

THE STATE OF THE DEAD ACCORDING TO
THE ROMAN AND ASIAN CHURCHES,
95-155 CE:

Epistle of the Church of Rome to the Corinthians [1 Clement] (96 CE)

But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church] have been persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours, and when he had finally suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.

To these men who spent their lives in the practice of holiness, there is to be added a great multitude of the elect, who, having through envy endured many indignities and tortures, furnished us with a most excellent example. Through envy, those women, the Danaids and Dircae, being persecuted, after they had suffered terrible and unspeakable torments, finished the course of their faith with steadfastness, and though weak in body, received a noble reward. . . .

. . .

All the generations from Adam even to this day have passed away; but those who, through the grace of God, have been made perfect in love, now possess a place among the godly, and shall be made manifest at the revelation of the kingdom of Christ. For it is written, "Enter into thy secret chambers for a little time, until my wrath and fury pass away; and I will remember a propitious day, and will raise you up out of your graves." (V, VI, L)

Epistle of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, to the Philippians (135 CE)

I exhort you all, therefore, to yield obedience to the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience, such as ye have seen [set] before your eyes,

not only in the case of the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the apostles. [This do] in the assurance that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and that they are [now] in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they loved not this present world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by God from the dead. (IX)

Encyclical Epistle of the Church at Smyrna [Martyrdom of Polycarp] (155 CE)

Such were the things that happened to the blessed Polycarp, who together with those from Philadelphia was the twelfth who suffered martyrdom in Smyrna; but he alone is held in memory by all, so that he is spoken of in every place even by the Gentiles; not only being a distinguished teacher, but also an eminent martyr, whose testimony we desire to imitate, since it happened according to the Gospel of Christ. For having overcome by patience the unjust governor, and so having received the crown of immortality, rejoicing together with the apostles and all the just, he glorifieth God and the Father, and blesseth our Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour of our souls, and the pilot of our bodies, and the shepherd of the Catholic Church throughout the world.” (XIX)