

A FOLLOWING CHURCH
Part 2: HARD LOVE (SMYRNA)
January 20, 2019

“We love, because He first loved us.”

1 John 1:19 (NASB)

PERSECUTION

To oppress, drive away, subjugate or exterminate people because of their

_____.

CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF

“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:....”

Revelation 2:8 (NAS)

“This is what the Lord says – Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and the last; apart from Me there is no God.”

Isaiah 44:6 (NIV)

I am the first and I am the last. My own hand laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens ...”

Isaiah 48:12-13 (NIV)

I am the good shepherd ... and I lay down My life for the sheep ... I lay down My life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord.”

John 10:14-15, 17-18 (NIV)

- **Christ reveals Himself to a persecuted Church as the _____**
_____ Who _____.

CHRIST KNOWS THEIR SITUATION

“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. 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 2:9-10 (NAS)

- **The Church in Smyrna faced four types of persecution:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

James 1:2-4 (NIV)

- **Despite their suffering, Christ offers them a _____
_____, but _____ out.**

FOLLOWING CHRIST THROUGH PERSECUTION

“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.” Revelation 2:11 (NAS)

- 1. STAY _____ ON _____.**

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIV)

- 2. _____ THE REAL _____.**

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spirit forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Ephesian 6:12 (NIV)

- 3. _____ THAT CHRIST IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT.**

- a. My _____ Than My _____.**

“... we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” Romans 5:3-5 (NIV)

- b. My _____ Than My _____ - _____.**

- c. My _____ Than My _____.**

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10:28 (NIV)

- d. The _____ Then _____.**

“Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin ... but thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” I Corinthians 15:54-55; 57-58 (NIV)

MY NEXT STEP THIS WEEK IS ...

If I am a Christ follower, rate myself in terms of the following:

Standing Firm

Invisible

Compromise

Rejection



If I am not standing firm, what will I do this week to take a stand?

In light of Christ's letter to the Church in Smyrna, what do you think Christ would write to GNG? E-mail your thoughts to jeff@goodnewsgathering.org.

If I am not a Christian, discover what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.
• Check box on back of Communication Card.

Prepare for next week's lesson by reading Revelation 2:12-17 and reviewing the Revelation Study Guide at www.goodnewsgathering.org at the Resource tab.