

RETURNING TO THE ORTHODOXY OF THE CHURCH

(Thursday—Evening Session)

Message Three The Church in Smyrna

RK *Hymns*: 124, 639

Scripture Reading: Rev. 2:8-11; 1:18; 22:13

- Rev 2:8 And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again:
- Rev 2:9 I know your tribulation and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.
- Rev 2:10 Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- Rev 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall by no means be hurt of the second death.
- Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.
- Rev 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

I. The church in Smyrna was a church under the suffering of persecution—Rev. 2:8-11:

- Rev 2:8 And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again:
- Rev 2:9 I know your tribulation and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.
- Rev 2:10 Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- Rev 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall by no means be hurt of the second death.

A. In Greek *Smyrna* means “myrrh,” a sweet spice that, in figure, signifies suffering; the church in Smyrna was a suffering church—v. 10:

Rev 2:10 Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

1. This persecuted church suffered in the sweetness and fragrance of Christ.
2. This church was in the tribulation in Jesus and was in the fellowship of His sufferings—1:9; Phil. 3:10.

Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

3. The church in Smyrna suffered as Christ Himself did and thereby became a continuation of His suffering—Col. 1:24:

Col 1:24 I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;

- a. The afflictions of Christ are of two categories: those for accomplishing redemption, which have been completed by Christ Himself, and those for producing and building the church, which need to be filled up by the apostles and the believers.
- b. “The afflictions of Christ...for His Body, which is the church” (v. 24) must be completed by His followers both individually and collectively.

Col 1:24 I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that

which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;

- c. In the church in Smyrna we see the collective continuation of the sufferings of Jesus.
- d. Because this church was a continuation of Jesus' suffering, it was truly the testimony of Jesus—Rev. 1:2, 9; 19:10.

Rev 1:2 Who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, even all that he saw.

Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Rev 19:10 And I fell before his feet to worship him. And he said to me, Do not do this. I am your fellow slave and a fellow slave of your brothers who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the prophecy.

- B. The church in Smyrna suffered “the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan”—2:9:

Rev 2:9 I know your tribulation and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

- 1. The Judaizers slandered the suffering church by evilly criticizing her; they stubbornly insisted on keeping their Judaistic system, consisting of the Levitical priesthood, the sacrificial rituals, and the material temple, which were all types that had been fulfilled and replaced by Christ.
- 2. Since the church under the new covenant in God's economy had no part in their religious practice, the Judaizers slanderously criticized her.
- 3. In principle, it is the same today, in that religious people slander the churches in the Lord's recovery, which seek the Lord and follow Him in spirit and in life and do not care for the religious system.
- 4. According to the Lord's word in John 15:1, 4-5, and 18-24, the vine and the branches are opposed by the religious world (Judaism); today Christianity is the religious world, the religious system that opposes not only Christ, the true vine, but also the church, the branches of the vine—cf. Gal. 1:4.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:18 If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before you.

John 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

John 15:20 Remember the word which I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also; if they have kept My word, they will keep yours also.

John 15:21 But all these things they will do to you because of My name, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.

John 15:23 He who hates Me hates My Father also.

John 15:24 If I did not do among them the works which no one else has done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.

Gal 1:4 Who gave Himself for our sins that He might rescue us out of the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father,

- C. The persecution suffered by the church began from the religious synagogue of the Jews instigated by Satan, the adversary, and it was consummated by the Roman Empire used by the devil, the slanderer; the persecution of the suffering church was a cooperation of satanic

religion and devilish politics—Rev. 2:9-10.

Rev 2:9 I know your tribulation and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Rev 2:10 Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

D. To the suffering church the Lord Jesus said, “I know your tribulation”—v. 9:

Rev 2:9 I know your tribulation and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

1. Tribulation is precious to the church because it tests the life of the church.
2. The Lord’s purpose in allowing the church to suffer tribulation is not only to testify that His resurrection life overcomes death but also to enable the church to enjoy the riches of His life—John 11:25; Rev. 1:18; Eph. 3:8.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

II. In speaking to the church in Smyrna, the Lord said that He is “the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again”—Rev. 2:8:

Rev 2:8 And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again:

A. The fact that Christ is the First and the Last means that He never changes:

1. In suffering, the church must know that the Lord is the First and the Last, the ever-existing, unchanging One.
2. Whatever the persecuting environment may be, the Lord remains the same; nothing can precede Him, nor can anything exist after Him; all things are within the limits of His control.

B. The Lord’s declaration in verse 8 implies the creation—the First—and the completion—the Last—and it also implies Christ’s incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection:

Rev 2:8 And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again:

1. This is a declaration to strengthen the suffering church in Smyrna, which was experiencing and suffering martyrdom.
2. The only thing that can support the saints in their martyrdom is seeing the One who created and will complete the entire universe and who was incarnated, lived on earth, was crucified, and resurrected; such a vision sustains the martyrs to stand in their sufferings—v. 10.

Rev 2:10 Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

3. All the local churches need to believe that the Lord Jesus is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End; He will accomplish what He has begun in His recovery—22:13.

Rev 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

C. As the One who became dead and lived again, Christ is the living One—2:8; 1:18:

Rev 2:8 And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again:

Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

1. The Lord Jesus suffered death and lived again; He entered into death, but death could

not hold Him, because He is the resurrection—Acts 2:24; John 11:25.

Acts 2:24 Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

2. “I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever”—Rev. 1:18:

Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

a. Resurrection is a life that passes through death and still remains living.

b. Christ’s resurrection is the lengthening of His days; He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection.

3. The resurrected Christ, the living One, is living in us and among us; therefore, all the churches should be living as He is, full of life and overcoming death—1 Tim. 3:15.

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

4. The Lord’s living forever is His testimony; the more living we are, the more we are the testimony of the living Jesus—Rev. 1:2, 9; 19:10.

Rev 1:2 Who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, even all that he saw.

Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Rev 19:10 And I fell before his feet to worship him. And he said to me, Do not do this. I am your fellow slave and a fellow slave of your brothers who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the prophecy.

5. For us to be living, we must have not only life but the life supply; as the living One, Christ cares for the churches by giving us Himself not only as life but also as the life supply—John 4:10, 14; 6:48, 51; Rev. 2:7, 17; 3:20.

John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.

John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.

John 6:48 I am the bread of life.

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, given for the life of the world.

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Rev 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except he who receives it.

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.

D. As the One who became dead and lived again, Christ has the keys of death and of Hades—1:18:

Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

1. The Lord Jesus overcame death and destroyed the devil, the keys of death and of Hades are now in His hand, and He is victorious over the grave—Heb. 2:14; Rev. 1:18.

Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in

- like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,
- Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.
2. In His resurrection the Lord Jesus took away the authority of death and of Hades; death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control—v. 18.
Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.
 3. In the church life today, we are no longer subject to death and Hades, for Christ abolished death and overcame Hades in His resurrection—Heb. 2:14.
Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,
 4. Christ not only defeated death—He nullified it; 2 Timothy 1:10 reveals that Christ nullified death, making it of none effect, through His devil-destroying death and death-swallowing resurrection—Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:52-54.
2 Tim 1:10 But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,
Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,
1 Cor 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.
1 Cor 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
1 Cor 15:54 And when this corruptible will put on incorruption and this mortal will put on immortality, then the word which is written will come to pass, "Death has been swallowed up unto victory."

III. “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life”—Rev. 2:10:

- Rev 2:10 Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- A. “Be faithful unto death”:
 1. The Lord insists that the life of all those who serve Him belongs to Him; this is why we must be faithful even unto death.
 2. Being faithful unto death is a matter both of attitude and of time:
 - a. As to our attitude, we must be faithful even unto death—12:11.
Rev 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.
 - b. As to time, we must be faithful until death.
 - B. “I will give you the crown of life”:
 1. The crown of life, as a prize to those who are faithful unto death in overcoming persecution, denotes the overcoming strength that is the power of the resurrection life (Phil. 3:10); it also denotes that these overcomers have attained to the out-resurrection from the dead (v. 11), the outstanding resurrection.
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
Phil 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.
 2. Not only the tree of life but the crown of life will be a reward to the suffering church—Rev. 2:7, 10:
Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

- Rev 2:10 Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- a. The eating of the tree of life is inward for supply, and the crown of life is outward for glory.
 - b. The promises concerning the tree of life and the crown of life are wrapped up with the divine life (John 1:4; 10:10; 11:25; 1 John 5:11-13); this life must be our food, and then it will be our expression and our glorification as the crown of life.
 - John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
 - John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
 - 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
 - 1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
 - 1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

Excerpts for the Ministry:

THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA— THE RESURRECTION LIFE AND THE CROWN OF LIFE

The Lord was sovereign in selecting the churches to fulfill His purpose. He chose seven cities in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. According to the Greek, the name of each city is very meaningful, exactly matching its spiritual significance. As we have pointed out, *Ephesus* means “desirable,” indicating that the church in Ephesus was precious to the Lord and desirable in His eyes. In Greek *Smyrna* means “myrrh.” Myrrh is a sweet spice which, in figure, signifies suffering. In typology myrrh signifies the sweet suffering of Christ. Thus, the church in Smyrna was a suffering church, prefiguring the church under the persecution of the Roman Empire from the latter part of the first century to the early part of the fourth century. This persecuted church suffered in the sweetness and fragrance of Christ. In other words, this church was in the tribulation of Jesus and in the fellowship of His sufferings. The church in Smyrna suffered as Christ Himself did, having become a continuation of His suffering. In Colossians 1:24 Paul said that he filled up “that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church.” Paul was completing the sufferings of Christ. Although no one can continue Christ’s redemption, His sufferings must be completed by all His followers both individually and collectively. In the church in Smyrna we see the collective continuation of the sufferings of Jesus. Because this church was a continuation of Jesus’ suffering, it was truly the testimony of Jesus.

Let us now consider the speaker to the church in Smyrna. In verse 8 the Lord says, “These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again.” The Lord told this suffering church that He was the First and the Last. This means that no matter how great were the sufferings through which He passed, those sufferings could not terminate or damage Him. He was the First and eventually He was also the Last. In suffering, the church must know that the Lord is the First and the Last, the ever-existing, unchanging One. Whatever the environment may be, He remains the same. Nothing can precede Him, nor can anything exist after Him. All things are within the limit of His control.

When the Lord told the church in Smyrna that He was the First and the Last, He was indicating that the church had to be victorious. The church should not be frustrated by any type of suffering. She must pass through all the sufferings and come to the end, because the Lord, who is the life and Head of the church, is the First and Last.

THE ONE WHO BECAME DEAD AND LIVED AGAIN

In this verse the Lord also said that He is the One “who became dead and lived again.” *Lived again* means resurrection. The Lord suffered death and lived again. He entered into death, but death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24) because He is the resurrection (John 11:25). The suffering church also needs to know Him as such a One that she may endure all kinds of suffering. However severe the persecution may be, the church will still be alive, for the resurrection life of Christ within her can endure death. The most suffering or persecution can do is kill us. Following the death from persecution, there is resurrection. Therefore, the Lord seemed to be telling the suffering church, “You must realize that I am the One who was persecuted to death. But that death was not the end—it was the gateway into resurrection. When I entered into death, I came into the threshold of resurrection. Do not be frightened by persecution nor terrified at the prospect of being killed. You must welcome death and be happy, for once you have passed into death, you also will be on the threshold of resurrection. Remember, I am the One who became dead and lived again.” Whatever we need, the Lord is. His qualifications exactly match our need. To the suffering church, the Lord is not only the First and the beginning but also the Last and the end. Whenever you are undergoing persecution, you must rise up and declare, “Hallelujah, I am going to the end, to the last. I am about to enter into the gateway of resurrection.” (*Life-study of Revelation*, pp. 129-131)

HIS BEING THE FIRST AND THE LAST

In Revelation 1:17 the Lord Jesus says, “I am the First and the Last.” Christ is not only the First and the Last but also the Beginning and the End. He is the First, the One at the beginning, and the Last, the One at the end. This assures us that, having started the church life, He will surely accomplish it. He will never leave His work unfinished. All the local churches must believe that the Lord Jesus is the beginning and the ending. He will accomplish what He has begun in His recovery.

HIS BEING THE LIVING ONE, AND HIS BECOMING DEAD AND LIVING FOREVER AND EVER

In Revelation 1:18 we see that the Lord is “the living One,” the One who “became dead” and who is “living forever and ever.” The Lord suffered death and lived again. He entered into death, but death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24), because He is the resurrection (John 11:25). Christ died, but in resurrection He will live forever. Resurrection is the lengthening of the Lord’s days. He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection. Jesus Christ today is the living One, the One who is in resurrection. For Christ to dispense life, He must be the living One since a dead person can never dispense life to others.

The importance of His being the living One is that He is living in us. He is living forever and is living in us. Therefore, He wants us to leave every kind of death and rise up to be the living church. The living One within us can never be dead. His church should be neither dead nor deadened; instead, His church must be living all the time. We must learn to enjoy Christ as the living One. His living forever is His testimony, for the testimony of Jesus is always related to the matter of being living. If a local church is not living, it will not have the testimony of Jesus. The more living we are, the more we are the testimony of the living Jesus.

The Christ who walks in the midst of the churches, who is the Head of the churches and to whom the churches belong, is the living One—full of life. Hence, the churches as His Body should also be living, fresh, and strong. We have a living Christ who has overcome death. Our Christ, who is the resurrected One, is living in us and among us. He is living forever and ever. What a living Christ we have in the recovery! In the recovery all the churches should be as living as Christ, full of life and overcoming death.

The Lord Jesus is the living One. For us to be living, we must have not only life but also the life supply. If we do not eat any food, we will not be so living, but if we eat nutritious meals, we will be living and even energetic. Our energy comes from our eating. The living Christ cares for the churches by giving to the believers Himself as their food and life supply. Therefore, in His seven epistles to the

seven churches, the Lord as the living One presents three promises of eating: the tree of life (Rev. 2:7), the hidden manna (v. 17), and a feast full of His riches (3:20). If we would be living, we need to eat Christ as the tree of life and the hidden manna and to feast with Him.

It was to the church in Smyrna, the suffering church, that the Lord revealed Himself as the One who became dead and lived again. The suffering church needs to know Him as such a One so that she may endure all kinds of suffering. However severe the persecution may be, the church will still be alive, for the resurrection life of Christ within her can endure death. The most that suffering or persecution can do is to kill us. Following the death from persecution, there is resurrection. The Lord was persecuted to death. But that death was not the end—it was the gateway into resurrection. When He entered into death, He came to the threshold of resurrection. This indicates that the suffering church should not be frightened by persecution or terrified at the prospect of being killed; rather, she must welcome death and be happy, for once she has passed into death, she also will be on the threshold of resurrection. Whenever we are undergoing persecution, we must rise up and declare, “Hallelujah, I am about to enter into the gateway of resurrection.”

To the church, tribulation is a test of life. The extent to which the church experiences and enjoys the resurrection life of Christ can be tested only by tribulation. Moreover, tribulation also brings in the riches of the resurrection life of Christ. The Lord’s purpose in allowing the church to suffer tribulation is not only to testify that His resurrection life overcomes death but also to enable the church to enter into the riches of His life. The Lord’s resurrection life is in the church. Christ, the One who is the resurrection, is living in us. Because we have resurrection life in us, there is no reason or excuse for us to fail. We need not be defeated by persecution. Rather, we must suffer this persecution victoriously by His resurrection life.

HIS HAVING THE KEYS OF DEATH AND OF HADES

In Revelation 1:18 the Lord also says, “I have the keys of death and of Hades.” Due to the fall and sin of man, death came in and is now working on earth to gather up all the sinful people into Hades. Death resembles a dustpan used to collect the dust from the floor, and Hades resembles a trash can. Whatever the dustpan collects is put into the trash can. Thus, death is a collector, and Hades is a keeper. In the church life today we are no longer subject to death and Hades, for Christ abolished death on the cross and overcame Hades in His resurrection. Although Hades tried its best to hold Him, it was powerless to do it (Acts 2:24). With Him, death has no sting and Hades has no power. We must be the same as Christ. In the church life the keys of death and Hades are in His hand. It is impossible for us to deal with death; we simply do not have the ability to handle it. Whenever death enters, it will deaden many. But as long as we give the Lord Jesus the ground, the opportunity, and the free way to move and act among us, both death and Hades will be under His control. However, whenever the Lord Jesus does not have the ground in the church, death immediately becomes prevailing and Hades becomes powerful to hold the dead ones. We should praise the Lord that Christ has the keys of death and of Hades. Death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control.

Christ’s resurrection was also His victory over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave (2:24). Satan, death, Hades, and the grave form a group. Christ, the Son of Man, was not only vindicated by God and was proved to be a success in His achievements, but He was victorious over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave, all of which are a great concern and trouble to us. The Son of Man overcame death and destroyed Satan (Heb. 2:14). The keys of death and of Hades are now in His hand (Rev. 1:18), and He is victorious over the grave. Such a Christ is walking in the midst of all the local churches in His recovery, taking care of them as the golden lampstands. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 4153-4156)