

ST LUKE'S – HOME GROUP QUESTIONS – 1ST OCTOBER 2017

Isaiah 44:1-8 and Revelation 2:8-11

The Persecuted Church

Possible questions for discussion:

- 1) *'These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again'* (Rev. 2:8). Why do you think these particular words were given to the persecuted believers in Smyrna? What encouragement did they provide to them - and to us today?
- 2) *'I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God'* (Isaiah 44: 6). The Christians in Smyrna lived among many gods, idolatries and pagan beliefs, as we do in the UK today. What examples have we come across or do we see emerging in our culture today? How can we take a courageous stand against their encroaching influence?
- 3) *'If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord...'* (Rom.10:9). To whom or what do we tend to bow the knee today?
- 4) Why are many Christians - and even church leaders - remaining somewhat silent, or adapting what they say to conform to the views of the majority of so-called 'right-thinking' people? What encouragement to be courageous do we find in Rev. 2:8-11?
- 5) What is the warning, the command and the promise in Rev. 2:10? Are these mainly relevant to believers living under anti-Christian regimes? How are they helpful to us?
- 6) What signs are there that Christians who put their heads above the parapet are being persecuted in the UK today? How can we avoid 'privatising our faith' and keeping it mainly for church or personal devotion? What difficulties have we faced in witnessing 'on our frontline'?
- 7) What did you make of John's words in verse 11 about 'the second death'? (See John 3:16). How are the words we say in the Nicene Creed relevant to this teaching?: *'We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come'*, and in the Apostles' Creed: *'I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting'*.
- 8) *'Be faithful, even to the point of death and I will give you life as your victor's crown'* (v10). Which Christian martyrs do we most admire, and what do we owe to them?

Peter LeRoy 29/9/17