

Introduction

- I. One of the greatest fears we have is the fear of the persecution that is coming for the church.
- II. Remember that our Lord Jesus Christ is present with His church and caring for her.

The Persecuted Church

I. The Description

- A. The church in Smyrna was a persecuted church.
 1. The term tribulation means literally pressed or squeezed.

 2. The first form of persecution for these Christians was poverty.

 3. Second, they were slandered by the Jews.
- B. Because this church in Smyrna represents the persecuted church in the history of the world, we see in this church the persecution we experience today.
 1. The church today does experience persecution.

 2. What explains this persecution for the church in Smyrna and the church today?

II. The Condition

- A. God uses persecution to strengthen the church.

- B. This is important because Jesus says to the church in Smyrna that the persecution will continue and will even increase.

III. The Encouragement

- A. Notice from whom this encouragement comes - our Lord Jesus Christ, the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.

- B. Now, we can hear what He says: Fear none of those things...