

SMYRNA - The Church

- It's located about 40 miles north of Ephesus
- Domitian was the Roman "Caesar" of that time who launched an extensive persecution against the church.
- It's not mentioned in Acts nor is there any profile of it in the New Testament.
- Most church historians assume it was founded during Paul's 3 year stay in Ephesus.
- There were mass executions of Smyrna believers who refused to bow a knee to Caesar.
- Smyrna was a "suffering" church.
 - The word "Smyrna" means myrrh – yes the same myrrh the Magi brought to the baby Jesus.
 - Myrrh was a substance taken from a thorny tree that when crushed would yield a fragrant aroma.
 - Initially it was used for a type of perfume but later was used to put on dead bodies for aromatic purposes. It became associated with death.

SMYRNA - The City

- Was called the "Crown of Asia"
- Mountainous and near the water – very beautiful
- Old...the city was repeatedly destroyed, invaded, ransacked over time and a new city built on the ruins of the old one.
- According to some historians, during the time of John, when it rained sewage would flow in the streets toward the sea because no provision had been made to handle sewage!
- Earthquakes frequent in the area
- Smyrna is still a city, currently named Izmir, Turkey AND Christians still worship there.
- During Roman times, it had one of the finest harbors in the world but due to a constant west wind sewage that drained into the sea was often blown back into the city.
- It became a center of science and medicine
- It was a "free" city, seeming always to have been on the winning side of Roman civil wars
- It was given the privilege of self-governing by Rome
- A strong cult of emperor worship existed in Smyrna
- It was a center for the worship of Apollo, Aphrodite, and Zeus
- The legendary epic Greek poet Homer was born in Smyrna (wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey)
- A large Jewish community also existed in John's day there...