

# Bereans Bible Institute

## Module XI – Revelation

### Lesson 8 – Rev. 2:8-11

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#### I. Smyrna

A. Polycarp was pastor of the Smyrna assembly, ordained by John himself.

1. Irenaeus heard Polycarp teach as a boy, was raised in the assembly at Smyrna.

a. *“But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time, ...”*<sup>1</sup>

b. Polycarp was later martyred by burning at age 86 along with eleven martyrs from the assembly in Philadelphia. This occurred on the “Great Sabbath,”<sup>2</sup> which was Nisan 15,<sup>3</sup> the anniversary of Jesus’ crucifixion.

B. **Vs. 8** Jesus identification by two statements:

1. “The First and the Last,” points to His origin as deity. **Isaiah 48 11-13,16**

2. “the one who died and came to life,” points to His becoming flesh

C. **Vs. 9** Jesus had been “observing” (the 7 eyes on the Lamb, seven “Spirits/Breaths)

1. Trials and Poverty are GOOD! You are RICH (**2 Cor. 8:9**)

2. Jesus saw the “blasphemy” of the Pseudo-Jews

a. Many of the synagogues of the diaspora had mingled Greek philosophical ideas with Judaism. (Essenes, Enochic Judaism, Cabalism). Jesus referred to these as the “synagogue of Satan.”

b. Jesus also linked Temple leadership with Satan (John 8:44).

D. **Vs. 10** No fear in suffering (Polycarp was the perfect example).

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<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Bk. III, ch. iii, vs. 4

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, History, Bk. IV, ch. xv

<sup>3</sup> John 19:31

1. Ten days of testing
    - a. Early Christians: Ten periods of persecution from Nero to Diocletian.
    - b. All Christians: Daniel and his three friends were “tested” 10 days (Dan. 1:12-15)
    - c. End-time Christians: 10 days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, Christ’s return.
  2. Faithfulness to the point of death
    - a. faithfulness until you die
    - b. faithfulness in the face of martyrdom
  3. The reward is immortality
- E. **Vs. 11** *“The one having an ear, listen,”* a favorite saying of Jesus in the Gospels
1. Jesus was speaking to the assemblies through the holy “Breath.” (Not a 3<sup>rd</sup> Person).
  2. *“The one being victorious will not experience the second death,”* the opposite of receiving the “wreath of life.”