing the name of Christ and making sacrifice to Caesar - or death. 'Eighty and six years have I served him,' said Polycarp, 'and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?' The proconsul threatened him with burning, and Polycarp replied: 'You threaten me with the fire that burns for a time, and is quickly quenched, for you do not know the fire which awaits the wicked in the judgment to come and in everlasting punishment. Why are you waiting? Come, do what you will.'

So the crowds came flocking from the workshops and from the baths with bundles of wood - and the Jews, even though they were breaking the Sabbath law by carrying such burdens, were ahead of everyone in bringing wood for the fire. They were going to bind him to the stake. 'Leave me as I am,' he said, 'for he who gives me power to endure the fire will grant me to remain in the flames unmoved even without the security you will give by the nails.' So they left him loosely bound in the flames, and Polycarp prayed his great prayer:

O Lord God Almighty, Father of thy beloved and blessed Child, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received full knowledge of thee, God of angels and powers, and of all creation, and of the whole family of the righteous, who live before thee, I bless thee that thou hast granted unto me this day and hour, that I may share, among the number of the martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and body in the immortality of the Holy Spirit. And may I today be received among them before thee, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as thou, the God without falsehood and of truth, hast prepared beforehand and shown forth and fulfilled. For this reason I also praise thee for all things. I bless thee, I glorify thee through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Child, through whom be glory to thee with him and the Holy Spirit, both now and for the ages that are to come. Amen.

*So much is plain fact; but then the story drifts into legend, for it goes on to tell that the flames made a kind of tent around Polycarp and left him untouched. At length, the executioner stabbed him to death to achieve what the flames could not do. 'And when he did this there came out a dove, and much blood, so that the fire was quenched, and all the crowd marvelled that there was such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect.' What is certain is that Polycarp died a martyr for the faith. It cannot have been easy to be a Christian at Smyrna - and yet the letter to Smyrna is one of the two in which there is undiluted praise.*

Well, that is a bit of the history of this city of Smyrna. We have no record of it in the book of Acts. And so with that background of a beautiful city, it is surprising that the name Smyrna means bitter. What is true is that bitter indeed were the persecutions borne by the Christians at Smyrna. Smyrna, like Ephesus, was a seaport. It was a wealthy city and had abundant apostate Jews who were instrumental in much of the persecution endured by the Christians there. J.B. Smith writes that about 320,000 people live there of which about 3/4 profess to be believers. He also says that because of its beautiful location, its orderly arrangement, and its gradual elevation to a lofty summit led to such names as, 'the first city,' 'the Beauty of Asia,' 'the City of Life and Strength.'

But why would such a beautiful city be called, "Bitter"? Lehman Straus says, "The city of Smyrna received its name from one of its principle products, namely myrrh." You will recognize that when the wise men from the east came with gifts for the newborn king in Israel, one of those was myrrh. Straus further says, "For many centuries it was notably a prosperous seaport city, the port of myrrh. It was situated about 40 miles north of Ephesus. The Greek word Smurna is actually a word of Semitic (Hebrew) origin, the Hebrew root meaning 'bitter'. It was a gum resin taken from a shrubby tree and had a bitter taste. It was used as an ingredient in making perfumes (Psalm 45:8); as one of the ingredients of the holy anointing oil for the priests (Exodus

30:23); for the purification of women (Esther 2:12); and for embalming (John 19:39). It is most significant that our Lord spoke as He did to the assembly at Smyrna, for this church was in the midst of bitter sorrow and suffering" (41).

Further, there is no record of how this church started. I have little doubt that it began through the witness of the Ephesian church. Acts 19:9 says:

*9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.*

I mentioned previously that 'the Way' is an early name for Christians. So Paul then finds a more private place and continues reasoning with the Jews in the school of one Tyrannus, and we do not know anything about that school, but verse 10 says:

*10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*

So, spending 2 years at Ephesus, it would even seem there would be little doubt that Paul did not himself go to Smyrna and preach there. And if not he, certainly the news of his preaching at Ephesus was heard in Smyrna, which is only about 30 miles away.

## 2. The counselor (2:8b)

Well, that is the counselee, and we come in 2:8 to the counselor. It says:

*...These things says the First and the Last, who was dead and came to life...*

The counselor this time is described as the First and the Last. I do not know how much persecution this church had faced by the time this letter came, but later they would face much, much more. We have seen the death of Polycarp, and that took place later. But to them, the description of the speaker is not one of

censure, but one of comfort. The one who is speaking is the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the First and the Last. In 1:8, The Lord is described in this way: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." The Alpha and Omega is the First and the Last. Here is Jesus identifying Himself to them as the Almighty God as we have seen earlier.

And then the speaker adds the second part of how He describes Himself like this: ...who was dead and came to life... Here is a church where many will die for the faith. But the comfort that comes from Almighty God Himself is that He too died, and He has come back to life. If they die, they too will come back to life. This is the hope of the resurrection.

For this church that was going through trials and would yet go through very bitter persecution, I believe these words will have come as a comfort over the next many years. The One who existed long before these persecutions began and would exist long after was still in control.

You will remember that the name Ephesus meant, 'let go' or 'allow', hence 'declension' or 'relaxation'. Sir William Ramsey called Ephesus 'the city of change'. But Smyrna means *bitter*. That is fitting to what would become of the Christians in Smyrna, because they faced bitter persecution. But Sir Robert Anderson calls Smyrna the city of life. Amazing, when we learn what happened here as we saw earlier in Polycarp who was martyred here.

Furthermore, Christ too died under persecution but He is now alive forevermore. So it will be for all those who are faithful until death. Furthermore, the speaker, the Lord Jesus, the counselor is described as the one ... who was dead and came to life... Here is an encouragement for those who will give their lives.

Polycarp, according to one article,... was a bishop of the early church, a disciple of the apostle John, a contemporary of Ignatius, and the teacher

of Irenaeus. According to Irenaeus, Polycarp "was instructed by the apostles, and was brought into contact with many who had seen Christ" (Got Questions.Org). He lived from the latter half of the first century to the mid-second century. Polycarp was martyred by the Romans, and his death was influential, even among the pagans.

Polycarp could have been or would yet be the messenger to this church as mentioned by Jesus when He said in verse 8, "To the angel of the church of Smyrna write..." He was born in 69 AD. So he was probably just a child when Paul came to Ephesus. He died February 23, 155 AD. So if the book of Revelation may have been written around 96 AD. So Polycarp could have been the pastor of this church when this letter came from the Apostle John on Patmos, of whom he had been a disciple. If so, he would have been here another 60 years before he was martyred.

And the Lord Jesus says, "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life...'" Polycarp will surely have taken these words to heart. He had heard of Jesus. He had spoken to a number of those who had seen Jesus. He had been John's disciple, and now he reads these words. What a comfort that must have been.

### 3. The commendation (2:9)

We go then to the commendation of this church in verse 9. It says:

*2:9 I know your works, tribulation and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.*

The first thing the Lord said to Ephesus was, "I know your works..." That is what he says now to Smyrna as well. But then He says He knows their tribulation. The word for tribulation is *thlipsis*. In a literal sense, *thlipsis* means pressure. When it is used in

this sense, it is pressure which is used to seek to make a Christian drop his faith. Now this word does not speak of persecution as such, though it seems it could include it. I rather think that the beginning of their *thlipsis* was not persecution. The word for persecution is *diwoko*. It means to be persued, or as I have said elsewhere, it is *persue cution*. Generally persecution follows lesser troubles. People around Christians who dislike them try to discourage them in all kinds of ways and when that does not work, persecution begins. I tend to think that is where this church is. They have been marginalized. Maybe they cannot find work. Maybe they are robbed. Maybe their church is burned down etc... They have tribulation, not persecution, as such, at this point. The persecution lies before them, and it is another 60 years from here before Polycarp, whom we mentioned earlier, died a martyr.

Now the Lord says, "I know your works..." and then He says He knows their tribulation. I expect what they did, their works, brought about their tribulation. It is an amazing thing to me that a truly godly life wants to draw fire. Turn to Matthew 13. When you set a godly standard of any kind, you need not say one word, your works will draw fire, and amazingly, from professing Christians or religion. You see, the Lord says, "I know your works..." and then he says, "and I know your tribulation..."

Now look at Matthew 13:20-21:

20 *"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;*

21 *"yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*

You will notice in verse 21 the word *tribulation* and the word *persecution*. And the word in our text is the word here given as tribulation not persecution. I think it has not yet come to the point of persecution, but it is building up to it.

Turn now to 2 Corinthians 4:17-18. Paul says:

*17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*

*18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

When we have eternity in our sights, present things, no matter how difficult, are but a light affliction. Why? Because life is so short and eternity so long. Paul speaks of light afflictions? He often despaired of life! Chapter 5:1 then says:

*1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Trusting God does not mean deliverance from trouble. It does not mean health and wealth. It means ultimate salvation even if it costs us our lives. Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." You see, as long as we are in this life, and we have the choice between tribulation or persecution or even death, or to be faithful to the Lord and be ultimately saved. If we are not faithful, we cannot be ultimately saved.

One of the difficulties of the early persecuted church in the time period Smyrna was yet to face was what to do with a professing believer who denied the Lord when the persecution became too great, and they were released because of that denial, and then wanted to come back to the church and recant of recanting. Could such a person be allowed back? That was their dilemma.

So the Lord says in Revelation 2:9, *I know your works, tribulation and poverty...*" I think it cannot be

otherwise than that they suffered tribulation because of their works. And this tribulation resulted, in their case, in poverty, and we will look at that in the next message.

CONCL: Well, we have finished looking at the church at Ephesus and have begun with the church at Smyrna. We see quite a different situation at Smyrna than we did at Ephesus. Let me encourage you to take out a map and check out where these cities were. Today we call the land in which they were, Turkey. Ephesus is where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Aegean Sea. When we go north from Ephesus to Smyrna, though it is only some 35 miles, we find that it is on the Aegean Sea. Follow that sea and and you get into the Black Sea and into Russia.

So here is what we have seen this far. We have looked at the counselee. Verse 8 says:

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

Then we have looked at the counselor, which is the Lord Jesus Christ:

*'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:*

Here we have the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first and the last is the Alpha and the Omega, who is identified in Revelation 1:8 as the Almighty. So the First and the Last is Almighty God, or Jehovah. But then He is identified as the one who was dead and came to life, and that makes Jesus God Almighty.

Then we began to look at verse 9, the commendation:

9 *"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich);*

And I leave us with this question to think about: How rich are we spiritually?