

A.D. 96 / To the Pastor & Congregation at Smyrna,

The words of the first and the last, the One who became dead and came to life. I am the One who was before all creation, and I am the one who will be standing and remain when all else is gone. I am your Lord, Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of kings on earth. I love you and have set you free from your sins by my blood and have made you a kingdom, priests to our God and Father. I am the Alpha and the Omega; I am the One who is and who was and who is to come; I am the Almighty. I have a message for you, a message set in eternity.

First, I know you. You do not hear Me or see Me, but I am in your midst. In fact, I walk among all of the churches of Asia Minor—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Each and every one. I am there. I see you; I know you. I know what you are going through. Nothing escapes my notice. I know your story from front to back, beginning to end. I know you better than you know you. And I see your life more clearly than you ever will, so you must listen to me.

I know your troubles and your great poverty (even though you are rich in my eyes). I know that you are slandered by those who should be your brothers. I too have felt the brunt of lies and the hate of unjust accusations from those who profess to be the people of God, but who, in reality, serve Satan.

So listen very carefully to the eternal One. You will not be able to understand what I am about to tell you, or understand life at all, not your life, not the life of your church, not anyone's life, if you do not understand these things in the context of eternity. Your life here, brief as it is, is set in eternity, and is significant within my eternal plan and purpose. This perspective will free you to see the events of your life through the truth of God and his word. I am telling you this to prepare your heart for faithful service to Me.

Also, you must hear my words in the context of death and life, so I speak to you as One who knows death, as in I have died, and who has won the victory over death, as in I rose from the grave and live again. I did this for you, for your victory. I know death. I went through the valley of deepest darkness and became alive again. I will be there with you and for you when you face the same journey. I fought sin and death and won. You will win because I won, so I exhort you now to live worthy of your victory.

So, then, hear my words in the context of death and life. Why is this relevant? Because Satan is poised to attack your church and throw some of you in prison. Some of you may die; all will suffer. Never forget the spiritual battle. You are fighting against the cosmic powers of darkness, at war with unimaginable evil. Never forget. Never forget that our arch-enemy, Satan, will try every attack, every deception in the book, to cause you to veer from your love and loyalty to Me. I am telling you now to not be afraid of what you are about to suffer.

So pay attention so that through your suffering you will hear My voice. I will always be there. I will never abandon you. Know that are not alone, never alone, never forsaken. Know that your suffering has true meaning and significance in the eternal plan and purpose of God. Know that suffering does not mean defeat. Be faithful even unto death, and I will reward you with the crown of life.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.