I. What you have seen (Rev 1).

II. What is now (Rev 2–3)—the seven churches of Asia Minor.
   A. Ephesus (2:1–7)
B. Smyrna (2:8–11)

- Lysimachus, rebuilt Smyrna, 3rd cent. B.C.
- Roman commercial center with a port.
- Nearly 100,000 in time of Paul and John.
- Apostate Jews persecuted its Christians.
B. Smyrna (2:8–11)

- City of life: “the beauty of Asia.”
- Izmir still exudes joy, life, and brightness as Turkey’s 3rd largest city.
- 1 of the 7 churches still prospering.
- Large population professes Christianity.
B. Smyrna (2:8–11)

1. Characterization of Christ (v. 8)
   – He is the first and the last—He is Creator, Redeemer, and Completer of the work of God. He is sovereign over all history past, present, and future.
   – He is the victor over death—the first to be resurrected.
2. Commendation from Christ (v. 9)

   - He commends the church at Smyrna for its faithfulness during persecution by some Jews who are tools of Satan (cp. John 8:31–47).

   - He commends the church at Smyrna for being spiritually rich, even though they are materially impoverished.
3. Complaint by Christ
   – He has no complaint about the church at Smyrna.
4. Counsel from Christ (v. 10)
   – He counsels the church at Smyrna to not fear the suffering that they are about to experience.
   – He counsels the church at Smyrna to remain faithful through the testing which will occur by means of persecution.
5. Caution by Christ (v. 10)
   - He warns the church at Smyrna that they will experience suffering for ten days.
6. Commitment of Christ (vv. 10, 11)

- The faithful at Smyrna will receive the crown of life (see James 1:12).
- The overcomers at Smyrna will not be harmed by the second death.
7. Practical Implications
   – Believers need to prepare themselves for immediate persecution.
   – Persecution can be the result of engaging Satan and his forces in spiritual combat.
Questions for Discussion

a) What “riches” does ___________________ possess in Christ?

b) How can ____________________________ prepare for suffering or persecution?

c) Why would Christ have no complaint about ____________________________?
Implications Regarding Jesus Christ

• He is sovereign over all history.
• He lives for His church.
• He knows His church’s sufferings.
• He gives spiritual riches to His church.
• He calms His church’s fears.
• He desires His church’s faithfulness.
• He rewards faithful believers.
• He leads in battle with Satan.