

And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

Revelation 2:8-11

Pattern of seven prophecies:

- **Vision of Christ**
- **Affirmation**
- **Correction**
- **Invitation to wholeness**
- **Promise**

THE CITY OF SMYRNA

VISION OF JESUS

Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he.

Isaiah 41:4

AFFIRMATION

Tribulation & Poverty

**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against the rules, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers, over this present
darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in
the heavenly places.**

Ephesians 6:12

The monstrous American heresy is in thinking that the whole drama of history takes place between God and humanity. But the truth, biblically and theologically and empirically, is quite otherwise: The drama of this history takes place amongst God and humanity and the principalities and powers, the great institutions and ideologies active in the world. It is the corruption and shallowness of humanism which beguiles Jew or Christian into believing that human beings are masters of institution or ideology.

Or to put it differently, racism is not an evil in human hearts or minds; racism is a principality, a demonic power, a representative image, an embodiment of death over which human beings have little or no control, but which works its awful influence in their lives.

William Stringfellow

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

1 Peter 2:11-12

INVITATION

Don't be afraid

Jesus is present in our suffering

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Jesus has power over our suffering

**Jesus makes a promise to us in
our suffering**

PROMISE