

# Jesus Walks Among the Lampstands

Jesus' Assessment of Smyrna

Lesson #06

go to map of modern Turkey or visit  
the Istanbul Archaeological Museum



Troas

Pergamum

Sardis

Smyrna

Ephesus

Miletus

Laodicia

Hieropolis

Antioch of Pisidia

Iconium

Lystra

Derbe

Perge

Aspendos

Tarsus

Antioch  
of Syria





















“Other materials illustrating Smyrna’s loyalty to the emperor include a coin portraying Nero, and dedications to Titus and Domitian. Statues of Domitian, Trajan, and Hadrian have also been recovered.”



## The Christ Title

“The first and the last”



“Who was dead,  
and has come to life again.”



## The Commendation

### Revelation 2:9

“<sup>9</sup> ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.’”



## **Matthew 7:13-14**

“<sup>13</sup> Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

## Poverty and Slander

Both are mentioned in verse 9.



## **Hebrews 10:34**

“You joyfully accept the  
plundering of your property.”

“Blasphemy”

The Greek is *BLASPHEMIA*.



Pliny the younger, governor to Trajan, 111-113.

“ . . . Meanwhile, in the case of those who were *denounced* to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians: those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered to be executed . . . Soon *accusations* spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the

gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statutes of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ – none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do – these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the *informer* declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ . . . I therefore postponed the investigation and



hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed . . . Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded .

Trajan (Emperor, 98-117) to Pliny the younger:  
“You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been *denounced* to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They [Christians] are not to be sought out; if they are *denounced* and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it – that is, by worshipping our gods – even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted *accusations* ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of the age.”

Suffering is the hallmark of the church.



What would Jesus say about us?