

SMYRNA

A PROSPEROUS CITY IN THE FIRST CENTURY A.D.



A STRATEGIC SEAPORT

- A large, beautiful and wealthy city, proud of its splendor.
- Crucial seaport of Asia Minor, terminus of trade routes extending eastward.
- Surpassed Ephesus and Pergamum in physical beauty.



ARCHITECTURAL SPLENDOR

- Crowned with temples and buildings forming an ideal acropolis—“the crown of Smyrna.”
- Famous Street of Gold ran west to east, curving around the hill with temples at each end.
- Boasted gymnasia, forums, theaters, odeons, and temples.



LOYAL TO ROME

- Built a temple honoring Roma in 195 BC—remarkably early for the region.
- In A.D. 26 secured the privilege of erecting a temple to Tiberius, Livia, and the Senate.
- Loyalty to Rome distinguished Smyrna's orientation to the West.



RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

- Decidedly pagan.
- Protecting divinity was a local variety of Cybele, the Sipylene Mother.
- After Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70, Jews became a favored and powerful settlement in the city.



A JEWISH PRESENCE

- After A.D. 70, Jews grew powerful in Smyrna.
- Their presence created tension with the emerging Christian community.
- Jews in Smyrna proved especially hostile to Christians and informed against them before Roman officials.



Smyrna was a city of wealth, beauty, and loyalty to Rome—yet a spiritually divided city where Christ's church would shine with faithful witness.

