



## REVELATION 16 – SMYRNA: CROWN OF LIFE

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Revelation 2:10-11

## PROLOGUE – SMYRNA: CHURCH WITH MANY ENEMIES

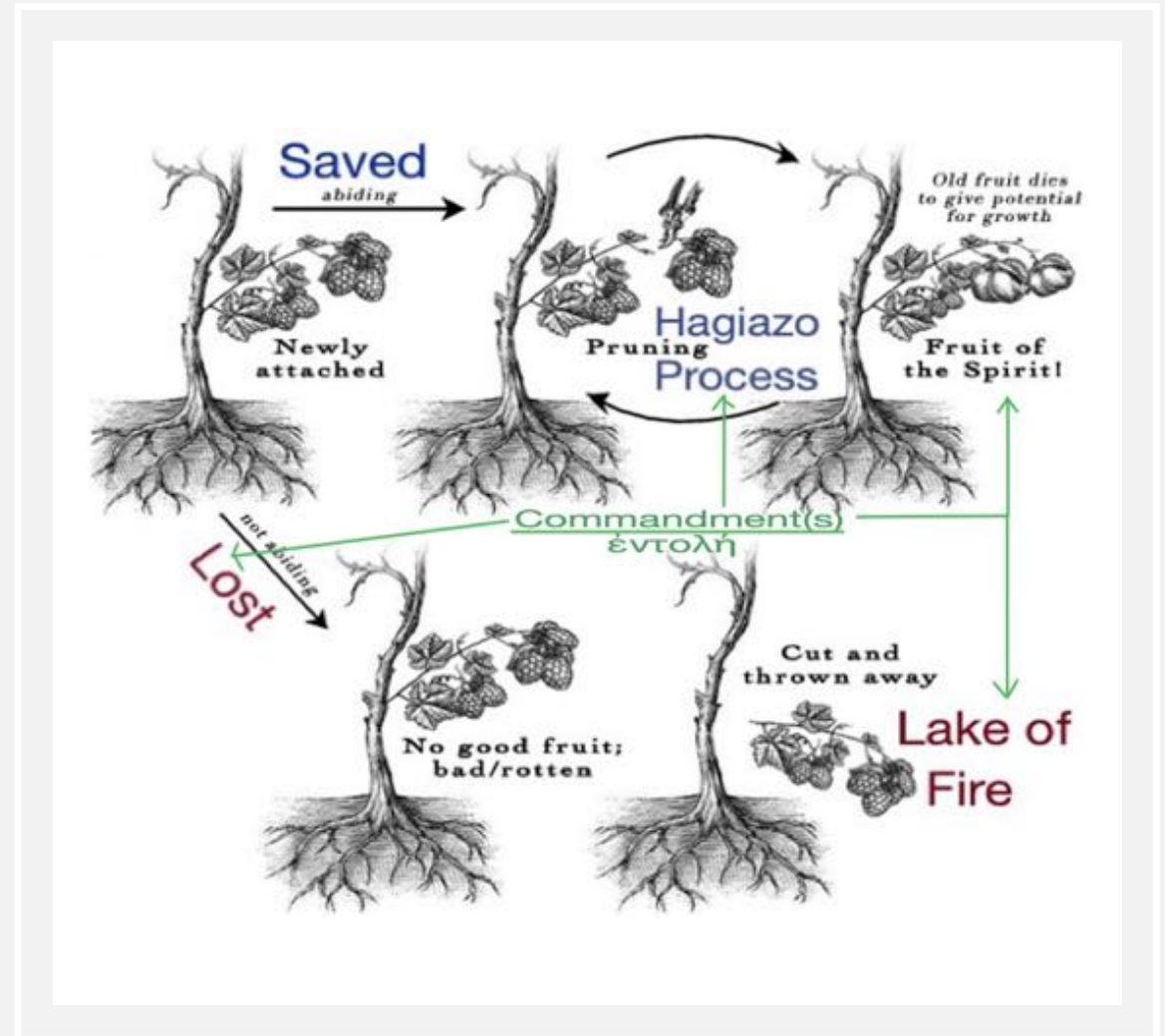
- Smyrna was bustling wealthy metropolis by World's standards, but its church was *weak* by worldly standards {powerless}
  - This was not a wealthy church; thus, it had little influence and little respect
  - Early church Gentile growth occurred primarily among the slave class
  - Deprecated by the wealthier classes meant it could be oppressed, bullied, by local political-religious forces: *Easy target*
  - *A kick the dog* metaphor, easy non-threatening target to blame for whatever for any convenient issue needed to sway public's focus
  - *Illegal*, not approved, religion seen as disrupting the *peace of Rome*

## CHARGES AGAINST CHRISTIANITY: WHY SMYRNA WAS PERSECUTED

- Being a *new* faith from an obscure culture, many misconceptions arose
  - Cannibalism: Lord's Supper *body and blood* symbology was believed actual by pagans
  - Immorality: Use of *brother and sister*, along with their early-late meetings in homes, contributed to belief that believers practiced orgies {Ignore religious prostitution}
  - Atheism: Since Christians practiced an illegal religion and refused to acknowledge any other religion as a different path to *good*; they were considered dangerous atheists
  - Non-Patriots: Christians refused military service based on, "*Do not Kill*" and Christ's "*Turn the other cheek*," teachings; this threatened the very life of the Empire
- Catastrophes would be considered "*Ire of the gods*" due to Christians' impiety being tolerated by society: Persecution was demanded to prevent these events

# HAGIAZO PROCESS: TRIBULATION

- Hagiazo Process: Building Holiness in You
  - Tribulation, pressing down, is Christ's means of producing *good fruit* in believers, maturation; but lost unmasks asebeia, ungodly, or *bad fruit*
  - Peirazo, testing usually by world through one's continuing fleshly traits; they mean it for evil, but God uses it for Good {Job, Joseph} (Ge 50:20)
- Hagiazo Process is not punishment for sin
  - It is love to develop maturity (Ja 1:2-8, 12-14)
  - Christ disciplines those He loves; others are illegitimate, rejected (He 12:5-11)



## CHRIST *LOVES* SMYRNA: DEVELOPING MATURING BELIEF

- Ephesus, when faced with persecution left its *first love*, Christ; Smyrna retains its *first love* to endure Hagiazo Process driving it into greater intimacy with Christ
  - Yes, they have sin; but Christ is greater than their sin, forgiving them (Ro 5:20-21; 1Jo 1:8-10)
  - Yes, World hates them because they *reveal* World's foolishness (Jn 15:18-27)
- Christ commands: *Stop Fearing!* For it is *fear* the flesh-Satan uses to commit us to choose sin rather than life; especially *fear of Death* because we do not truly believe Christ conquered Death; His resurrection showed His victory (Jn 16:32-33)
  - Same command Christ gave to John; these believers on par with John before Jesus
  - Jesus had the Father, John had the Father, they, and us, have the Father: We are not alone in Tribulation (Ps 23; Mt 11:25-30)

# BE FAITHFUL: ONLY IN CHRIST

- Flesh-World-Satan are *allowed* to be the agents of Hagiazo Process for a finite period {Ten Days} (Job 1-2)
  - Faithfulness only occurs in Christ; *Hypomene* or endurance is of the Spirit (Ro 5:1-5)
  - As *Stephanos* {Crown} who died for his faithfulness saw Christ, some of them may die for their faithfulness and they will see Christ; remember: **All** die (Ac 7:54-60; He 9:27-28)
- Saved will be brought to maturation to *understand* {hear} these words: Always
  - *Crown of Life* {Stephanos} is not a special reward; given to All who are saved (Jn 3:36)
  - We only *conquer* by resting in Christ; if we walk in our strength, which is small, we will fall away: What is more valuable than saving your soul for eternity? (Pr 24:10; Mt 16:24-27)