

“I Know Thy Works”

“To Him That Overcometh Will I...”

**A Study about Works in Relation to
the Seven Promises to Overcomers
in Revelation 2, 3**

Arlen L. Chitwood

Revelation chapters two and three contain seven letters/epistles to seven Churches. And, continuing from chapter one — where the seven Churches, the timing of events, and the subject matter are introduced — chapters two and three simply form a continuation of that introduced in this opening chapter.

The entire matter, occurring at the end of the present dispensation, has to do with Christians removed from the earth and coming under judgment — at Christ’s judgment seat — preceding God once again turning to Israel and completing the last seven years of the Jewish dispensation, Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week.

And all of this anticipates Christ’s return at the completion of the Jewish dispensation, at the end of Man’s 6,000-year Day, with ensuing events culminating in the 1,000-year Lord’s Day, the Messianic Era.

All seven of the epistles in chapters two and three are structured alike.

Each is addressed to the angel placed over that particular Church; the Author of each is then made known through drawing mainly from His description in the previous chapter; the One addressing each Church then states, “I know thy works”; most of each epistle is then taken up with comments, both positive and negative, about their works; and each epistle then ends with an overcomer’s promise.

A promise to overcomers, in this respect, forms the capstone to each epistle — something which *could ONLY be expected*.

The works of Christians, emanating out of faith, bringing faith to its proper goal (I Peter 1:9; Heb. 11:1ff), form that which will come under review at the judgment seat. Works will be tried by fire, showing in each case the type works of every Christian (I Cor. 3:11-15).

The Judge will *KNOW* their works, which is how each of the seven epistles begins. *NOTHING will or can escape this judgment by fire.*

And ALL will occur with a view to showing whether the Christian has overcome or has been overcome, realizing or not realizing the proffered promises to overcomers.

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by
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2020

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write...
I know thy works...
To him that overcometh...” (Rev. 2:1a, 2a, 7a).

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write...
I know thy works...
He that overcometh...” (Rev. 2:8a, 9a, 11a).

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write...
I know thy works...
To him that overcometh...” (Rev. 2:12a, 13a, 17a).

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write...
I know thy works...
And he that overcometh...” (Rev. 2:18a, 19a, 26a).

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write...
I know thy works...
He that overcometh...” (Rev. 3:1a, 5a).

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write...
I know thy works...
Him that overcometh...” (Rev. 3:7a, 8a, 12a).

“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write...
I know thy works...
To him that overcometh...” (Rev. 3:14a, 15a, 21a).

Cover Picture: Canyonlands, SE Utah, 2014

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	vii
INTRODUCTION	ix
I. THE TREE OF LIFE	1
WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE TO RULE AND REIGN	
II. THE SECOND DEATH	23
HURT BY, NOT HURT BY	
III. THE HIDDEN MANNA, WHITE STONE	41
CONTINUED PROVISION TO RULE AND REIGN	
IV. POWER OVER THE NATIONS	57
REALIZING THE RIGHTS OF FIRSTBORN SONS	
V. CLOTHED IN WHITE RAIMENT	73
THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS	
VI. A PILLAR, A CITY	89
I WILL KEEP... I WILL WRITE...	
VII. SEATED ON THE THRONE	105
CHRIST AND HIS CO-HEIRS TOGETHER	
APPENDIX	123
I) PRESENT CLEANSING FROM SIN	123
II) THE PRESENT KINGDOM	131
III) THE COMING KINGDOM	135
SCRIPTURE INDEX	143

By the Same Author —

JUDE
RUTH
ESTHER
BY FAITH
RUN TO WIN
LET US GO ON
END OF THE DAYS
MOSES AND JOHN
IN THE LORD'S DAY
DISTANT HOOFBEATS
SO GREAT SALVATION
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS
GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS
SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE
WE ARE ALMOST THERE
SIGNS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL
THE MOST HIGH RULETH
SALVATION OF THE SOUL
THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE
HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES
COMING IN HIS KINGDOM
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN
THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE
SEVEN, TEN GENERATIONS
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST
THE RAPTURE AND BEYOND
FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM
PROPHECY ON MOUNT OLIVET
NEVER AGAIN! OR YES, AGAIN!
THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE
BROUGHT FORTH FROM ABOVE
ISRAEL — FROM DEATH TO LIFE
O SLEEPER! ARISE, CALL...! (JONAH)
THE TIME OF THE END (REVELATION)
MIDDLE EAST PEACE — HOW? WHEN?
SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH
MESSAGE IN THE GOSPELS, ACTS, EPISTLES
ISRAEL — WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

FOREWORD

Neither saved man nor unsaved man can ever come into judgment where belief or unbelief in God's Son is the issue.

And the reasoning for that is very simple. *Both have already been judged on that basis, and God is satisfied.*

Note John 3:16-18 in this respect:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him is not condemned ["judged"]: but he that believeth not is condemned ["judged"] already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

In the first part of verse eighteen, the one believing on the Son *can NEVER* come into any future judgment relative to the sin question and eternal salvation, for *ALL judgment is past*. God judged sin in the person of His Son at Calvary.

NOR can any consequences of this judgment await the believer, for the wages of sin, which is death, have been paid by Another on his behalf, and God is satisfied.

Then, the latter part of this verse states that the one not believing on the Son, as well, has already been judged.

Perfect tenses are used in the Greek text for both "judged" and "believed," indicating completed action in the past, with this action existing in a completed state during present time.

Complete judgment, in relation to unbelief, has occurred in past time, with everything relative to judgment and unbelief existing in that completed state during present time.

God, relative to the unbeliever, judged sin in the person of His Son at Calvary, *EXACTLY* as seen relative to the believer.

BUT, the consequences of this judgment, in relation to his unbelief, *are another matter entirely*. Unlike consequences for the believer (taken care of by Another), the unbeliever doesn't have a substitute to pay the wages of sin for him. And he will have to pay the wages himself, which is *death*.

And the preceding is why both the believer and the unbeliever — both the saved and the unsaved — are seen being judged, at future times, *SOLELY on the basis of WORKS* (cf. I Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 20:11-15).

IF judged at a future time, which ALL will be, there is NOTHING remaining, aside from WORKS, which could be judged. That outside of works, in relation to belief or unbelief, has already been judged.

That's why so much space is given in Scripture to man's actions — to Israel in the past and future, and to Christians today.

As well, that's why each of the epistles to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three is comprised of *the works of Christians in these Churches, followed by the Lord's admonition and instruction concerning these works.*

The works of Christians can emanate from two sources. They can emanate *out of faith*, or they can emanate *out of a lack of faith*. The former will bring faith to its goal (cf. I Peter 1:9; Heb. 11:1ff); and the latter will, of course, fail to do so, for faith is not involved.

And at the judgment seat, the former will be shown to have resulted in works comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones," while the latter will be shown to have resulted in works comparable to "wood, hay, stubble."

The former works will remain after passing through the fire, BUT NOT so with the latter.

ALL will be revealed by fire at this judgment, through the actions of the One Who states to each of the seven Churches, "I know thy works." *ALL will be laid out in the open at this judgment; NOTHING will remain hidden.*

And it is through this judgment that the overcomers will be singled out and shown forth. These are the ones who will ascend the throne with the One Who, following His work as *Judge*, will enter into His work as *King*. These are the ones who will sit with Christ on His throne (seventh overcomer's promise) and rule the nations with a rod of iron (fourth overcomer's promise).

Then, there are five other promises to overcomers, which have to do with things related to this rule.

And that's what this book, "*I Know Thy Works*," is about — the things introduced in Revelation chapter one, dealt with in Revelation chapters two and three, which culminate with Christ and His co-heirs, the overcomers from the present dispensation, ascending the throne and ruling the nations during the Messianic Era.

(In Rev. 1:13, Christ is seen dressed in the type garments worn by both *a priest* and *a judge*.

BUT, the position of the girdle about the breasts rather than around the waist indicates that Christ, in this passage, is exercising *a judicial rather than a priestly role*.

A priest would be girded about the waist, signifying *service*; but the girdle placed about the shoulders or breasts indicates *a magisterial function* [cf. John 13:2-5; Rev. 15:6].

Aside from the preceding, the entire scene is *judicial, NOT priestly*. *Brass, fire, and a sword* are mentioned in connection with Christ's appearance, which speak of *judicial activity*.

And Christ's countenance is described by the expression, "as the sun shineth in his strength," *which would have to do with His glory, to be manifested during that coming day of His power* [cf. Ps. 2:1-9; Rev. 2:26, 27].

THEN, more information is given, which will help to ascertain *EXACTLY* what is being depicted by the scene at hand.

The Apostle John was transported into "*the Lord's day [the Day of the Lord]*" [v. 10], and the vision of Christ which he saw depicts Christ as He will appear *following* the completion of His high priestly work, *anticipating* His long-awaited regal work.

The entire scene in Rev. 1:13-18 is *prophetic*, depicting Christ as *Judge in the midst of the seven Churches at the conclusion of the present dispensation, anticipating that coming day when He will exercise governmental power and authority over the earth*.

The chronological arrangement of events opening the Book of Revelation sets forth the fact that God will deal with the Church in judgment *BEFORE* He deals with Israel and the nations after this fashion [cf. I Peter 4:17-19].

The Church will be removed from the earth and placed in the heavens; and the Church will be dealt with during *a period of time BEFORE the Tribulation begins on earth*.

A review of the first five chapters of the Book of Revelation reveals that there will have to be an interval of time between the removal of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation.

THEN, chapters two and three continue from chapter one, providing more detail about events introduced in chapter one, which precede events in chapters four and five, *anticipating* the breaking of the seals of the seven-sealed scroll and the ensuing Tribulation [chs. 6ff].

That is, the present dispensation will run its course, the Church will be removed, and certain events will then transpire in heaven [while the Church is in heaven] before the Tribulation begins on earth [which, when it begins, will complete seven unfulfilled years of the previous dispensation].

These events — occurring while the Church is in heaven, preceding the beginning of the Tribulation on earth — concern *the Church coming under judgment* [as revealed in chapters one through three].

And these events also concern *the relinquishment of crowns* which Christians will wear during the Messianic Era [ch. 4], along with *preparations to redeem the domain* over which Christians will rule at this time [ch. 5], as well as bringing about *the marriage of God's Son to His bride* [a bride previously revealed at the judgment seat in chs. 1-3; *ref.* Ruth 3, 4].

For additional information on material in the preceding paragraph, refer to the author's book, *The Rapture and Beyond*, Chs. IV-VI, "Crowns Relinquished in the Lord's Day," "The Seven-Sealed Scroll," and "Redemption, Marriage, Regality.")

INTRODUCTION

“Unto the angel of the church in Ephesus... Smyrna... Pergamos... Thyatira... Sardis... Philadelphia... Laodicea write...

I know thy works...

To him that overcometh...” (Rev. 2, 3).

(Man was created in the beginning to assume regal power and authority over the earth, a position held by a ruling angel who, through pride, had moved outside the Divinely set fixed laws governing his power and authority.

This angel, Lucifer, had sought to elevate his throne, rule over more than just one province in God’s kingdom, becoming “like the most High,” like God Himself (Isa. 14:14). And, one-third of the angels ruling with him followed him in this God-dishonoring act.

Because of this, Lucifer disqualified himself to continue on the throne, along with the angels who had followed him.

Thus, another individual had to be brought on the scene to assume the throne and, under God, govern the earth. And this individual whom God brought forth was not another angel, but man, a completely new creation in the universe.

Lucifer, now seen as Satan, knew immediately why man had been created, for God revealed the matter at the time of his creation (Gen. 1:26) — “let them have dominion [‘...let them rule’].”

And, Satan’s subsequent actions, resulting in man’s fall, had a singular purpose — to thwart God’s plans and purposes surrounding man, preventing man from replacing him on the throne.

And, following the fall, the purpose for man’s salvation is to rectify matters, ultimately placing man back in the position for which he was created in the beginning.

ALL is REGAL, from the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis to the closing chapter of the Book of Revelation.

And the Book of Revelation, drawing from the whole of preceding Scripture, brings things to a climax in this respect.)

Revelation chapters two and three contain seven messages to seven Churches located in Asia during the first century; and these messages were directed to these Churches through seven different angels — angels who had been placed over these seven Churches.

This introduces a facet of angelic ministry within Christendom which is often overlooked.

According to Heb. 1:14, angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation [*lit.*, "to minister for the sake of the ones about to inherit salvation"]."

Then, according to Revelation chapters two and three, each Church possesses an appointed, ministering angel; and the context clearly infers that these angels have been placed in their respective positions, centrally, for the same reason as set forth in Heb. 1:14.

Angelic ministry in Christendom centers around the coming inheritance of the saints, the salvation of the soul, etc. Hebrews 1:14 refers to *the individual nature* of angelic ministry (*cf.* Acts 12:15), and Revelation chapters two and three refer to *the corporate nature* of angelic ministry.

Many expositors over the years have sought to teach that the word "angel" in Revelation chapters two and three (see also Rev. 1:16, 20) is a reference to individual pastors (or possibly other high officials) in each of the seven Churches. The Greek word translated "angel" (*aggelos*) refers to *a messenger of God*, and these seven messengers are looked upon by these individuals as seven human messengers from the seven Churches.

This view, however, for several reasons, *is NOT at all tenable*:

Revelation chapter one provides a distinction between the seven angels and individuals comprising the seven Churches. In this chapter, rather than being integrally identified, the seven angels and the seven Churches are seen as separate, distinct entities.

The seven Churches are represented by the "seven golden candlesticks" in Christ's midst, but the seven angels are represented by the "seven stars" in Christ's right hand (vv. 13, 16, 20).

Interpreting the word *aggelos* as a reference to individual pastors (seven pastors of seven Churches) is *NOT* in keeping

with that which is taught concerning pastors elsewhere in the New Testament. Churches throughout the New Testament are *NEVER* spoken of as having *ONLY one pastor*. The thought is *ALWAYS* “pastors” (or “elders”) of a Church (*cf.* Acts 14:23; 15:6, 23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1).

(The New Testament refers to *Churches in a region* [*e.g.*, “the churches of Macedonia” or “the churches of Galatia” (II Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2)], but reference is made to *ONLY one Church in a city or village* [*e.g.*, “the church of the Thessalonians” or “the church of (‘in’) Ephesus” (II Thess. 1:1; Rev. 2:1)].

ALL Christians in one city comprised one Church which met in various homes throughout the city, requiring the ministries of pastors within that one Church. And the simplicity and oneness of the Church in a city was characterized by the fact that *ALL* Christians in that city were automatically looked upon as being members of that Church [Rom. 14:1; 15:7; 16:2; I Cor. 16:10, 11; III John 5-8].

This is the apparent fashion after which each of the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three was structured; and since there *were NO* individual pastors of these Churches, the use of the word *aggelos* in each epistle *could NOT* possibly be thought of as a reference to the pastor of the Church being addressed.)

Then, the manner in which the Greek word *aggelos* is used throughout the New Testament should be considered, particularly the way in which the word is used in the Book of Revelation.

This word appears over one hundred eighty times in the New Testament, and seventy-six of these occurrences are in the Book of Revelation alone.

There are only eight instances in the entire New Testament where the word *aggelos* is either clearly or seemingly used of men as messengers of God (Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; 24:4; Acts 10:3, 7, 22 [*cf. v. 30*]; James 2:25). In all other occurrences there is nothing to indicate that the word should be understood as referring to anyone other than heavenly messengers.

To understand *aggelos* in Revelation chapters two and three (also 1:20) as referring to earthly messengers, while understanding the same

word throughout the remainder of the book as referring to heavenly messengers, is forced and unnatural. Consistency of interpretation would require one to acknowledge that angels are seen as being very instrumental in God's dealings with mankind throughout this book, beginning in chapters one through three.

The Overcomers

The seven messages to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three are all identical in their basic structure. The opening verse of each message contains descriptive terminology, taken either word-for-word from the description of Christ given in chapter one or from material directly related to this description, *which has to do with judgment*.

Following this, each message begins with the statement, "I know thy works..." Then, certain things are stated concerning each Church relative to past works, and each message concludes with an overcomer's promise.

Contextually, the "descriptive" aspects of Christ in chapters two and three *can ONLY* continue the thought of *judgment* from chapter one. The seven epistles to the seven Churches in chapters two and three provide additional information, forming commentary, with *judgment* continuing as the central issue at hand.

"Works" are then brought into the picture in each epistle, for it is *works* which will be reviewed when Christians are judged.

"Overcoming" and promised "blessings" then terminate each epistle, clearly revealing that only the overcomers — those possessing works comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones" — will be allowed to enter into the promised blessings.

There are seven different overcomer's promises in chapters two and three, and each promise is *millennial* in its scope of fulfillment.

That is, these promises will be realized during the 1,000-year reign of Christ after Christians have had their works tried "by ['in'] fire" at the judgment seat.

Christ is seen as Judge in the midst of the seven Churches in chapter one, and chapters two and three provide information concerning why and on what basis these seven Churches — representing Christianity as a whole — are to come under judgment.

The word “overcome” is a translation of the Greek word *nikao*, which means “to conquer” or “to gain a victory over.” The thought inherent in the word *nikao* (or *nike*, the noun form of the word) always means *to be victorious in a contest or conflict*.

The “overcomers” are *the conquerors, the victors; they are the ones who will have successfully run the race of the faith; they are the ones who will have conquered the numerous encountered obstacles along the way*.

Christians have been saved with a view to their being overcomers and bringing forth fruit. And this matter comprises the very heart of the message which is to be proclaimed to Christians throughout the dispensation.

Israel has been set aside during this time, and God is calling another people — a separate and distinct people — “for his name,” taken mainly from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14).

Those presently being called comprise an entirely *new creation*, which is neither Jew nor Gentile, forming *one new man* “in Christ.” And God is extending to individual members of this *one new man* the privilege of overcoming and bringing forth fruit, with a view to their occupying positions as joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly sphere of the coming kingdom.

The present dispensation is the time which God has set aside to accord redeemed man the privilege of overcoming and bringing forth fruit, and judgment at the end of this dispensation will reveal man’s response to this privilege. Some Christians will be shown to have overcome, possessing works comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones”; but other Christians will be shown to have been overcome, possessing works comparable to “wood, hay, stubble.”

The overcomers will, at that time, inherit the promised blessings of Revelation chapters two and three; but those shown to have been overcome will be denied these blessings.

THIS is the central subject matter dealt with in the opening three chapters of the Book of Revelation.

Three Enemies

There are three great enemies in the Christian life which *MUST* be overcome.

These three enemies are:

- 1) *The world.*
- 2) *The flesh.*
- 3) *The Devil.*

ALL temptations come to Christians in these three realms, ANY ONE of them can produce shipwreck in the lives of Christians, and EACH is overcome after a different fashion.

1) *The World*

According to I John 5:1-5, the "world" is overcome by *our faith*:

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God."

The text deals with the saved, *NOT* with the unsaved. It deals with the saved faithfully keeping the commandments of God *through a bringing forth from above, and, in this manner, overcoming the world.*

The thought advanced by many Christians that "overcome" in this passage has to do with the simple salvation message, placing every Christian in the position of being an overcomer on the basis of his presently possessed eternal salvation, is completely foreign to that which is taught here or elsewhere in the New Testament.

In fact, such a teaching *is completely contrary to and does away with that which is dealt with in this passage.*

Overcoming *does NOT* even enter into the picture *UNTIL after one has been saved.* There is *NO* such thing as unsaved individuals overcoming the *world* (or, for that matter, *the flesh*, or *the Devil*).

Overcoming has to do with spiritual verities, and *ONLY* those who have “passed from death unto life” — *ONLY* those who have been made alive spiritually, through the Spirit breathing life into the ones previously having no life — can function in the spiritual realm. In this respect, *Christians ALONE are in a position to overcome in the manner seen in these verses.*

Overcoming the world is the subject matter in I John 5:1-5, and there are four references in these five verses to being *brought forth from above* (three in v. 1 and one in v. 4). And, as well, there are six other references in I John to the same thing, a major subject of I John in relation to Christians and overcoming (2:29; 3:9 [twice]; 4:7; 5:18 [twice].)

The expression, brought forth from above (born from above), *is NOT used* in I John or elsewhere in Scripture relative to the unsaved (John 1:13; 3:3-7; James 1:18; I Peter 1:3, 23). The expression is *ALWAYS used relative to the saved.* Overcoming is in view, and the power to overcome *is derived from above, NOT from below, from within the individual.*

(This is *NOT* to say that the Divine work surrounding an unsaved individual believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and being saved is to be viewed in any manner other than *a bringing forth from above*, for there is *NO* other way that he could be saved. Rather, it is to say that Scripture *does NOT* use the expression in this manner. Scripture uses the expression *ONLY one way — relative to a work of the Spirit among the saved.*

For additional information on this subject, refer to the author’s book, *Brought Forth from Above.*)

Overcoming in verses four and five *MUST* be understood contextually. Note the connecting word, “For,” beginning verse four. The first three verses of this chapter place the one who has been brought forth from above in the position of keeping God’s commandments (the only way he can keep them — living in the sphere of the spiritual, not the fleshly).

Then, the person in verse four is one who, through faith (through believing God, inseparably associated with being brought forth from above), keeps these commandments; and, *in this manner — through keeping God’s commandments — he is presently overcoming the world.*

The "world," referring to the present *world system* under the dominion and sway of the god of this age, Satan, is a major subject of I John.

Christians are commanded, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." The things in the world, under the control of Satan, are "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

The world *does NOT* know the one True and Living God; *NOR* does the world know Christians. The entire world "lieth in wickedness [under the control of the wicked one]" (I John 2:15-18; 3:1; 5:19).

This is the status of the way things exist during Man's Day, but a change is in the offing. The entire world system as we know it today is about to pass out of existence. A change in the entire administration is about to occur. And *UNTIL* that time arrives, Christians are to regulate their activities in accord with I John 5:1-5.

2) *The Flesh*

According to Rom. 8:13 and Col. 3:5, the flesh is overcome by *mortifying* "the deeds of the body," which emanate from the ever-present sin nature, and all things emanating from the sin nature are to be kept in a constant state of mortification:

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13).

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5).

The revealed way to mortify "the deeds of the body" is set forth in Rom. 8:13, 14: "...if ye through the Spirit...as many as are led by the Spirit of God..." This, as well, is what is involved in Gal. 5:16ff: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh..."

There is a constant warfare in the life of every believer brought about by the presence of both the man of flesh and the man of Spirit residing in the same body, with either man capable of gaining the ascendancy and proving victorious in the conflict.

Walking in the Spirit, being brought forth from above, will assure victory over the man of flesh; and in this manner the Christian will be mortifying "the deeds of the body," overcoming the flesh.

On the other hand, *giving way to the flesh will quench the Spirit, assuring defeat in one's life*. In this manner the Christian will be allowing "the deeds of the body" to live, resulting in his being overcome by the flesh.

The man of flesh with his deeds are seen in Scripture *ONLY one way — a ruined creation, under the sentence of death* (cf. Gen. 1:2-4; II Cor. 4:6; Rom. 7:24). And if man doesn't put the things associated with the man of flesh to death during the present time, they will rise up and testify against him at a future time, with the Lord Himself being forced to take care of matters.

The sentence of death MUST and WILL be carried out — whether by man during the present time, or by the Lord during a time yet future.

The original and unchangeable pattern for restoration associated with a ruined creation has forever been established in the opening verses of Genesis.

The darkness "upon the face of the deep" in Gen. 1:2a had to do with darkness over a material creation which had come into a state of ruin; and this darkness continued to exist even following the restoration of the ruined creation (vv. 3-5). God simply brought light into existence and left the darkness alone. He placed light alongside the darkness and divided between the two (cf. Isa. 45:7).

However, the day is coming when God will make "all things *new*." And, at that time, the present darkness seen in the opening chapter of Genesis will *NO* longer exist (Rev. 21:5, 25).

Fallen man forms a subsequent ruined creation of God, and the restoration of this ruined creation *MUST be effected after the identical order set forth in the original pattern (SET perfect in the beginning)*.

The parallel restoration for man, wherein *the light shines* "out of darkness," occurs at the point of his salvation, the point of his believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. The man of flesh, associated with the ruined creation (as the darkness in the Genesis account was associated with the ruin of the material creation), continues in existence.

As the darkness was retained in the restoration of the material creation, so the old nature is retained in the restoration of man; but as God brought light into existence and made a division between the light and the darkness in Genesis, He brings a new nature into existence and makes a division between the new and the old today.

Then, the day is coming when God will make "all things new"; and as the darkness in the first chapter of Genesis will *NO* longer exist, the old nature presently possessed by redeemed man will, likewise, *NO* longer exist (*cf.* Rom. 7:24; 8:23; I John 3:2).

"Darkness" in Scripture is associated with *the works of the flesh* (John 3:19; Rom. 13:12; I Cor. 4:5), and the roots of this association, as previously noted, are found in the opening verses of Genesis. Darkness appears in connection with the ruined creation in the type, and the old nature appears in connection with the ruined creation in the antitype.

NOTHING good is ever said about darkness in Scripture. *ONLY of the light* does God use the word "good" (Gen. 1:4).

And the same *MUST* hold true concerning the old and new natures possessed by man (*cf.* I John 1:6, 8).

Both darkness and the old nature are, so to speak, *under the sentence of death*; and this sentence *MUST* be carried out — *by man during the present time, OR by the Lord yet future.*

Thus, awaiting the coming day, when the Lord will complete matters relative to the carrying out of *this sentence of death*, redeemed man in his present state is *to reprove* "the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11); he is *to mortify* — *put to death* — "the deeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13).

And in this manner ALONE redeemed man is to overcome the flesh.

3) *The Devil*

According to James 4:7 and I Peter 5:9, the Devil is overcome *by resisting*:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

"Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Peter 5:8, 9).

Christians are to set themselves against, withstand, the Devil as *they stand firm in the faith*. "The faith" is an expression in the New Testament peculiarly related to *the Word of the Kingdom* (e.g., Acts 6:7; 13:8; Rom. 1:5; I Cor. 16:13; Gal. 1:23; Col. 1:23; II Tim. 3:8; Jude 3).

Christians are in a contest/race “of the faith” (I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7). And it is while *standing firm in the faith, in this race*, that Christians are to withstand, resist, Satan.

Christians are to be “sober...vigilant”; and the reason given is “because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

The word “sober” is the translation of the Greek word, *nepho*, which means “to exercise self-control” or “to be well-balanced”; and the word “vigilant” is a translation of the Greek word, *gregoreo*, meaning “to watch,” or “to be awake,” as seen in I Thess. 5:6, 10.

Christians are to always be watchful and exercise a well-balanced judgment in the race of the faith, *for Satan stands ever ready to bring about defeat in their lives through his “wiles [crafty, deceitful ways]”* (Eph. 6:11).

Why is Satan so intensely interested in bringing about defeat in the lives of Christians today? Why has Satan expended so much time and energy throughout almost two millenniums in efforts to bring Christianity into the apostate condition in which it presently finds itself? What is so special about Christianity, attracting Satan’s attention after this fashion?

The answer is very simple, but it is one which goes almost completely unrecognized within the confines of the lukewarm, apostate Laodicean Church of today.

To properly understand the present warfare between Satan and Christians, one must go back to the creation of man and understand certain things concerning the reason for man’s creation.

Adam was brought into existence to rule the earth, and Eve was removed from Adam’s body, through the process revealed in Gen. 2:21-23, to reign as consort queen with him (Gen. 1:26-28). And the dominion to be exercised by Adam was the one which Satan held at that time (and continues to hold today).

Satan had previously been brought into existence to rule the earth. He was the “anointed cherub [messianic angel].” He held the chief position among a great host of angels who, along with him, ruled the earth under the one True and Living God, in a complete structural breakdown of powers and authorities (*cf.* Ezek. 28:14-16; Luke 4:5, 6; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:7-9).

But the day came when Satan rebelled against the Lord and succeeded in leading one-third of the angels ruling with him at that time in this rebellion. Satan sought *to elevate his throne (increase his delegated power and authority)* and "be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13, 14). Satan sought to become the ruler over all the provinces throughout the universe — the position held by God Himself — rather than continue ruling only the province over which he had originally been placed.

As a result, Satan's kingdom was reduced to a ruined state, but he himself retained his position as ruler of the kingdom. *And he would be allowed to retain this position UNTIL that day when his God-appointed successor appeared on the scene, ready to take the sceptre* (Gen. 1:2a, 26, 28; Ps. 110:1, 2).

This is *the reason* Satan was so intensely interested in bringing about the fall of Adam. Adam had been created to occupy the position which he held. The wrecked domain (the earth) had been restored, and the one created to rule in Satan's stead had been created from the very soil of the restored domain. Satan's replacement was present, on a restored domain, though he had yet to take the sceptre.

Thus, following Adam's creation, the only hope which Satan possessed was to bring about Adam's disqualification through sin, as he himself had previously been disqualified through sin. Otherwise, Adam would ultimately take the sceptre, and Satan's reign would end.

However, such was not to occur. Satan, through tempting Eve, brought about the first man, the first Adam's fall and disqualification.

This allowed Satan to continue his reign, necessitating the appearance of the second Man, the last Adam at a later date (*cf.* I Cor. 15:45).

The second Man, the last Adam *NOT ONLY* had to be brought on the scene, *BUT* He had to meet Satan face-to-face in order to show that He was fully qualified to act in the realm for which man had originally been created. *THEN*, the last Adam provided redemption for fallen man, with a view to man ultimately occupying the position for which he had originally been created.

Christ's virgin birth (He *MUST* be God as well as Man, for the triune God *ALONE* can act in the realm of redemption [Gen. 1-4]), His face-to-face encounter with Satan in the wilderness, and His vicarious death at Calvary, have *ALL* come to pass.

HOWEVER, He has YET to wrest the governmental reins of the earth from Satan's hands. He has YET to take the sceptre and rule the earth in Satan's stead.

An interval of time exists prior to His taking the kingdom in order that He, through the Holy Spirit, might call out a bride to reign as consort queen with Him. This is the reason for the present dispensation, a fact little recognized and understood in Christendom today.

As the first Adam possessed a bride removed from his body to reign with him (preceding the time he was to take the sceptre), so will the last Adam. This bride is presently being called out from among the redeemed, and for the past two millenniums, Satan has been doing all within his power to thwart God's purpose for the present dispensation.

His attack today is directed specifically and intently against Christians *for ONE simple, revealed reason. Christians are the ones destined to be placed as consort queen with Christ in His reign.*

Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God, and Satan cannot touch Him; but Christians are presently upon the earth, and Satan walks "to and fro in the earth...up and down in it" (Job. 1:7; 2:2; cf. I Peter 5:8), venting his wrath against them, seeking at every turn to bring about their defeat and consequent disqualification to occupy a position with Christ during the coming day of His power.

Satan, at every turn, seeks to overcome Christians, rather than allowing Christians to overcome him.

In the coming kingdom, Christ will rule in Satan's stead, and Christians occupying positions with Christ will rule in the stead of the angels ruling with Satan (angels ruling during both past and present times).

The ENTIRE matter surrounding the present warfare between Satan and Christians has the coming kingdom in view.

Overcoming Christians will occupy the numerous proffered positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom, but the Christians who are overcome will be denied these positions.

Thus, future positions with Christ in the kingdom, presently being offered to Christians, are for the overcomers ALONE.

"There exists a government of the universe conducted by great angels and their subordinates. Many of these have fallen from their original allegiance to God and prostitute their offices and powers to corrupt His realms.

It is therefore inevitable that a rearrangement shall come in that heavenly government. This will be effected by Christ and His glorified followers being invested with the whole of that heavenly authority. For it is written that 'not unto the angels hath God subjected the inhabited world to come'" (Heb. 2:5).

— G. H. Lang
World Chaos, 1948

The Whole Armor of God

Eph. 6:10-18 is the passage in the Word of God which instructs Christians concerning how to be properly clothed in order to withstand the onslaughts of Satan and his demons today.

There is a battle presently being waged. This battle is specifically said to not be "against flesh and blood [not against fallen man residing on the earth]," but, instead, "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world ['age'], against spiritual wickedness in high places ['against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heaventies']" (v. 12). And the issue at hand concerns *a future governmental control over the earth from a heavenly realm as joint-heirs with the "King of kings, and Lord of lords."*

A battle of this nature requires *extensive preparation*, and *ONLY* those properly prepared can be victorious in the battle. This is the reason given in Eph. 4:11 ff for the placement of pastor-teachers in the Churches, and this is the reason given in Eph. 6:10ff for the battle-dress in which Christians are to be arrayed.

Christians entering into this conflict are to take unto themselves "the whole armor of God." *NOTHING* short of this will suffice, for Christians are able to withstand Satan's attacks (are able to stand against the wiles of the Devil) *ONLY* in this manner.

Six items are listed for Christians to take in order to be properly clothed in the present conflict:

1) "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth..." (v. 14a).

There is no definite article before "truth." This is not "the truth," which is *the Word of God*. That appears later (v. 17).

The girdle is placed about the loins first, and the other pieces of armor are affixed to the girdle. Placing the girdle about the loins is with a view to the other pieces of armor also being taken and put on; and for a Christian to put on the girdle of truth can only be synonymous with a Christian entering the conflict in a truthful or sincere and earnest manner, looking ahead to continuing the process of putting on the armor, ultimately resulting in his being clothed with the whole armor of God.

Arraying one's self with the girdle has to do with a Caleb- and Joshua-type attitude toward the goal in view:

“Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (Num. 13:30).

2) “...and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (v. 14b).

Note that this is something which the Christian himself is to put on. This has nothing to do with the righteousness of Christ imputed to the Christian at the time of the birth from above. Rather, the “breastplate of righteousness” has to do with *right living*. It has to do with the “righteous acts of the saints” (Rev. 19:8, ASV), which make up the wedding garment.

3) “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (v. 15).

Note the emphasis in verses eleven, thirteen, and fourteen relative to *standing* as one goes forth to battle: “to stand” (v. 11), “withstand [*lit.*, ‘stand against’],” “to stand” (v. 13), and “Stand” (v. 14). One must have solid footing to stand upon. Both feet *MUST* be firmly planted, “shod with the preparation [‘readiness’] of the gospel of peace.”

There are two aspects to the gospel in Scripture. One appears in connection with “peace *with* God,” and the other appears in connection with “the peace *of* God.”

“Peace *with* God” comes about through justification by grace through faith, as seen in Eph. 2:8, 9: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace *with* God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

This peace results from one being placed upon the foundation, with the most sure, steadfast footing possible, *apart from which there can be NO conflict*.

However, distinctions between "peace *with* God" and "the peace *of* God" are *NOT* what is in view in Eph. 6:15, for availing oneself of the proper footwear (for both feet) is something which, contextually, occurs following salvation.

In a parallel passage to that which is in view, the latter part of Rom. 10:15 states:

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace,
and bring glad tidings of good things."

The feet are seen as the vehicle of transportation for the messenger, as he goes about proclaiming good news concerning *peace*. Within the overall scope of the good news, as previously stated, there is a facet of the message having to do with "peace with God" (for the unsaved [Rom. 5:1]) and there is a facet of the message having to do with the "peace of God" (for the saved [Phil. 4:5-7]). The contextual emphasis in Rom. 10:15 though has to do with *the saved*, *NOT with the unsaved*.

Exactly the same thought is in view regarding the armor in Eph. 6:15. Having one's feet properly shod has to do with proper preparation relative to the good news concerning *peace*, as it pertains to the saved, exactly as seen in Rom. 10:15; and this would be based on the person already having "peace with God," as seen in Rom. 5:1.

The messenger's feet being properly shod shows a proper preparation of the messenger as he goes about proclaiming this message concerning *peace*. And this message of *peace* would have two facets — *the peace of God* now (having to do with the present aspect of salvation, the outworking of the saving of the soul), culminating in a future *peace* when *the Prince of Peace* is Himself present (having to do with the future aspect of salvation, when the salvation of the soul will be realized).

4) "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [wicked one]" (v. 16).

"Faith" is simply *believing that which God has to say about a matter*. The weakness of the average Christian is lack of faith, which results from the neglect of prayerful study and meditation on the Word of God.

Hebrews chapter eleven, the great chapter on *faith*, provides the

capstone to the first ten chapters of the Book of Hebrews; and the opening two verses of chapter twelve provide the capstone to all that is stated in chapter eleven.

In these verses, Christians are exhorted to “lay aside every weight [every hindrance in the spiritual warfare], and the sin which doth so easily beset us [lack of faith, the besetting sin common to every Christian (*ref. ch. 11*)].”

And in *this manner ALONE* Christians are to “run with patience” the race set before them, “looking unto Jesus [*lit.*, ‘looking from, unto Jesus (*i.e.*, looking *from* all that surrounds, *unto* Jesus)]...”

5) “*And take the helmet of salvation...*” (v. 17a).

I Thessalonians 5:8 reveals that this helmet is the “hope of salvation.” This is the salvation to be revealed (salvation of the soul) at the time Christ returns.

The hope set before Christians is *the hope of occupying a position with Christ in His coming kingdom*. There is *NO other doctrine* in the Word of God which will inspire and encourage a Christian more in the present conflict against Satan and his demons than the doctrine of “that blessed hope” (Titus 2:12, 13; *cf.* Col. 1:5, 27; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Heb. 3:6; 6:18).

6) “*...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (v. 17b).

Christ Himself, in the temptation account, demonstrated that the one great weapon to be used against Satan is the Word of God.

Satan also knew and attested to the power of this Word when he attempted to use it against Christ (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; *cf.* Heb. 4:12).

David said, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps. 119:11). It is vitally important, it is imperative, *that Christians KNOW and USE the Word of God in the present conflict*.

Having properly clothed and armed themselves, Christians are to then be:

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (v. 18).

Overcoming is a lifelong task, provision has been made, and proffered rewards await the victors.

In the words of Paul, as he was borne along by the Holy Spirit:

"So run, that ye may obtain" (I Cor. 9:24b).

A couple of thoughts before proceeding on into this book...

As will be seen, *the end result* of the type works which bring faith to its goal, allowing a Christian to be approved at Christ's judgment seat, will be *the realization of the promises to overcomers*.

Each of the seven epistles in Rev. 2, 3 is structured in this manner, *structured EXACTLY the same way — revealed works, followed by an overcomer's promise*.

And as will become evident in the seven chapters of this book, *ALL seven of the promises to overcomers center around regality* (Christ taking the kingdom), and four of the promises have to do with that which the overcomers will need in order to occupy the numerous positions with Christ in the kingdom.

That seen in these promises are the things which will prepare the overcomers to reign as co-heirs with Christ — *properly dressed and recognized for their befitting position and, occupying such a position, possessing the necessary wisdom and knowledge to rule and reign in a perfectly just and righteous manner*.

As well, as God not only bestowed upon Solomon "wisdom and knowledge" but also "riches, and wealth, and honour" as he reigned over his people (II Chron. 1:10-14), *so will it be with the overcomers. Through their proper dress, recognition, possession of wisdom and knowledge to reign in a perfectly just and righteous manner, they will, beyond degree, possess "riches, and wealth, and honour."*

In this respect, by the very nature of these seven promises, *one CANNOT be realized apart from the others. ALL seven promises MUST be realized together, by every overcomer*.

There will be complete perfection in ALL things relative to the rule of Christ and His co-heirs, and that seen in these seven promises is God's revealed way to bring this to pass.

1

The Tree of Life

Wisdom and Knowledge to Rule and Reign

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden...” (Gen. 2:9a).

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

The promise concerning those who overcome being granted the privilege of partaking of the tree of life is the first of “seven” overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three. These promises pertain to *Christians ALONE*, and the realization of these promises awaits *the future Messianic Era*.

The time when Christians will enter into the blessings associated with these promises *MUST* follow the time set forth in chapter one — Christ appearing as Judge in the midst of the “seven” Churches.

Judgment *MUST* occur *FIRST*. *THEN*, overcoming Christians will realize that which has been promised.

The Seven Epistles

Overcoming in each of the “seven” promises is related to existing conditions in the particular Church to which the promise is given. One promise though is *NOT* to be looked upon as standing alone and being peculiar to *ONLY one Church*.

There are seven promises given to seven Churches. “Seven” is a number showing *the completeness of that which is in view*.

In this particular instance, the “seven” Churches show *the complete Church* of Matt. 16:18; and the “seven” overcomer’s promises show *the completeness of that which has been promised to ALL Christians, with these promises to be realized by ALL overcoming Christians*.

The seven Churches viewed together, as seen in these chapters, comprise an indivisible unit; and the seven overcomer's promises viewed together, as presented in connection with Christians comprising these seven Churches, *are indivisibly related in such a manner that one CANNOT be realized apart from the other.*

And viewing the overcomer's promises in this manner, that seen throughout each epistle would have to be looked upon the same way.

Different facets of truth, *applicable to ALL Christians throughout the seven Churches*, are shown through the Lord's comments on things which have been singled out in each epistle concerning a particular Church.

1) *Applicable to All*

Viewing one facet of truth after this fashion, in the epistle to "the church of ['in'] Ephesus," reference is made to *a departure from "thy first love"* (v. 4). The command is then given, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

This is followed by the warning that if *remembrance, repentance, and first works do NOT follow*, the "candlestick [Church in Ephesus; cf. 1:11-13, 20]" will be removed from its place. And this removal of the candlestick — this removal of the Church in Ephesus, the Christians in Ephesus — is, contextually, *millennial* in its scope of fulfillment.

This removal will occur at the judgment seat; *and it has NOTHING to do with eternal verities, with one's eternal salvation, etc.*

NOR do the warnings in the other epistles in Revelation chapters two and three. Rather, *millennial verities ALONE, as they relate to saved individuals*, are in view through that stated in these warnings.

The time element involved in the warnings would have to be the same as that seen in the overcomer's promises, for the latter has to do with overcoming or being overcome relative to the former.

And *millennial verities ALONE* are clearly revealed to be in view through that stated in several of the overcomer's promises. Conditions seen in several of these promises will not exist beyond the Millennium, during the eternal ages (*e.g.*, 2:11, 26, 27; 3:5, 21).

Following the warning to the Church in Ephesus, reference is made to the “Nicolaitanes” (an Anglicized form of the compound Greek word, *nikolaites* [from *nike*, “a victor,” “a conqueror”; and *laos*, “people”]). Thus, the word “Nicolaitanes” means, “to conquer [be victorious over] the people.”

Within Church history, there is no record of a group of individuals known by the name, “Nicolaitanes” — in the Church in Ephesus, or in any other first-century Church (note that a reference to the “Nicolaitanes” is also repeated in the epistle to the Church in Pergamos [2:15]).

And, when coming across a reference of this nature, there is *ONLY* one thing that can be done in order to understand that which the Lord meant through using this word (whether by Christians during the first century, or by Christians today). The use of “Nicolaitanes” would have to be understood as a reference to *the actions of a group of individuals, described by the meaning of the word itself.*

From the meaning of the word, contextually, a reference to the “Nicolaitanes” could only be understood as a reference to *individuals forming a hierarchy within the Church, ruling over the people.*

And these individuals were undoubtedly responsible, at least in part, for the existing conditions in Ephesus near the end of the first century, as well as the conditions subsequently seen existing in Pergamos (and possibly in one or more of the other five Churches, though this is not mentioned).

And the entire matter leads into the promise for those who overcome, *i.e.*, for those who *remember, repent, and do the first works.* These are the ones who will be allowed to partake of the tree of life during the Messianic Era (vv. 5-7).

All of these things, though directed to those in the Church in Ephesus, would be applicable to those in any of the other six Churches as well.

And the inverse of that is equally true. The things written to those in each of the other six Churches would be applicable to those in the Church in Ephesus, or to those in any of the Churches.

That is, the things recorded in each of these seven epistles would be applicable to Christians everywhere.

2) *The Dispensation*

It is also evident that these seven epistles, through the manner in which they have been Divinely arranged and structured, set forth truths within another realm. Viewed together, beginning with the Church in Ephesus and ending with the Church in Laodicea, it is evident that these epistles set forth a Divinely revealed, overall view of Church history, covering the entire dispensation.

In this respect, the message to the Church in Ephesus would reveal things concerning the Church at the beginning of the dispensation; the messages to the next five Churches would continue from that point and reveal things concerning the Church throughout at least most of the remainder of the dispensation; and the message to the Church in Laodicea would reveal things concerning the Church during the closing years of the dispensation.

(Revelation chapters two and three present one of only two places in Scripture where an overall history of Christendom throughout the dispensation is given. The other was also given by Christ, but years earlier during His earthly ministry, preceding Calvary.

The earlier history of Christendom can be seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen [*ref. the author's book, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, Chapters III-VI*]. And interestingly enough, both of these accounts center around a history of Christendom as it pertains to *the Word of the Kingdom* — something which Church history books written by man *NEVER even mention, much less center around.*

And *UNTIL* man understands the true nature of Church history, from the standpoint revealed in Matthew chapter thirteen and Revelation chapters two and three, *he can NEVER properly understand Church history.* He *can NEVER* properly understand why the Church, after almost 2,000 years of existence, has ended up in its present decadent state.

And, as a result, he can do little more than what is presently being done — approach the whole matter from a position other than how it is handled in Scripture.)

Near the beginning of the Church's existence on earth, as shown by the first of the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three, there was a departure of Christians from their first love. And this revealed something with far-reaching ramifica-

tions which would occur in Christendom during the early years of its existence. The time element is not given in the epistle, but it would have to be seen in conjunction with a general deterioration of spiritual conditions in Christendom, occurring over the first several centuries.

Christians during the early years of the Church were busily engaged in the Lord's work as they waited, anticipated, and longed for His return. They *loved His appearing* (cf. II Tim. 4:8).

But as time went on and the Lord remained in heaven, the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 began to do its damaging work, resulting in Christians gradually losing their first love. And the end result of the loss of this first love was the onset of what is known in Church history as "The Dark Ages."

Although Christians departing from their first love emanates out of a sequence of events which fit into a framework of early Church history, this is not something peculiar to that period. Rather, this is something which has continued to exist since that time; and the attendant warning to Christians concerning the possibility of the candlestick being removed *MUST* extend throughout the entire period.

The retention or removal of the candlestick *is contingent on either overcoming or being overcome relative to the matter at hand* (v. 7). Eternal verities *are NOT in view at all*. The thought set forth in this passage projects the matter out into that time when Christ will deal with the Church in *judgment*, and a retention or removal of the candlestick anticipates the Church as it will appear *following* the issues of the judgment seat of Christ.

3) *Called, Called Out*

The word *Church* in the Greek text is a compound word (*ekklesia*, from *ek* and *kaleo*) which means "called out." And the word is used in the New Testament in two senses:

- 1) As the Church appears *preceding the issues of the judgment seat* (which would be during the present dispensation [Rev. 2, 3], or as the Church is seen *before the judgment seat* [Rev. 1-3]).

2) As the Church will appear *following the issues of the judgment seat* (which would be as the Church is seen in Rev. 19:7-9, as the bride of Christ [cf. Heb. 12:23]).

Only the "called" (all of the saved) can comprise the Church today (as it is looked upon in Rev. 2, 3), for the "called out" are yet to be revealed and removed from the called.

The Church will appear in the true sense of the word itself (*ekklesia*, "called out") only after the "called out" have been removed from the "called," which will occur following Christ dealing with all Christians at His judgment seat (note that all those being addressed in Rev. 2:1-7 are in the Church [as the Church presently appears], but some are in danger of being removed [as the Church will one day appear]).

Christ's warning concerning the removal of the candlestick in Rev. 2:5 — the removal of the Church in Ephesus, the Christians in Ephesus — *MUST* be understood in the light of the two ways in which the word "Church" is used in Scripture.

The message is to individuals in the Church *as it appears today, which comprises ALL of the called, ALL of the saved, NOT just the called out* (for the Church in the latter sense is yet to be revealed).

And any of the called who leave their "first love" and do not "repent, and do the first works," *CANNOT be among the called out*. They *CANNOT* comprise the Church as it will appear in that coming day.

Rather, they will *be removed*, spoken of elsewhere as *being disapproved* (Gk., *adokimos*) [cf. I Cor. 9:27; II Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:16; Heb. 6:8]).

These two appearances of the Church present a sharp contrast in Scripture:

The Church on earth immediately *preceding* its removal to appear before the judgment seat is described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (which includes only those Christians alive at that time [Rev. 3:14-18]).

But the Church *following* the issues of the judgment seat is described as the "glorious church [the Church in her glory (the bride of Christ)], not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"

(which will include overcoming Christians from throughout the dispensation [Eph. 5:25-32]). And it is the Church in her glory, the bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7-9), which will be extended the privilege of partaking of “the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

The Church as it will exist in that coming day is referred to in Heb. 12:23 as the “Church of the firstborn.” The thought has to do with a *called out group of firstborn sons*.

This moves matters beyond the adoption (the placement of firstborn sons) and presents the Church as being comprised only of individuals *called out of the body*, not individuals called out of the world (so to speak), as the Church is seen during the present day and time.

(Paul, in his Church epistles, though he wrote to all of the saved in a particular locality, often worded matters more in keeping with the thought of the Church as it will appear in that coming day [as presented by the writer of Hebrews in Heb. 12:23; e.g., Rom. 1:7, 8; Eph. 1:5-14; I Thess. 1:5-10; 5:1-9].

And this would be in complete keeping with Paul’s central message [pertaining to *the mystery*], which was *the central message* proclaimed throughout Christendom during the first century.)

The Church as it will exist in that coming day will appear in complete keeping with the type in Genesis chapter two — Eve formed from a *part of Adam’s body*, which had been removed from his body.

The bride of Christ, in the antitype — synonymous with the Church as it will appear in that coming day — will be formed from a *part of Christ’s body*, which will have been removed from His body.

ALL Christians together form the body of Christ. *BUT, ALL* Christians *CANNOT* form the bride of Christ.

ONLY those removed from the body can form the bride.

The type has been set, and the antitype *MUST* follow the type in *EXACT* detail. There can be *NO* variance between the two.

And the called out, in that day, forming *the bride*, will be placed as *firstborn sons* (i.e., be adopted), with a view to their occupying positions with Christ in the kingdom.

(For a more detailed discussion concerning the bride being removed from the body, refer to the author's book, *The Bride in Genesis*, Ch. I, "Adam and Eve.")

Note that the Church will be looked upon in that coming day in two respects in Scripture — as a *bride*, and as a *firstborn son*. These are simply two ways in which Scripture presents the matter.

On the one hand, *Christ MUST have a bride to reign as consort queen with Him*; then, on the other hand, *ONLY firstborn sons can rule*.

NONE of this is true in the angelic realm, *ONLY* in the human realm. Angelic rulers are *ALL sons, but NOT firstborn sons*; and there can be *NO* thought of marriage within the angelic realm itself, for all angels are of the same gender, referred to in a masculine respect.)

In Genesis, Proverbs, and Revelation

"The tree of life" is mentioned nine times in Scripture, in three different books — three times in Genesis (2:9; 3:22, 24), four times in Proverbs (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4), and twice in the Book of Revelation (2:7; 22:2).

BUT, what was the original purpose for the tree of life (seen in Genesis), *which will be realized yet future* (seen in the Book of Revelation)?

The tree of life was one of the numerous trees in the garden in Eden. And Adam, with Eve, was commanded to eat of all these trees, with the exception of one — "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:9, 16, 17).

Adam, the first man, had been created for the specific purpose of assuming *the rulership over the earth*, and the fruit of the tree of life was singled out as *a specific provision* for man as he exercised this rule.

An evident connection between man's rule and his partaking of the tree of life can be seen by noting *the appearance of this tree* in the beginning when man was in a position to rule, *the absence of this tree* during the entire period when man is not in a position to rule (aside from the tree being referenced in Proverbs), and *the reappearance of this tree* in the Book of Revelation when man will be brought back into a position to rule (*cf.* Gen. 1:26-28; Rev. 2:26,27).

The period during which man has been barred from eating of the tree of life *began* following Adam's fall, resulting in his disqualification to rule; and this period will *end* following the issues of the judgment seat, at which time man will once again find himself in a position to rule.

Adam, following the fall, was driven from the garden to prevent his partaking of the tree of life. Adam *could NOT* be permitted to eat of this tree in a fallen condition, for had such occurred, Adam, in a fallen state, would have realized that which fruit from this tree was meant to provide.

Thus, *NOT ONLY* did God remove Adam from the garden, *BUT* "Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way," were placed at "the east of the garden...to keep the way of the tree of life [to prevent fallen man from reentering the garden and partaking of this tree]" (Gen. 3:22-24).

Studying Gen. 3:22-24 apart from the context and related Scripture could lead one to believe that the purpose for the tree of life in the beginning, in Genesis, was to provide perpetuity of life for Adam in his unfallen state.

However, such *could NOT* have been the case at all. "Death" *did NOT* enter into the picture until *after* Adam's sin (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6ff; cf. Rom. 6:23), at which time he was barred from the tree of life.

Adam had lived in an *undying state* prior to his sin, as he continued to live in an antithetical *dying state* following his sin; and to say that the tree of life was given to Adam in his unfallen state to provide perpetuity of life, preventing death, *CANNOT possibly be correct*.

NOR could it possibly be correct to say that the tree of life would have had anything to do with providing *physical life (keeping Adam alive physically)* following the fall.

A tree can produce *ONLY* "after his kind" (Gen. 1:11, 12). In this respect, *fruit* from the tree of life simply *could NOT have produced one result before man's fall and another following man's fall*.

In Rev. 2:7, partaking of the tree of life has been promised to the overcomers from among those *ALREADY possessing eternal life*.

Consequently, in this passage, the tree of life *can have NOTHING whatsoever to do with perpetuity of life; and EXACTLY the same*

thing could ONLY be seen in the Genesis account when man was first brought upon the scene.

The tree of life in both Genesis chapters two and three and Revelation chapter two appears *in the SAME setting.*

The tree of life reserved for Christians in Rev. 2:7 is associated peculiarly with *a provision for those who will rule and reign as co-heirs with Christ.*

And viewing Adam's position in the Genesis account — created *to rule and reign*, in possession of an unending life, with the fruit of the tree of life at his disposal — *the SAME thought concerning regality in connection with the tree of life could ONLY hold true.*

Thus, Adam in a fallen state, NO longer in a position to rule, could NOT have been allowed to eat of the tree of life, for fruit from this tree would have provided "life" in relation to regality.

This whole overall thought concerning the tree of life in Scripture *would have to hold true*, for that seen relative to this tree *in Revelation chapter two* is drawn from that which was *first* seen relative to this tree *in Genesis chapters two and three.*

The fruit of the tree of life *was in the past* (seen in the Book of Genesis) and *will be in the future* (seen in the Book of Revelation) *a provision for the rulers in the kingdom. This is an evident fact which MUST be recognized.*

And, in that coming day following the Millennium, the tree of life will be for "the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2).

The Greek word translated "healing" is *therapeia*, from which the English word "therapy" is derived.

This is a medical term which has to do with *restorative healing.* In that day, God will *restore ALL of saved mankind to the original place which man occupied at the time of his creation.* And, consequently, *the whole of saved mankind, with regality in view, will have access to the tree of life.*

During the preceding Messianic Era, the tree of life will have been made available to overcoming Christians (Rev. 2:7), those ruling and reigning as co-heirs with Christ. And this tree will probably be made available to certain others at this time as well, others occupying regal positions with Christ in His reign from the heavens over the earth (*e.g.*, certain Old Testament saints,

Tribulation martyrs [Matt. 8:11, 12; Rev. 20:4-6]).

But following the Messianic Era, in the eternal ages, this tree is seen being made available to the nations of the earth, something which would have been completely out of place during the Millennium. And this will be an apparent end result of Israel's evangelistic endeavors during the Millennium, along with Christ and His co-heirs' rule with a rod of iron during this time.

Man was created in the beginning to *rule and to reign*. And though only a part of saved mankind will have been brought back into a position to occupy the throne at the beginning of the Millennium (with the tree of life made available to them at this time), at the end of the Millennium the whole of saved mankind will be brought back into this position (with the tree of life made available to them at this time).

Wisdom, Understanding

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She is *a tree of life* to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is everyone that retaineth her" (Prov. 3:13-18).

Following the introduction to "the tree of life" in the opening chapters of Genesis, there are only *four references* to this tree throughout Scripture until one arrives at Rev. 2:7.

Solomon used the expression, "a tree of life," four times in the Book of Proverbs (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4); and it is within this revelation given through Solomon that one finds *information pertaining to the type "provision" — past and future — which fruit from this tree would provide.*

And through putting all of this together, the reason then becomes apparent why this tree, with its fruit, was among the trees provided for Adam and Eve to eat in their unfallen state, and why fruit from this tree is being reserved for overcoming Christians to partake of during the Messianic Era.

(Then, there is also a connection between this tree and the complete restoration of the nations of the earth beyond the Messianic Era, with all of mankind realizing the purpose for man's creation in the beginning [Rev. 22:2].

For additional information on this subject, refer to Appx. III, "The Coming Kingdom," in this book.)

In the first of these four passages, *wisdom* and *understanding* are said to be "a tree of life." Viewing this in the light of the wisdom and understanding possessed by Solomon as he ruled over Israel is the association provided by Scripture to correctly understand *one facet* of the tree of life. *Solomon possessed wisdom and understanding as he ruled; and Christians MUST, in like manner, possess wisdom and understanding as they rule, as would have been necessary for Adam had he ruled.*

1) Solomon Properly Equipped

Shortly after Solomon ascended the throne following the death of David, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon, recognizing that he was but as a "little child" in understanding the affairs of state within the kingdom over which he ruled asked for *wisdom* and *knowledge*. Solomon asked God for the ability to judge the people of Israel in equity, justice, and righteousness.

Such a request pleased the Lord, and Solomon was granted not only "*wisdom* and *knowledge*" but also "*riches, and wealth, and honor.*" His ability to rule, his material wealth, and the respect which he commanded — all coming from the hand of the Lord — would later be shown to exceed that of any king upon the face of the earth (I Kings 3:5-15; II Chron. 1:7-17).

Solomon's ability to judge among his people in a unique manner through the wisdom and knowledge which the Lord had

bestowed began to be displayed through a decision which he rendered concerning two women and a child.

These two women dwelled alone in the same house, and both had given birth to sons, one three days before the other. The son born last died one night because his mother lay upon him; and as the other mother slept with her son at her side, the mother of the dead child took the living child from his mother's side and placed the dead child in its stead.

However, upon awakening, the mother now in possession of the dead child realized that the child was not hers and found that her child was still alive and being claimed by the other mother.

And not being able to resolve the matter between themselves, their case was brought before Solomon.

Solomon was told what had allegedly occurred; and as he listened to both women claiming the living child, he was unable to ascertain which was the true mother.

He then called for a sword and commanded that the child be divided into two parts, giving half to each woman. Solomon, in his wisdom, knew that the true mother would be revealed through the actions which each woman would take when they heard his decision.

And this is exactly what occurred. The true mother pleaded for the child's life, telling Solomon to not harm the child but to give him to the other woman. The other woman, whose child had died, on the other hand, insisted that the child be divided.

Solomon then knew which of the two was telling the truth, and the child was returned to his true mother (I Kings 3:16-27).

Solomon's *wisdom* in this matter spread throughout all Israel, and the people "feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment." Not only did God give Solomon wisdom to judge in all matters, but Solomon possessed wisdom of such a nature that it spread throughout the entire known world.

His wisdom "excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men...and his fame was in all nations round about...and there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" (I Kings 3:28; 4:29-34).

The queen of Sheba came "to prove him with hard questions" (I Kings 10:1ff), and in the end stated:

"It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (I Kings 10:6b, 7).

2) *Christians Properly Equipped*

The wisdom and understanding which Solomon possessed as he ruled in the kingdom of Israel (associated with "a tree of life") provides the central reason why the tree of life is found in association with Adam's rule in Genesis and with the Christians' rule yet future.

The fruit of this tree *would have provided* (for Adam) and *will provide* (for Christians) the necessary wisdom and understanding to govern in equity, justice, and righteousness.

God's bestowal of *wisdom, understanding, riches, wealth, and honor* upon Solomon typifies that which He will bestow upon overcoming Christians during the coming age.

Through the fruit of the tree of life, God will provide the necessary *wisdom and understanding* to rule in the kingdom; through being co-heirs with God's Son, Christians will come into possession of unlimited *riches and wealth*, for all the Father's possessions will belong to the Son; and in these positions, Christians will realize a status of *honor and glory* befitting those elevated to such noble rank (Gen. 24:10, 36, 53; John 16:13-15; I Peter 1:9-11; 4:12, 13; Rev. 4:11; 5:12).

The tree of life in Eden was a literal tree with literal fruit, as will be the tree of life in the new Jerusalem following the Millennium (Rev. 22:2).

However, there is a possibility that the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, reserved for Christians during the Millennium, may not be a literal tree as such. There is a sense in which Christ Himself is the Tree of Life, a Tree upon which Christians will one day feed, similar to the feeding upon Christ seen in John 6:48-56.

But, a feeding upon Christ in relation to the tree of life could only be at a *future time alone*. Scripture associates a present feeding in this respect with “manna,” not with a “tree.”

The tree of life is located in *the paradise of God* and is connected with *regality*, something from which Christians are presently *estranged*.

This is *NOT the day* when Christians are to rule and reign. *That day* lies in the future. Thus, any feeding upon Christ today could not be associated with the tree of life. Rather, it would have to be associated with manna.

(As previously seen, in Gen. 1:12, God introduced something concerning trees which is *unchangeable*. Trees which yield fruit will *always* yield their fruit “after his kind.”

The tree of life is located in *the paradise of God* and associated with *regality*; and fruit born by this tree *MUST* be viewed accordingly.

The tree will bear fruit “after his kind,” associated with *the paradise of God* and with *regality*; and this fruit can be eaten by man *ONLY* after he finds himself exercising *regality* in the *paradise of God*, during the *Messianic Era*.)

Insofar as a feeding upon manna with respect to Christ, note the third overcomer’s promise (Rev. 2:17). The Israelites fed upon literal manna in the wilderness, but Christ is the Manna upon which Christians feed. Christ is “the bread of life”; and we “eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood.”

Through this process, we acquire *that wisdom which comes from above*; or, as Scripture states, “Christ...is made [‘has become’] unto us *wisdom*...” (John 6:48-58; I Cor. 1:30; cf. I Cor. 2:6-10; Eph. 1:8; Col. 1:9, 28).

Christ is the Living Word which came down from heaven; and feeding upon the Living Word is accomplished through feeding upon the inseparable Written Word. In Christ are “hid all the treasures of *wisdom* and *knowledge*” (Col. 2:3); and feeding upon Him, through the Written Word, allows us to develop and grow, becoming more and more like Him through acquiring this wisdom and knowledge.

Wisdom and knowledge acquired during the present time though *is NOT for the purpose of equipping Christians to rule and reign*. We are living during the time Christ is in heaven, with the present existing kingdom under the dominion and control of Satan. Wisdom and knowledge presently being acquired is for the *SOLE purpose of equipping Christians to carry on the Lord's business during His time of absence*.

Wisdom and knowledge of a nature which will equip Christians to rule and reign will be acquired *ONLY* from the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. *IF* this is a reference to Christ Himself, such a feeding upon Christ *can ONLY refer to something which is NOT available today but reserved for the overcomers during the coming age*.

Christians allowed to partake of the tree of life in that day will, through partaking of this tree, be properly equipped for carrying on the Lord's business following His return when He is revealed as "King of kings, and Lord of lords"; and Christians carrying on His business then will do so through reigning as co-heirs with Him.

John, in two of the books which he wrote — the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation — deals with the entire matter of saved individuals partaking of manna during the present time and partaking of both the tree of life and hidden manna yet future.

Six of the eight times that John deals with man partaking after the preceding fashions have to do with man partaking of manna during the present time, during man's 6,000-year day. And the seventh and eighth times have to do with man partaking of the tree of life and hidden manna during a future time, during the Lord's 1,000-year day, during the Messianic Era.

(For more information on "the hidden manna," refer to Ch. III in this book.)

The six partakings occurring during man's 6,000-year day are seen in John's gospel:

1) *Life* — spiritual life, a passing "from death unto life" — derived through the One Who said "I am the resurrection, and the life (John 1:4; 10:10; 11:25).

- 2) *Food* — the “bread of life” (John 6:35).
- 3) *Water* — the “living water” (John 4:14; 7:37).
- 4) *Breath* — a continued breathing beyond the Spirit breathing life into the one having no life at the beginning (John 20:22).
- 5) *Light* — the “light of life” (John 8:12).
- 6) *Dwelling Place* — abiding “in the vine” (John 15:1-5).

But the Lord’s 1,000-year day will follow Man’s Day; and John dealt with man eating during this day through reference to both *the tree of life* and *hidden manna*, providing a seventh and an eighth partaking of Christ within that which he later wrote, recorded in the Book of Revelation:

7) *The Tree of Life* — related to *regality* and a *future inheritance in Christ’s kingdom* (Rev. 2:7).

8) *The Hidden Manna* — also related to *regality* and a *future inheritance in Christ’s kingdom* (Rev. 2:17).

Then, as previously seen, a reference to *the tree of life* in association with the ages beyond the Messianic Era is also seen at the end of this same book (Rev. 22:2).

Fruit of the Righteous

“The fruit of the righteous is a *tree of life*; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30).

The second mention of the “tree of life” in the Book of Proverbs is in connection with *righteousness* and *soul-winning*.

This is the identical connection one will find in the New Testament when studying the Christians’ association with the tree of life.

The “righteous” in Prov. 11:30 are the ones who will be allowed to partake of the tree of life. With respect to Christians, such a righteousness *CANNOT* be looked upon as synonymous with the imputed righteousness of Christ received at the time one was saved, for every Christian possesses this righteousness.

But, as is plainly revealed in Rev. 2:7, *NOT* every Christian will be allowed to partake of the tree of life. The righteousness in this verse *can ONLY* have to do with "the righteous acts of the saints," which form the wedding garment.

The ones referenced are those Christians who will be properly clothed at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9, ASV). These are the Christians who will comprise *the Church consisting of firstborn sons* (Heb. 12:23) and subsequently enter into the kingdom in positions of power and authority with Christ (Matt. 24:45-47; cf. vv. 48-51).

Soul-winning in the New Testament is largely misunderstood in Christian circles today. The common terminology, which is *NOT* correct at all, is to equate soul-winning with carrying the message of salvation by grace through faith to the unsaved.

BUT, equating soul-winning with the message of salvation by grace through faith serves *ONLY* to obscure both issues, leaving one hopelessly mired in a sea of misinterpretation.

Soul-winning is one thing, and proclaiming the message of salvation by grace through faith is another. The former has to do with the saved, and the latter has to do with the unsaved. The messages involved in both issues *MUST* be kept separate and distinct, which necessitates Christians understanding proper distinctions in these two realms.

Salvation by grace through faith, carried to the unsaved, is the presentation of the simple gospel message. The unsaved are to be told "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 2:1, 2; 15:3).

Christ has paid the penalty for sin. The work of redemption has been accomplished on man's behalf, and God is satisfied.

Provision has been made for unredeemed man to be saved through receiving that which Christ has done on his behalf. And he does this through simply *believing on the Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 16:31).

Redeemed man, on the other hand, is to hear an entirely different message.

He is to be taught the reason for his salvation.

He is to be told that Christ has *gone away* "to receive for him-

self a kingdom”; he is to be told that *during the time of his Lord’s absence* he is to be busy with the talents and pounds which the Lord delivered to and left in charge of His servants (Christians); he is to be told that *a day of reckoning* is coming; he is to be told that *the Lord will return to judge His servants* on the basis of their faithfulness in carrying out His business during His time of absence; and he is to be told that *the outcome of this judgment* will determine every Christian’s position in the coming kingdom (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27).

And it is within this overall message to the saved that one finds the salvation of the soul taught in Scripture, *NOT* within the message of salvation by grace through faith, proclaimed to the unsaved.

“Soul-winning” has to do with *winning those who are already saved to a life of faithfulness to the Lord*. “Soul-winning” is *winning one’s life*.

This involves winning Christians (those possessing “life”) to be occupied with the Lord’s business during His time of absence, anticipating His return.

And more specifically, this involves winning Christians to be occupied in this manner with that portion of the Lord’s business delivered to them personally.

Illustrated in the parables of the talents and the pounds, one servant was responsible *ONLY* for bringing forth an increase in the talents or the pounds *which had been placed in his possession, NOT in those which had been placed in another servant’s possession*. Issues and determinations resulting from the judgment seat will be based strictly on *the evaluation of works performed by Christians in complete keeping with that set forth in these two parables*.

Direct references to the salvation of the soul are found in New Testament passages such as Matt. 16:24-27; Heb. 10:38, 39; James 1:21; 5:19, 20; I Peter 1:9-11 and are always spoken of in a future sense within a context dealing with those who are already saved.

Soul-winning is associated *with the righteous acts of the saints, with overcoming, and with one day being extended the privilege of partaking of the tree of life*. This is the reason that soul-winning is found within a context of this nature in Prov. 11:30.

The wise are the ones who win souls (win lives):

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Hope Realized

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a *tree of life*" (Prov. 13:12).

The third mention of the "tree of life" in the Book of Proverbs is in connection with *hope* that is realized.

There is *NO* tree of life as long as one's hope is deferred. *ONLY* when "the desire cometh [hope is realized]" does the tree of life come into view.

This thought from the Book of Proverbs is in perfect accord with the Christians' present hope in the light of the two previous references to the tree of life in this book.

Christians have been "begotten" from above unto a "living hope" through the "resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Christ lives, and Christians will live with Him. But this fact is not the object of one's hope. Hope is described as "living" because of resurrection, but hope itself lies in things beyond resurrection. These things are revealed as an "inheritance" and a "salvation" (I Peter 1:3-5).

"Hope," "inheritance," and "salvation" are inseparably linked in Scripture. It is *ONLY* because we are saved (passive, salvation of the spirit) that we can possess a "hope." And the hope which Christians possess looks ahead to the reception of an inheritance within a salvation (future, salvation of the soul) to be revealed.

The "blessed hope" in Titus 2:13 is one of the more familiar passages written to Christians in this respect.

This hope is often said to be the return of Christ for His Church, but that's *NOT* what this or any other passage in the New Testament dealing with the Christians' hope teaches at all. *Hope*, as in Titus 2:13, is associated with the "appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (ASV).

The construction of the Greek text in Titus 2:13 actually makes *hope* synonymous with *the appearing of Christ's glory*.

Christians are the ones who possess this hope, as they are the ones who will be partakers of Christ's glory when it is revealed. In this respect, participation in the coming glory of Christ will be the realization of one's present hope, *for one CANNOT be separated from the other*.

Christians realizing their present hope, and the overcomers in Rev. 2:7 who will be allowed to partake of the tree of life, are one and the same.

This is the reason Prov. 13:12 teaches that *hope realized* is "a tree of life." Those Christians one day coming into a realization of their present hope will be the ones who constitute the rulers in the kingdom, the ones allowed to partake of the tree of life to equip them for service in their respective capacities in the kingdom.

A Wholesome Tongue

"A wholesome ['tranquil'] tongue is *a tree of life*: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Prov. 15:4).

The Epistle of James in the New Testament forms the commentary for the fourth and last mention of the "tree of life" in the Book of Proverbs, demonstrating a number of things about the use of the tongue and showing the connection between Prov. 15:4 and the three previous references to the tree of life in this book.

James is an epistle dealing strictly with the salvation of the soul, providing certain indispensable information necessary for a proper understanding of this all-important subject.

The tree of life, on the other hand, is reserved for those Christians realizing the salvation of their souls; and a proper understanding of the tree of life is integrally related to a proper understanding of this salvation.

James mentions the tongue in chapter one (vv. 26, 27) and then goes into a lengthy discourse in chapter three concerning this small member of the body and what it is capable of doing (vv. 1ff):

"The tongue...boasteth great things...is a fire, a world of iniquity... it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell [*Gehenna*]...the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (3:5-8).

A Christian's spirituality can be seen through the control of his tongue, for the tongue can be properly controlled only through the use of that *wisdom* and *knowledge* which comes from above (James 3:13-18).

This thought from the Epistle of James takes one back to Prov. 3:13-18, where *wisdom* and *knowledge* are associated with the tree of life. And, in this same respect, "a wholesome tongue" also finds its association with the tree of life. A wholesome (tranquil) tongue results from the proper use of Divinely imparted *wisdom* and *knowledge*.

Concluding Thoughts:

Man's rule over the earth *MUST* await that time when Rev. 2:7 will be brought to pass. He that "overcometh" will realize *the salvation of his soul (life)*, realize *that blessed hope*, come into possession of *the required wisdom and knowledge* necessary to rule as a co-regent with Christ in the kingdom, and be shown to have a *wholesome tongue [a tranquil tongue]* in this rule.

This is what Scripture teaches concerning *the presence* of the tree of life in Eden, *the absence* of the tree of life in the world today, and the coming inheritance of the saints, when Christians *will be allowed to partake of "the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."*

2

The Second Death

Hurt by, Not Hurt by

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11).

The words of the Spirit of God to the Church in Smyrna carry a special message to Christians who find themselves passing through times of various trials and testings during their pilgrim walk.

The Christians in Smyrna had been called upon to suffer, but NOT without cause or recompense.

“Suffering” is God’s *refining fire*, and those passing through the fire in Smyrna were extended a promise: “...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (vv. 9, 10).

The overcomer’s promise then comes into view, stating simply and explicitly that overcoming Christians in Smyrna would “not be hurt of the second death” (v. 11).

Trials, Testings

The sufferings which Christians in Smyrna were called upon to endure are summed up in the words, “...behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days.”

Over the years there have been numerous interpretations concerning the ten days of suffering in Rev. 2:10.

Some expositors have called attention to ten periods of Roman persecution during the first three centuries of the Church’s existence and have sought to establish a correlation between the ten days in this verse and these ten periods in Church history, making each day represent a period of time.

Other expositors have sought to apply the ten days to a ten-year persecution during one of these periods, making each day represent one year.

Still other expositors have taken the number "ten" as symbolic, representing a limited but undefined period, usually within the larger period covered by the ten persecutions.

Regardless of how one looks upon the ten days of tribulation within a possible historical framework, the significance of the number "ten" *MUST* be taken into account.

"Ten" is the number of *ordinal completion*, pointing to *ALL the days of tribulation*.

And if these ten days are to be thought of in connection with the ten periods of Roman persecution, they would have to be thought of as showing *completion* in relation to persecution by the Roman Empire.

But, regardless of how one views the matter relative to persecution by the Roman Empire, the thought encompassed in the number "ten" *MUST, of necessity, go beyond these persecutions*.

The seven Churches of Revelation chapters two and three are indivisibly related, revealing messages and promises to Christians throughout the dispensation; and the "ten days," in their numerical sense, *MUST cover the complete period — the entire dispensation*. These ten days of tribulation *can ONLY refer to all trials and testings coming upon all Christians throughout the dispensation*.

Trials and testings are *the NORM* for the Christian life, *NOT the exception*.

And the Epistles of James and I Peter have been written to encourage Christians passing through times of trials and testings by holding out before them prizes, rewards, compensations, which are intimately associated with the salvation to be revealed — *the salvation of the soul* (James 1:21; I Peter 1:9).

This is the identical thought expressed in the overcomer's promise to the Church in Smyrna. A "crown of life" is in view, and the recipient of this crown is given the assurance that he will "not be hurt of the second death."

The Epistle of James begins its message with the statement, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."

Why? Temptations, testings, of this nature “worketh patience [‘patient endurance’]”; and allowing this patient endurance to have “her perfect work [end-time work],” Christians will become “perfect and entire, wanting nothing [‘mature and complete, lacking nothing]” (James 1:2-4).

Christians are to look upon such trials in the same manner as the apostles looked upon trials which confronted them. The apostles, in circumstances of this or a similar nature, *rejoiced* that “they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his [Christ’s] name” (Acts 5:41).

The Christian patiently enduring temptations after the fashion seen in James 1:2-4 is promised in verse twelve that “when he is tried [‘approved’ (at the judgment seat)], he shall receive the crown of life,” a parallel statement to Rev. 2:10. In both instances it is patiently enduring temptations, trials, and testings during the present time, with *a crown of life* in view; and this crown of life will be awarded *following one’s approval* at the judgment seat.

Crowns *MUST* be won through patiently enduring temptations, trials, and testings during the present “race of the faith” (I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 6:11, 12; II Tim. 4:7, 8). And forfeiture of the proffered crown — resulting in non-approval at the judgment seat — is *a very real possibility*.

Note the warning in this respect:

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11).

Apart from the thought that a Christian can forfeit his crown, this verse would hold little meaning whatsoever. Christians receiving or not receiving crowns awaits decisions and determinations at the judgment seat.

Overcoming Christians will wear the crowns which they have won in the present race of the faith while occupying positions of power and authority with Christ during the coming age.

BUT, for non-overcoming Christians, the matter will be entirely different. NO uncrowned person will rule as co-heir with Christ in the kingdom.

Manner of Usage in Revelation

"The second death" is an expression peculiar to the Book of Revelation, and it appears four times in this book (2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).

This expression is used *twice* in texts where the word "overcometh" is used (2:11; 21:7, 8), *once* in connection with those who are martyred during the Tribulation ("beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God..." [20:4-6], with the thought of *overcoming* again seen), and *once* in connection with the unsaved dead from throughout Man's Day (20:11-15).

"The second death" is defined in Rev. 20:14; 21:8 as being "cast into the lake of fire" and as having a "part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

It is evident in Rev. 20:14 that "the second death" is used referring to the unsaved.

And it is equally evident that this expression is used in the other three passages in the Book of Revelation (2:11; 20:6; 21:8) referring to the saved, in connection with *overcoming* (not subsequently being hurt of the second death) or *being overcome* (and subsequently being hurt of the second death).

To state otherwise, gloss over this, or attempt to read into the passage what clearly is not there (*e.g.*, see the statement as a litotes, as some have) is to ignore the CLEAR wording and meaning of the text.

1) Overcomers Will Not Be Hurt of...

The "fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars" in Rev. 21:8 are usually looked upon by students of Scripture as a reference to unredeemed individuals, synonymous with the ones previously seen in Rev. 20:11-15.

However, contextually, this CANNOT be the case at all. The subject in verse seven, leading into verse eight, is *overcoming and realizing an inheritance in the kingdom as a son*.

(Reference is made to these overcoming martyrs ruling and reigning with Christ for 1,000 years [Rev. 20:4-6].

Only *sons* can rule in God's kingdom [cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; Luke 3:38; Rom. 8:18, 19], and *ruling in the kingdom* is spoken of at times as *realizing an inheritance in the kingdom* [Eph. 1:14, 18; 5:5; Col. 3:24; I Peter 1:4].)

Verse eight simply describes the “unbelieving [‘unfaithful’]” ones (cf. Luke 12:46) — the non-overcomers — and reveals that which will be their lot following their appearance before the Lord in judgment.

A similar description of individuals to that of Rev. 21:8 appears in I Cor. 6:8-10, where an *inheritance* in the kingdom is also in view:

“Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

Know ye not that the unrighteous *shall not inherit the kingdom of God?*

Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [the word, contextually, refers to *male prostitutes*], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [homosexuals, the last of four references to different types of sexually immoral individuals],

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, *shall inherit the kingdom of God.*”

In this section of Scripture, the text clearly reveals that *Christians ALONE are in view*.

The words “ye do wrong” in verse eight (referring to the manner of living of the “brethren” in the Corinthian Church), leading into verses nine and ten, are a translation of the Greek verb *adikeo*. The noun form of this word (*adikos*) then appears in verse nine (translated “unrighteous”), establishing a connection with verse eight which provides the proper identification of the individuals Paul is addressing in verses nine and ten.

In verse eight, Paul calls attention to the fact that certain Christians in the Corinthian Church were conducting their affairs in an unrighteous manner.

(Those referenced in these verses, of necessity, would have to be saved individuals, for they were part of the Church in Corinth. Scripture recognizes “the Church” as comprised of *the saved alone, NEVER a mixture of saved and unsaved individuals*.)

The thought of both saved and unsaved individuals comprising a Church is solely man's ideology, and it is an ideology which is *completely foreign to ANY use of the word “Church [Gk., *ekklesia*]” in Scripture*.

Ekklesia means "called out," and that referred to through the use of this word during the present dispensation would be a group of individuals called out of the world — something which could NEVER include the unsaved.)

Continuing this same line of thought from verse eight into verse nine, Paul asks the question:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous [a reference to Christians from v. 8] shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"

The remainder of verse nine, along with verse ten, then lists a number of unrighteous acts in which it is possible for Christians to become involved, concluding with the statement in verse ten that those engaged in unrighteous living of this nature "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

The subject at hand, *inheritance in the kingdom*, rather than eternal life, should be carefully noted.

ONLY Christians are presently in line to either receive or be denied this inheritance:

"If children, then heirs..." (Rom. 8:17).

A person *MUST* be a child of God, a child of the Owner, a Christian (or, in the past dispensation, he *MUST* have been an Israelite), before inheritance in the kingdom can even come into view.

These sections of Scripture in I Corinthians and the Book of Revelation (I Cor. 6:8-10 and Rev. 21:7, 8) are actually companion passages.

In both passages, those being addressed (Christians) and the matter being discussed (inheriting or being disinherited, with the kingdom in view) are *the SAME*. *There is NO message to the unsaved in these verses*, for the issues of eternal life or eternal damnation *are NOT present*; and this fact *MUST* be recognized, else teachings surrounding inheritance in the kingdom, conveyed by the passages, will be missed entirely.

Revelation 21:8 *CANNOT* be equated with Rev. 20:14, even though both verses refer to "the lake of fire" and "the second death." These two verses *are NOT dealing with the same thing*, the same individuals, or even the same time period.

Revelation 21:8 deals with the judgment of *the saved preceding the Millennium*, with *millennial verities* in view; and Rev. 20:14 deals with the judgment of *the unsaved following the Millennium*, with *eternal verities* in view. *NOTHING* is the same in the two passages, save the existence of *the same lake of fire, with an associated second death*.

The seven overcomer's promises in Revelation chapters two and three reveal different facets of that which God has promised to those who overcome the three great enemies confronting every Christian — *the world, the flesh, and the Devil* (ref. the introduction in this book). The promise to the overcomer in the Church in Smyrna that he would not be "hurt of the second death" is *ONLY one facet of the larger scope covered by ALL of the overcomer's promises to the seven Churches*.

The entirety of the matter appears to be summed up by the words, "inherit all things," in Rev. 21:7. The overcomer will be a *co-heir with Christ in the kingdom and realize all the promises to the overcomers in chapters two and three* (cf. Heb. 1:2).

2) To Have No Power Over Martyrs

The martyrs of Rev. 20:4-6 are themselves revealed as overcomers. These are the individuals who gain "the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" during the Tribulation (Rev. 15:2).

A segment of this group was seen when the fifth seal was opened (6:9-11; cf. 13:7-15); and they were told at this time to "rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

But when events depicted in Rev. 20:4-6 come to pass, the Tribulation will be over, the beast and false prophet will have been cast into the lake of fire, the armies of the earth will have been overthrown, Satan will have been bound in the abyss, and the martyred saints of the Tribulation will have been resurrected to be judged (19:11ff).

These individuals, *overcoming during the Tribulation*, will, as Christians *overcoming today*, occupy positions with Christ in the kingdom.

(These positions though will be separate from those forming the bride of Christ.

The bride will be comprised solely of saved individuals from the present dispensation. But the Tribulation martyrs will come out of a period covering seven unfulfilled years of the previous dispensation, out of time covered by Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week.)

The second death will have "no power" over these Tribulation martyrs in view (v. 6). They, as will have been the case with numerous Christians prior to this time, will be revealed as *overcomers* and will NOT "be hurt of the second death" (v. 4).

As in Rev. 2:11; 21:7, 8, there is NO allusion in this passage to the unsaved dead being cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Rather, an inheritance in the kingdom is in view.

And saved individuals, even though disinherited, with ONLY that referred to as "the second death" awaiting them, will NEVER be cast into the lake of fire to suffer the same consequences which the unsaved will one day suffer in this place.

To Be Hurt of...

EXACTLY what does it mean "to be hurt of" the second death in Rev. 2:11?

In the light of Rev. 20:4-6; 21:7, 8, which deals with overcoming or being overcome, *this can mean ONLY one thing:*

Non-overcoming Christians are going to "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8b).

"Fire" in Scripture is associated with *the judgment of the saved as well as the judgment of the unsaved;* and, following judgment, non-overcoming Christians will be "hurt of the second death," which is associated with *the lake of fire.*

Thus, the time when this will occur is *following events at the judgment seat.*

And though the Christians' works will be tried in fire at the judgment seat, this is NOT synonymous with Christians having a part in "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

Rather, at this judgment, Christians will be shown to have either overcome or to have been overcome, with the carrying out of decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat occurring at a time following these events.

(Note in the judgment of the unsaved in Rev. 20:11-15 that the lake of fire and the second death enter into the matter *ONLY following judgment*. The lake of fire and the second death come into view *ONLY following decisions and determinations surrounding their judgment*.)

And it will be the same for the saved preceding this time. They will first be judged. *ONLY then, ONLY following the decisions and determinations surrounding their judgment*, do the lake of fire and the second death come into view.)

Each of the overcomer's promises is *millennial* in its scope of fulfillment. That in view through overcoming, or not overcoming — as the case may be — *will be realized during the 1,000-year Messianic Era ALONE*.

The fact that these are *millennial ONLY* in their scope of fulfillment can be illustrated quite easily.

Note the promises to two of the seven Churches in Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21. *NO* such scene as presented in these verses will exist beyond the Millennium.

Christ and His co-heirs, beyond the Millennium, will *NO longer* rule over the nations, as this rule is pictured in Rev. 2:26, 27. Rather, the Gentiles comprising these nations will, themselves, be brought into positions of rulership with Christ and His co-heirs, as this rule extends beyond the earth, out into the universe (Rev. 22:2, 5).

And the Son, beyond the Millennium, will *NO longer* sit on His Own throne, as seen in Rev. 3:21. Rather, He will sit on "the throne of God and of the Lamb," from whence universal rule will emanate (Rev. 22:1, 3, 5).

And the same is true relative to the overcomer's promise to the Church in Smyrna, having to do with the second death. This promise *can ONLY be millennial* within its scope of fulfillment, which clearly reveals that the conditions alluded to for the non-overcomer in this promise will exist for *the duration of the Messianic Era ALONE, NOT throughout the eternal ages beyond*.

Scripture deals with *millennial rewards and/or loss, NEVER with eternal rewards and/or loss.*

This should be easy enough for anyone to understand, for if rewards are eternal, so is loss of rewards. And loss of rewards involves an association with *death* (Rom. 8:13), *something which Scripture clearly reveals will NO longer exist in the eternal ages beyond the Millennium* (I Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:1-4).

In the overcomer's promise to the Church in Smyrna, there is a clear implication that *those who do NOT overcome will be hurt of the second death.* And *any attempt* to take this promise and make it mean something other than what it clearly states *serves ONLY to destroy the promise,* something which the Lord sounded a solemn warning against (Rev. 22:18, 19).

On the other hand, the promise that *those who do overcome will NOT "be hurt of the second death"* would be meaningless unless this promise is taken at face value and allowed to mean *EXACTLY what it says,* clearly implying that *those who do NOT overcome will "be hurt of the second death."*

"The second death" in the Book of Revelation is associated with *the lake of fire* (Rev. 21:8). And *those who do NOT overcome* (v. 7) are going to have their part in this lake of fire (v. 8). That is, *they will be hurt of the second death by having a part in the lake of fire.*

But *EXACTLY* what is meant by a saved person being hurt of the second death and having a part in the lake of fire in Rev. 21:8?

Revelation chapter twenty-one moves beyond the Millennium into the eternal ages, and the first six verses provide the complete story concerning conditions as these ages begin.

Note the words, "It is done," in the first part of verse six. This is the translation of a verb in the perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating that *the matter has been brought to completion and presently exists in that finished state.*

Then, beginning with the latter part of verse six and continuing through verse eight, overcoming and/or being overcome are again, for the last time, dealt with in this book. And this takes a person back to the same place seen in chapters two and three.

Then, the remainder of the book is simply a commentary for the eight verses which open and begin this section.

First, a commentary is provided for the first part of this opening section. Revelation 21:9-22:5 forms a commentary for this part of the section (21:1-6a), which has to do with conditions beyond the Millennium. Note how this commentary in chapter twenty-two closes: "...and they shall reign forever and ever [throughout the endless ages]" (v. 5).

Then, the remainder of chapter twenty-two (vv. 6ff) forms a commentary for the second part of this opening section, which has to do with conditions before and during the Millennium (21:6b-8).

And this will explain why, *outside the gates of Jerusalem during the Messianic Era*, one will be able to find "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (22:15).

This information is given to shed light on and provide additional detail for verses in the preceding chapter (vv. 6b-8), and the information in these verses in the preceding chapter was given to shed light on the previous overcomer's promises, particularly the one to the Church in Smyrna dealing with "the second death" (2:11).

To distinguish between millennial and eternal conditions in this respect, note that those *outside the gates* during the eternal ages will be the Gentile nations, as the New Jerusalem rests on the new earth (21:24-27); but those *outside the gates* during the preceding Messianic Era, with the New Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth, will be the non-overcomers (22:14, 15). And the place which they will occupy is described at least four other ways in Scripture — through the use of *Gehenna*, *the outer darkness*, *the furnace of fire*, and *the lake of fire*.

The picture surrounding an association between *Gehenna* and *the lake of fire* appears unmistakable.

As *Gehenna* was the place of refuse for the earthly city of Jerusalem, *the lake of fire* is seen as the place of refuse for the heavenly city of Jerusalem. And as *Gehenna* was on the opposite side of the city from that side where God dwelled (*south*, as opposed to *north* [cf. Lev. 1:11; Isa. 14:13]), thus will it be with the counterpart to *Gehenna* in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The lake of fire is used with respect to a place completely apart from Christ and His rule. And those "hurt by the second death"

are seen occupying this place during the 1,000-year Messianic Era.

(Why does Scripture associate non-overcoming Christians with the lake of fire in relation to Christ's millennial reign, in this manner? The answer would be the same as the reason why Scripture associates the unsaved with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages of eternity, following the Millennium.

The lake of fire *was NOT prepared for man*. Rather, it was prepared "for the Devil and his angels" [Matt. 25:41]. It was prepared for those who had rejected God's supreme power and authority, as Satan sought to acquire power and authority above that which had been delegated [Isa. 14:13, 14]. Thus, in this respect, *the lake of fire is connected with REGALITY*.

And man, created to replace Satan and his angels, finds his connection with the lake of fire *on EXACTLY the same basis*.

Saved man, ignoring the very reason for his salvation [which is *REGAL*], will find himself associated with the lake of fire during the Millennium [an association connected with all that the existence of the lake of fire implies].

And *unsaved man*, ignoring salvation and the reason for man's creation [which, again, is *REGAL*], will find himself associated with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages following the Millennium [an association connected with all that the existence of the lake of fire implies].)

But, relative to Christians and the coming kingdom of Christ, is Scripture dealing with something literal? Or, is Scripture dealing with metaphors?

Note how Scripture uses metaphors to deal with this same thing elsewhere.

In John 15:6 and Heb. 6:8, saved individuals are spoken of in a metaphorical sense, where *a burning with fire* is referenced. And the context both places has to do with either bearing fruit or not bearing fruit, which is *EXACTLY* the same thing seen in the Matthew thirteen parables (v. 42).

Or, as the matter is expressed in Revelation chapters two and three, either overcoming or being overcome.

And the negative side of the matter is expressed at least two other ways in Scripture — being cast into *Gehenna* (a reference

to the place of refuse outside the city walls of Jerusalem at this time; Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 23:15, 33) or being cast into *outer darkness* (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

Overcoming or not overcoming and not being hurt or being hurt of the second death in Rev. 2:11 is expressed a slightly different way in Rom. 8:13:

“For if ye [a reference to ‘brethren’ in v. 12] live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Whether *Gehenna* or *outer darkness* in Matthew, *a burning with fire* in John and Hebrews, *being cast into a furnace or lake of fire* in Matthew and Revelation, or *suffering death or being hurt of the second death* in Romans and Revelation, different facets of *EXACTLY* the same thing are in view.

ALL of these are used in contexts showing that they have to do with saved people in relation to fruit bearing and the kingdom.

Through comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is plain that these are simply different ways of expressing *the SAME thing*. And since a literal casting into outer darkness, Gehenna, or a furnace or lake of fire *could NOT possibly be in view* (for these different places *could NOT possibly* be looked upon as referring to the same place in a literal sense), it is evident that *metaphors* are being used throughout.

BUT, relative to the unsaved and the lake of fire, this is simply *NOT* expressed other ways in Scripture as it is with the saved, leaving no room for any thought other than understanding the matter as *literal, NOT metaphorical*.

Aside from the preceding, it is clear that ALL Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike, will be in the kingdom.

This is seen in type in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen. Both Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, are seen on the mount (a “mountain” in Scripture signifies a *kingdom*).

But note the stark difference in the place which each occupied. Abraham stood before the Lord, where he had always been (18:22; 19:27). Lot though found himself in a place separated from the Lord, in a place where he also had always been (19:1, 30).

Saving a Soul from Death

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;
Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error
of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of
sins" (James 5:19, 20).

According to I Cor. 3:11-15, Christians whose works are burned at the judgment seat will "suffer loss."

This CANNOT refer to the loss of rewards, for rewards enter into this judgment ONLY after a person is approved. The disapproved will have NO rewards to lose.

The ONLY thing in their possession possible for them to lose will be their souls (lives).

Matthew 16:25-27 refers to the saved coming under judgment and the possibility of a person losing his soul. The word "lose" in these verses and the word "loss" in I Cor. 3:15 are translations of the same word in the Greek text.

The loss experienced by the person in Matt. 16:25-27 is that of his *soul*; and it *MUST* be the same in I Cor. 3:11-15, for the judgments referred to are the same.

The Epistle of James, referring to the salvation of the soul at the outset (1:21), concludes by referring to the possibility of a Christian experiencing "death" in relation to his *soul* (5:19, 20).

This thought is set forth in an opposite sense to that of realizing the "salvation" of his *soul*. Failing in the present race of the faith (I Cor. 9:24-27; cf. II Tim. 4:7, 8), *a Christian will be disapproved at the judgment seat. He will have failed to overcome, be victorious; and, failing in this manner, he will lose his soul.*

Thus, experiencing "death" in James 5:20 can, contextually, *ONLY* be synonymous with *the loss of the soul (life)*; that is to say, a person entering into this experience will be "hurt of the second death." "Losing one's soul [life]" and "being hurt of the second death" are two ways of saying the same thing.

In order for a "second death" to exist, there *MUST* have previously been a "first death." Such a death, of course, is introduced in the fall of Adam:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

Every man comes into this world via the birth from below and becomes a partaker of the first death through his association with Adam. And the second death will befall unredeemed man, with eternal verities in view, because of his continued association with Adam.

But for redeemed man, the second death is a different matter entirely.

Through a bringing forth from above, he is no longer associated with Adam and death in the same sense as unredeemed man; and the possibility of his being hurt of the second death concerns events which occur in an entirely different sphere of activity.

Adam fell from the position in which he had been created; and more is involved in Adam’s fall than eternal verities, affecting only the unredeemed.

Adam had been called into existence to assume rulership over the earth; and the entrance of sin (along with bringing about eternal separation from God, apart from redemption) resulted in his disqualification to rule in Satan’s stead. Adam, through the fall, found himself disqualified to occupy the very position for which he had been created.

Redemption itself *did NOT* place Adam back in this position (Gen. 3:21-24); *NOR* does redemption today place man back in this position.

Redeemed man today, as Adam following his fall and redemption, *remains barred from the tree of life, awaiting the salvation of his soul.*

Following the fall in Genesis chapter three, *the tree of life does NOT enter the affairs of man again UNTIL the salvation of the soul is brought to pass; and this will occur ONLY following the issues and determinations surrounding the judgment seat, following Man’s Day.*

Man ultimately occupying the position which Adam was created to assume requires that he be identified with *a new Federal Head — the second Man, the last Adam.*

The second Man, the last Adam, appeared and met Satan in a face-to-face confrontation *to show that He was fully qualified to function in the realm (a regal realm) which the first man, the first Adam, forfeited in the fall.*

He then provided redemption for man through the sacrifice of Himself and presently awaits the day when He will take the kingdom.

Those "in Christ" have been redeemed, with a view to their being co-heirs with Christ after He wrests control of the kingdom from Satan and his angels.

Those ruling with the second man, the last Adam, will constitute His bride and reign as consort queen with Him, as Eve would have reigned as consort queen with the first man, the first Adam, had both remained obedient and occupied the position for which man had been created.

The second death, as it will affect Christians, can be properly understood *ONLY* in the light of a parallel between that which Adam failed to realize in the past and that which unfaithful Christians will fail to realize in the future — the very purpose for their existence.

And as *the first death* entered into man's former failure, *the second death* will enter into man's latter failure — for the saved on the one hand, and for the unsaved on the other.

Experiencing "the second death" for the redeemed, through failure to realize one's calling, can *in NO way* pertain to eternal verities. Such *CANNOT* be in view at all.

Christians are present possessors of an eternal salvation based entirely upon the finished work of Christ at Calvary; and there can be *NO such thing* as "the second death" affecting any Christian on the basis of his presently possessed eternal salvation, else the finished work of Christ itself would be called into question and come into disrepute.

The Christians' association with "the second death" *can ONLY pertain to millennial verities and the loss of one's soul, the EXACT association provided by each reference in the Book of Revelation.*

Unfaithful Christians will experience "the second death" during the millennial reign of Christ. That is to say, they will lose their souls (lives) and be denied positions with Christ in the kingdom.

Again, “the second death” for such Christians is *millennial ONLY, NOT eternal*.

Non-overcoming Christians, through experiencing “the second death,” will be:

“...punished with everlasting [Gk., *aionios*, ‘age-lasting’] destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe...” (II Thess. 1:9b, 10a).

For the unredeemed though, “the second death” can only pertain *to eternal verities*.

As a result of Adam’s sin and their nonacceptance of Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary, the unredeemed reside in a condition described in Scripture as “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13).

They, in this condition, can have *NOTHING* to do with matters pertaining to rulership over the earth. Eternal verities *ALONE* are in view; and the second death, as it will affect the unredeemed, *MUST* be understood in this respect.

Unredeemed man’s judgment will occur *ONLY* following the Millennium, for he has *NOTHING* to do with the millennial age, *ONLY* with the ages beyond.

Thus, unredeemed man will experience “the second death” *following the Millennium, with ONLY the subsequent endless ages in view*. The unredeemed will *remain* in their spiritually dead condition and, in the lake of fire, be *eternally separated* from God:

“And death and hell [‘Hades’] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14, 15).

3

The Hidden Manna, White Stone *Continued Provision to Rule and Reign*

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Rev. 2:17).

The third of the seven overcomer’s promises is given in the message to the Church in Pergamos, a Church located in a wealthy city where pagan worship flourished. Pergamos was a religious center filled with pagan cults, housing temples and shrines dedicated to the false gods of the Gentiles.

Pergamos, at this time, was also a center for the Roman government in Asia; and Satan, who ruled the earth through the Gentile nations (and continues to rule in this same manner today), was said to have his throne in Pergamos (v. 13).

This though could only refer to a prominent place for his rule in the Roman Empire rather than to the actual location of his throne, for his throne would still be located *in the heavens* at this time, *NOT on the earth*.

The Gentile nations ruling under Satan would exhibit power connected with Satan’s throne (*cf.* Ezek. 28:14; Dan. 10:12-20; Luke 4:5, 6). And it would have to be in this respect that Satan’s throne was said to be in Pergamos — a center of Gentile government, idolatry, and false worship.

Satan’s throne *will NOT* actually be upon the earth *UNTIL* he, along with his angels, is cast out of the heavens shortly before the middle of the Tribulation period (Rev. 12:7-12). It will *THEN* be established in Babylon, Satan’s earthly capital (Isa. 14:4ff; Dan. 2:31-45); and his throne will then be occupied by Antichrist, the last king of Babylon preceding its destruction (Rev. 13:1, 2).

The Roman Empire was the great persecutor of early Christianity. Jewish persecution entered into the matter. But, preceding 70 A.D., this persecution was centered mainly around believing Jews during the offer and re-offer of the kingdom to Israel (from 30 A.D. to abt. 62 A.D.).

Christians, as the Jews, were monotheistic; and they fixed their eyes upon the one true God, not upon Caesar. And if this period of persecution is to be associated in a historical sense with that which is stated about any one of the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, it would seemingly have to be the Church in Smyrna (2:8-11).

Numerous Christians during this period of Roman persecution were imprisoned, tortured, and killed. But the more widespread this persecution became, the more Christendom flourished and grew. This is what led Tertullian, one of the early Church fathers who lived during that time, to say, "*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*"

Along with a Satanic persecution from without during this period, there was also a Satanic corrupting work from within. Very early in the dispensation, as seen in the fourth of seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen (v. 33), leaven was placed in three measures of meal, which would have to do centrally with the Word of the Kingdom and Christendom (the subject matter seen throughout these parables).

And this resulted in a corrupting work *from within*, which paralleled the persecution *from without* (ref. the author's book, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, Chapter VI, "Parable of the Leaven").

In relation to leaven placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33, "leaven" in Scripture is spoken of as *a corrupting substance*, and the number "three" in Scripture is the number of *Divine perfection*. This number shows *Divine perfection within that which is in view* — *Divine perfection within that which is being corrupted by the leaven*.

"Three measures of meal" — three measures of ground grain, used to make *bread* — are in view. The reference is to *the Word of God* (Matt. 4:4; cf. Isa. 55:1, 2), though not the Word in a general sense.

Rather, the reference, *contextually, is to the Word in a specific sense, a specific part of the Word, a specific teaching in the Word. And a corrupting agent is seen being placed within that which is perfect.*

The subject at hand leading into this fourth parable in Matthew chapter thirteen has to do with *the Word of the Kingdom*. It has to do with how the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ would begin to be proclaimed in Christendom and how this message would progressively change *because of something (a corrupting agent) placed within the message* (vv. 19-24, 31, 33).

Thus, during the first several centuries of the dispensation, there was not only a Satanic work *from without* but one *from within* as well.

Then, at the beginning of the fourth century, Satan brought matters *together* in his efforts to destroy Christianity. His efforts *from within* (the working of the leaven through several centuries of time) had produced such corruption within Christendom that he could merge these efforts with those *from without* (persecution by the Roman Empire).

And to bring this to pass, *Satan brought Roman persecution to an end and simply merged a corrupt religious system with a pagan political system.*

The Roman emperor Diocletian, coming into power near the end of the third century, was the last of the persecuting emperors.

His persecuting edicts were repealed during the opening years of the fourth century by Constantine the Great after he had come into power, and Christianity was then regarded as simply *another religion in the countries over which Rome ruled.*

This move by Constantine set the stage for a succeeding move having far-reaching ramifications: The day came when Constantine (for reasons upon which historians differ) embraced Christianity, an act subsequently followed by his efforts to force Christianity on the Empire as its *ONE* and *ONLY* religion. And these efforts by Constantine began a sequence of events which, toward the end of the fourth century, ultimately resulted in *a COMPLETE merger of Church and State.*

In the year 380 A.D., Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity *the exclusive state religion*, and in the year 395 A.D.,

Christianity was finally recognized as the *OFFICIAL and ONLY religion of the Roman Empire*. Christianity then found itself *COMPLETELY enmeshed within a world power in the sphere of governmental authority over which Satan exercised control, COMPLETELY out of line with God's plans and purposes for the new creation "in Christ."*

If the message to the Church in Pergamos has to do with a particular period in Church history, it would have to be this period, where a merger of Church and State occurred. This is the period which followed the Roman persecutions; and the names "Smyrna" and "Pergamos," in this respect, would themselves be significant in pointing to these periods.

"Smyrna" is a transliterated Greek word meaning *myrrh* (a resinous gum used for embalming), which could possibly point to the martyrs under Roman persecution during the first several centuries of the Church's existence. "Pergamos," on the other hand, comes from the Greek word *gamos*, meaning "marriage"; and this word could possibly point to that period in Church history, beginning with Constantine, when the Church was wed to the world.

This entire matter is depicted in the parable of the mustard seed in Matt. 13:31, 32. The mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, would, through *natural growth*, germinate and become "the greatest among herbs." However, the mustard seed in the parable germinated and, after a period of time, experienced *an abnormal growth*, becoming a "tree."

The very next and last thing stated in this parable is the fact that once the herb had become a tree, "the birds of the air" then came and lodged in its branches.

A "tree" in Scripture symbolizes *a national power* (Judges 9:8-15; Dan. 4:10-12, 20-22), and the "birds" in Matt. 13:32 are associated with *Satanic activity* (cf. vv. 4, 19).

The mustard seed germinating and experiencing natural growth portrays the Church during the early years of the present dispensation; and the herb subsequently experiencing abnormal growth, producing a tree, allowing the birds of the air to lodge in its branches, portrays that which Christianity became during and following the reign of Constantine.

The Church merged with the state, becoming *a tree, a world power*; and Satan with his agents simply moved in and began accomplishing that which, under Roman persecution, had not been accomplished.

Where *the pagan*, persecuting emperors seemingly failed, the first so-called *Christian* emperors succeeded. And out of this condition in which the Church found itself arose two major problems:

1) There were those in the Church in Pergamos who held to “the doctrine of Balaam.”

2) There were those in this Church who held to the “doctrine of the Nicolaitanes” (note also “the deeds of the Nicolaitanes” in the message to the Church in Ephesus [2:6]).

These two doctrinal problems crept into the Church early in its history, but they are not at all peculiar to the historical state of the Church as seen in Revelation chapter two.

The intermingling of Christians in the affairs of the world (governmental, and other affairs) is something from which the Church has never really withdrawn, and the same problems produced by conditions of this nature in the fourth century are still with us today (*cf.* II Tim. 2:3, 4).

Rather than Christianity converting the world, the world converted Christianity; and the lasting effects of this unholy relationship — very evident in the closing days of the Laodicean period in which we live — is what led Andrew Bonar, a nineteenth-century Scottish minister, to say:

“I looked for the Church and found it in the world. I looked for the world and found it in the Church.”

Doctrine of Balaam

Jude 11 records “the error of Balaam,” II Peter 2:15 records “the way of Balaam,” and Rev. 2:14 records “the doctrine of Balaam.” All three of these are used in passages referring to Christians entering into a state of affairs within Christendom which not only defiles their high calling but which also dishonors the Lord who

purchased their salvation with His Own blood.

The error and way of Balaam appear in companion portions of Scripture and would seem to refer basically to the same thing. *The error* of Balaam is associated with "reward" in Jude, and *the way* of Balaam is associated with the "wages of unrighteousness" in II Peter.

Thus, *the error and way of Balaam* have to do with "monetary gain"; and, according to the Old Testament account, monetary gain derived through this means is acquired through one's willingness to compromise the principles of God and proclaim things contrary to the revealed Word of God (though Balaam was prevented from doing this and could only utter that which was in accord with the revealed Word of God).

The error and way of Balaam can be found in Numbers chapters twenty-two through twenty-four.

Balak, king of the Moabites, hired Balaam to come into his land and pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel. Balak had seen that which Israel had done to the Amorites; and knowing that this nation would soon be passing through his country, he was afraid because of the exhibited power which Israel exercised through the nation's God.

Balak knew that the only way Israel could be defeated was through severing this power. Thus, Balak hired Balaam to come into Moab and pronounce a curse upon the Israelites, incurring God's wrath upon them in order to ultimately bring about their defeat at the hands of the enemy.

However, once in Moab, in four separate prophecies, being unable to curse the one whom God had not cursed (Num. 23:8), only blessings proceeded from the lips of Balaam. Balak, angered by the turn of events, sent Balaam out of Moab to his own country.

The doctrine of Balaam though was different than his *error and way*. His *doctrine* had to do with that part of his teaching which was contrary to the revealed Word of God, and it is seen in Scripture following the account of his *error and way*.

1) Past Teaching

Scripture surrounding the doctrine of Balaam and its tragic results is given in Num. 25:1-3:

“And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.”

The Israelites, after coming into Moab, began to commit fornication with the “daughters of Moab,” eat meat sacrificed to idols, and bow down and worship the false gods of the Moabites.

In order to put a stop to these sins and stay the hand of God’s judgment upon the entire camp of Israel, Moses was instructed to slay every Israelite who had “joined himself unto Baal-peor.” Because of their sins, twenty-four thousand Israelites perished under God’s judgment.

What caused the Israelites to depart from the one true and living God (Who had delivered them from Egypt) and begin serving false gods and following the idolatrous ways of the Moabites?

The answer is given in Num. 31:16:

“Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through *the counsel of Balaam*, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.”

As previously seen, Balaam could not curse the one whom God had not cursed. Only beautiful prophecies filled with blessings flowed from his lips when he was called into Moab by Balak. But Balaam did succeed in leading the Israelites astray through *his counsel*.

The Israelites, through *the counsel of Balaam*, were led to commit fornication, eat things sacrificed to idols, and bow down before other gods.

And because of these sins, the judgment of God fell upon His people.

The counsel of Balaam — i.e., “the doctrine of Balaam” — in the light of his prophecies (Num. 23, 24), could only have had to do with sins committed by the Israelites in view of promises and blessings associated with their covenant relationship with God.

In this respect, briefly stated, this doctrine could only have had to do with the fact that the Israelites were the covenant people of God, God's covenants (Abrahamic and Mosaic at the time) could not be broken, and consequently the Israelites, in relation to realizing covenant promises and blessings, could sin with immunity.

Such, of course, was *NOT the case at all*.

It was true that the covenants established between God and Israel *could NOT be broken*; it was also true that Israel's position as firstborn *could NOT be changed*; *BUT, it was NOT true that the Israelites, in relation to realizing covenant promises and blessings, could sin with immunity.*

God's wrath was manifested because of the sins of His people, and the thousands of Israelites who succumbed to the counsel of Balaam *were overthrown in the wilderness, short of the goal of their calling.*

2) Present Teaching

The doctrine of Balaam is one of the most widely taught doctrines in the Church today. Christians know — as their counterparts in the Church in Pergamos — that they have been saved by grace through faith, and *NOTHING can alter that which has been effected by their having "passed from death unto life"* (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1ff).

They now possess spiritual life, which *can NEVER be taken from them*; and, because of the unchangeable nature of the life which they presently possess, they reason that *they can conduct their lives in any manner which they choose, and it will make NO difference.*

However, as in the case of the Israelites, so in the case of Christians. Christians, as the Israelites under Moses, have been saved for a specific, revealed purpose. Every Christian is enrolled in a race (I Cor. 9:24-27); every Christian is engaged in a conflict (Eph. 6:10-18; II Tim. 2:4, 5). And the goal set before every Christian is to win the race, be victorious in the conflict.

God has made provision for Christians in order that at the end of the race they might say with Paul in II Tim. 4:7, 8:

"I have fought a good fight [I have strained every muscle in the good contest']. I have finished my course [race'], I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..."

The enemy, Satan, on the other hand, is doing everything within his power to bring about defeat in the lives of Christians. Satan's main objective in the present warfare is to prevent Christians from qualifying for crowns and thus positions of rulership with Christ in His coming kingdom.

God is presently bringing into existence a new order of *sons* to replace the order now ruling in the heavens; and the incumbent rulers — Satan and his angels — know this and are doing all within their power to retain their present governmental control over the earth.

The main facet of the doctrine of Balaam which is being promulgated in Churches today is the teaching that future blessings and rewards have been set aside for every Christian solely on the basis of Christ's finished work at Calvary and the Christian's positional standing "in Christ." In this respect, all Christians — regardless of their conduct during the present time — will receive crowns and positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

However, that which is clearly taught throughout the Word of God is to the contrary. *Though the Israelites' positional standing before God could NOT be changed, they could NOT and did NOT sin with immunity.*

And EXACTLY the same thing is true concerning Christians. *Though the Christians' positional standing before God CANNOT be changed, they, as the Israelites, CANNOT sin with immunity.* Sin in the camp of Israel resulted in the Israelites being overthrown in the wilderness, short of the goal of their calling. *And it will be NO different for Christians.*

"...and I took the crown that was upon his head" (II Sam. 1:10; cf. Rev. 3:11).

Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes

Outside of Revelation chapter two, there is no known sect in Church history (Biblical or secular) referred to by the name "Nicolaitanes." Some early writers tried unsuccessfully to connect this

group of individuals with *Nicolas of Antioch*; and others, following in their steps, try this even today. However, such a connection cannot be established, which leaves one with a *sole* method of identification — *the meaning of the word itself*.

The reference *can only be to a sect in the Church in Pergamos* (known also to those in Ephesus) whose practices and doctrine are *self-explained by the term* which the Spirit of God used to identify them.

Apart from this means of identification, *NOTHING* can be known about the Nicolaitanes.

The word "Nicolaitanes" is a transliterated, compound word from the Greek text (*nikolaites*), derived from *nike* ("a victor," "a conqueror") and *laos* ("people"). Thus, the word simply means, "to be victorious over the people," "to conquer the people."

Using the meaning of the name itself after this fashion, the Nicolaitanes would have to be identified as individuals (leaders) in the Church who had subjugated the remaining Christians to their self-imposed authority — individuals comprising a ruling, priestly class (the clergy over the laity), *something condemned by Scripture in NO uncertain terms*.

Authority within the Church must *ALWAYS* be based *SOLELY* upon "service." Those occupying positions of leadership (elders, deacons) must *always minister (serve) within their sphere of activity*, which is to bear no relationship whatsoever to authority exercised by those in the world (*cf.* Matt. 20:25-28; I Cor. 16:15, 16).

"Nicolaitanism" is simply *a corruption of delegated authority within the Church, exercising this authority after a forbidden pattern — after the pattern set forth by those in the world*.

Nicolaitanism, being introduced in the message to the Church in Ephesus, was apparently in existence very early in Church history; but it would only appear natural that this doctrine coming into full bloom awaited that period covered by the Church in Pergamos.

Nicolaitanism patterns itself *after the structure set forth in worldly governmental systems*; and it was through the actions of Constantine and others in the fourth-century Roman Empire, during the period in Church history which seemingly parallels that seen in

the message to the Church in Pergamos, that the way was opened for an already-existing world system in the Church to follow this pattern to a level heretofore unattained. Once the union between Church and state had been established, worldly practices in the Church *could ONLY become commonplace*.

Since the Church has never really separated itself from the position which it began to assume during the days of Constantine, *one can ONLY expect to find Christendom saturated with "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" from the fourth century right on into the present day and time*.

In fact, viewing the matter from this perspective, while looking upon it within the framework of the leavening process in Matt. 13:33, the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes would have to be considered a false teaching which would undoubtedly *increase with time; and this would make it even more prominent in the Church today, near the end of the dispensation, than at any other time in history*.

The leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal *can ONLY* progressively continue its deteriorating work throughout the dispensation. And this leaven *can ONLY* do its most damaging work near the end of the dispensation, during the time in which we presently live.

"The doctrine of Balaam," viewed within the framework of the same perspective and same leavening process, would have to be looked upon after an identical fashion in relation to *time*. This is a doctrine which will undoubtedly, as "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes," be more widely proclaimed in the latter days than at any other time in the history of the Church. And "the doctrine of Balaam" will, in many instances, be proclaimed by those holding to "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes."

Such can ONLY be the ever-increasing, degenerate state of teaching emanating from the lukewarm Laodicean Church during the closing years of the present dispensation, immediately preceding Christ's return for the Church.

The Overcomers

Contextually, the overcomer's promise in Rev. 2:17 will be

realized by those Christians who conduct their affairs in a manner separate from the widespread teachings of "the doctrine of Balaam" and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes."

It *DOES* make a difference how one lives after he has been saved; and the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than man, *MUST* be recognized as one seeks to live a life pleasing unto the Lord.

The beliefs and practices of those holding to "the doctrine of Balaam" and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" have completely permeated the Churches, such beliefs and practices are part and parcel with those of the world, and to the victor *ALONE* belongs the promise which God has given. The overcomer *ALONE* has been promised that he will be allowed to partake of *the hidden manna* and will be given *a white stone with a new name* written on the stone, which no man will know other than the one receiving it.

1) *The Hidden Manna*

"Manna" is found in both the Old and New Testaments, but "*the hidden manna*" is found *ONLY* in the third overcomer's promise in the Book of Revelation.

The Israelites were provided manna during their pilgrim journey between Egypt and Canaan; and Christians, in like manner, have been provided Manna during their pilgrim journey between the antitype of Egypt (the world) and the antitype of Canaan (a heavenly land, wherein Christians will realize an inheritance). And any teaching concerning the future "*hidden manna*" *MUST* be drawn from past and present appearances of the manna as a provision for God's people.

(The fact that the future provision for God's people is presently "*hidden*" may be an allusion to the manna which was kept "*before the Lord*" in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle.

This manna was placed in "a golden pot" within the ark of the covenant, *hidden* from the people but *visible* to God [Ex. 16:14-35; John 6:48-54; Heb. 9:4]. So it is with the hidden manna during the present time. It is *hidden* from the people but *visible* to God.)

The manna given to the Israelites during the wilderness journey was a provision for their physical needs.

This manna was a special food, prepared by God, containing everything necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the physical body. It was provided fresh day-by-day, and the Israelites were to gather and eat the manna after the fashion in which it was given.

NO supplementary food was provided; NOR was any required.

The “manna” which the Israelites were given in the wilderness typified *Christ*, “the living bread which came down from heaven.”

And this “living bread” is the provision which Christians have been given for their wilderness journey. Christians “eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood” (John 6:48-54) through the assimilation of the Word of God. This Word is a special food, prepared by God, containing everything necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the spiritual life.

The Spirit of God will render this food fresh day-by-day; and Christians are to partake of the Living Word through the Written Word, after the manner in which it has been given.

NO supplementary food has been provided; NOR is any required.

The “manna” upon which Christians presently feed has been given to properly prepare and equip them for *the wilderness journey*.

And the “hidden manna” can only be a parallel provision for *things beyond the wilderness journey*. The overcomers will be allowed to partake of the hidden manna to properly prepare and equip them as they rule and reign in the kingdom.

The provision is “manna” *now* and “hidden manna” *yet future*, both given to equip Christians during particular periods for particular types of service.

The hidden manna in the third overcomer’s promise and the tree of life in the first overcomer’s promise would have to be integrally related in this realm. Both are set forth as provisions to properly equip Christians as they rule and reign, both point to Christ (the true Manna, the true Tree of Life), and both together will form God’s complete provision for the rulers in the kingdom.

However, a distinction *MUST* be drawn between the two, viewing each in the sense of a different facet of this provision. Since partaking of the tree of life will provide that special wisdom and knowledge necessary to judge in equity, justice, and righteousness

(*ref.* Ch. I in this book), it can be safely assumed that partaking of the hidden manna will apparently constitute God's provision to properly prepare overcoming Christians in all other realms of life. Such could possibly include physical needs as well as spiritual needs.

Not that much has been revealed about the resurrection body. Christ partook of food in His resurrection body (Luke 24:41-43; John 21:5-14; *cf.* Matt. 26:29), but the reason for His partaking of food or details surrounding the matter are not given. If the resurrection body requires sustenance for the rigors of the office Christians are to hold, the hidden manna may very well provide that sustenance, along with any other requirements for sustenance which Christians may possess.

2) *The White Stone, New Name*

During the days in which the Book of Revelation was written, and days prior to that time, giving one a white stone meant that the person had been charged with some offense but had been acquitted.

Since works *ALONE* will be reviewed at the judgment seat, justification shown by the white stone *MUST emanate out of a judgment of works*. Thus, justification on the basis of Christ's finished work at Calvary *CANNOT* be in view at all, for overcomers and non-overcomers alike would receive such a stone if that were the case.

A white stone will be given to those Christians whose works endure the fire, revealing justification on the basis of that coming under judgment — *a justification on the basis of works, works emanating out of faithfulness* (*cf.* James 2:14-26).

A white stone was also given to the victor in a contest or battle, which is *EXACTLY* what is in view through overcoming in the present battle, the present warfare, one "not against flesh and blood," but:

"...against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world ['age'], against spiritual wickedness in high places ['against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenlies']" (Eph. 6:12).

Satan and his angels use the world and the flesh in their

never-ceasing efforts to bring about a Christian's defeat. And the promised white stone will be given to *the victor* — the one overcoming *the world, the flesh, and the Devil*.

With the preceding in mind, understanding the white stone, along with the new name written on the stone, can possibly best be seen in Joseph's exaltation by the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Joseph, because of his faithfulness to God, was, through Divine providence, brought into a position of such favor with Pharaoh that he found himself exalted to the throne. Pharaoh took his own ring and "put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck." He then positioned him as "*ruler over all the land of Egypt*," and bestowed upon him a new name — "*Zaphnath-paaneah*" (Gen. 41:39-45).

The white stone will identify the overcomer as the one shown justified, victorious in conquest, and elevated to noble rank.

As Joseph in the type, he will be placed in the position of a ruler and be given a new name.

Joseph was placed over *all Egypt*, and the overcoming Christian will be placed over *all the earth* ("*Egypt*" is always a type of *the world* in Scripture). He will then be given "*a new name...which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*"

Such is the present prospect set before Christians, as given in the overcomer's promise to the Church in Pergamos.

Concluding Thoughts:

When overcoming Christians go forth to rule with Christ in the kingdom, everything will be in a state of readiness.

Through the provision of *the tree of life, the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name*, Christians will be properly equipped for *every facet of life in the kingdom* as they rule the nations with Christ.

They will be given *wisdom and knowledge* to rule in equity, justice, and righteousness; they will be provided with the necessary *sustenance* (physical and/or spiritual) to equip them for the office which they are to hold; they will be given *identifying stones*, showing their victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil; and the One with Whom they are to rule as co-heirs will know them by *a new name*.

Through God's provision, *a perfect rule will issue forth when man is once again brought back into the position for which he was originally created.*

All authority in that day will emanate from one throne (cf. Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21), and NOTHING short of an absolute rule will suffice.

4

Power Over the Nations

Realizing the Rights of Firstborn Sons

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And I will give him the morning star” (Rev. 2:26-28).

Remaining within the thought that each of the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three possibly points, in a particular sense, to a different period in Church history, the message to the Church in Thyatira would seemingly have to point to that period following the days of Constantine.

In this respect, it would show a continued description of deteriorating conditions in Christendom following the time when the Church became wed to the world during the days of Constantine, depicted in the preceding message to the Church in Pergamos.

(The manner in which the Church both began and will end during the 2,000-year dispensation can clearly be seen in Revelation chapters two and three in the messages to the Churches in Ephesus [the first Church dealt with] and Laodicea [the last Church dealt with]. But to contend for that revealed about any one of the seven Churches to fit *completely into a particular period of Church history* rather than covering, at least to some degree, *an overall scope of Church history* would be an incorrect way to view matters.

Even remnants of that seen in both the Church in Ephesus and the Church in Laodicea can be seen in Christendom throughout the dispensation. The thought inherent in that which is said about these two churches, in the light of related Scripture, has to do with Christendom becoming less like that seen in Ephesus and more like that seen in Laodicea as the dispensation progresses.

THEN, near the end of the dispensation, after "the whole" has been leavened [Matt. 13:33], ONLY that seen in the Laodicean Church, for all practical purposes, will remain — a completely leavened Christendom which, relative to any proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom, can only be described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" [Rev. 3:17b].

And a sad part of the matter is that the Church in that day — which appears very much to be the present-day Church — will NOT even recognize that they occupy this completely leavened position.

In the same preceding respect, messages to the remaining five Churches seemingly fit into different periods of Church history [though each, after at least some fashion, would have to cover the whole scope of Church history].

Attention will be called to these different periods into which these different Churches seemingly fit [more so at particular times than at other times during the dispensation], but doing this is as far as the matter will be taken.)

Once the door had been opened and the world welcomed within, as seen in the Church in the Roman world during the fourth century, the working of the leaven producing corruption in the true Biblical message *could ONLY have dramatically increased.*

And any remaining remnants of pristine Christian doctrine and worship *could ONLY* have begun to gradually be corrupted by the ways and practices of the world, a corruption which would eventually encompass such proportions that *ALL Christendom would ultimately be affected.*

That which continued to occur following the time when the Church became wed to the world, seemingly described in the message to the Church in Thyatira in Revelation chapter two, is simply another facet of the working of the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 — "... till the whole was leavened."

The message to the Church in Thyatira, in this respect, would actually present the far-reaching results of that which was introduced during the days of Constantine.

The world had been invited within, providing added fuel for the leaven which was already working; and this message would present *the depths* to which the world ultimately carried Christianity.

Regardless of how one views matters in relation to Church history, *ONE fact cannot be denied*. The false teaching being accepted and practiced by Christians in Thyatira was of such a *degenerate nature* that the Spirit of God reached back hundreds of years in time and associated the entire matter with one of the darkest periods in Israeli history — *the days of Jezebel*.

And to properly understand conditions among Christians as they existed in Thyatira, *one must understand conditions in the camp of Israel during that time*.

(The false doctrine being taught, accepted, and practiced in Thyatira emanated from “that woman Jezebel.”

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” [v. 20].

Calling the woman teaching false doctrine in Thyatira by the name “Jezebel” *can ONLY be an allusion, through association, to Jezebel in the Old Testament*, rather than to the actual name of the person [even though, conceivably, this could also have been the actual name of the person teaching in this Church; *but, even if so, the allusion could ONLY still exist*].

The false doctrine being promulgated by this person [with its attendant results] evidently so closely approximated the beliefs and practices of Jezebel in the Old Testament [with their attendant results] that *the person teaching these things in the Church in Thyatira was referred to by the name of her counterpart from the Old Testament*.)

Jezebel

Jezebel appeared in Israeli history during Old Testament days at a time when wickedness was reaching a pinnacle through the unlawful deeds of a succession of Israeli kings. The kingdom had been divided following Solomon’s death, and the kings reigning over the northern ten tribes (the kingdom of Israel, beginning with the reign of Jeroboam) not only themselves “did evil in the sight of the Lord” but they also caused the people of Israel “to sin” (*cf.* I Kings 15:25, 26, 33, 34; 16:18, 19).

This wickedness began to reach a pinnacle during the days of Omri (the sixth king following Jeroboam), and it reached a pinnacle during the reign of his son, Ahab. It is recorded of Omri that he "did worse *than all* that were before him"; and it is recorded of Ahab that he, in turn, "did evil in the sight of the Lord *above all* that were before him."

It was during the dark days of Ahab's reign in Israel that Jezebel appeared, with Baal worship subsequently being introduced. Jezebel was the daughter of an idolatrous king-priest whom Ahab had married, a follower of the ways of her father and the one responsible for Baal worship being brought over into the camp of Israel.

It was after Ahab's marriage to Jezebel that he "went and served Baal, and worshipped him"; and it was during this time that he "reared up an altar for Baal" and "made a grove" (also connected with idolatry), doing more "to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him" (I Kings 16:25, 30-33).

Also, during the reign of Ahab, Jericho was rebuilt; and for centuries a curse had rested upon the person who rose up and rebuilt this city (I Kings 16:34; *cf.* Joshua 6:26).

Jezebel was responsible for the death of numerous prophets of the Lord, and she sought Elijah's life after he had destroyed the prophets of Baal, following the declaration of the one true and living God by fire on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18:4, 17-40; 19:1, 2).

But the act which appeared to be the final straw, bringing iniquity to a point where God could no longer stay His hand (*cf.* Gen. 15:16), was Jezebel's acquisition of Naboth's vineyard for Ahab. Jezebel, through forged letters, brought about Naboth's death in order that Ahab might possess his vineyard; and Ahab himself became a partaker of this deed through subsequently possessing the vineyard.

And because of this, *judgment of a nature befitting this sin* was pronounced upon both Ahab and Jezebel. The Lord said of *Ahab*, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine"; and the Lord said of *Jezebel*, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel" (I Kings 21:1-23; *cf.* I Kings 22:35-38; II Kings 9:30-37).

Following this pronouncement of judgment upon both Ahab and Jezebel, Scripture provides a summary statement concerning the lives of these two individuals:

“But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, *whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.*

And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel” (I Kings 21:25, 26).

Jezebel in the Old Testament sets forth *the epitome of corruption*, and there was a woman teaching in the Church in Thyatira whose influence and corrupt teachings were compared to those of Jezebel.

During Jezebel’s day in the Old Testament, corruption was produced by bringing the things of the world over into the camp of Israel; and during the day of her counterpart in the New Testament, corruption was produced through the same means — bringing the things of the world over into the Church.

A terrible judgment was pronounced upon Jezebel in the Old Testament (I Kings 21:23; cf. II Kings 9:30-37), and *a similar judgment* was pronounced upon her counterpart and those who followed her ways in the New Testament (Rev. 2:21-23).

The message concerning Jezebel in Revelation chapter two, along with the Old Testament counterpart, is clearly stated for *ALL* to behold:

God will NOT tolerate Christians entering into an unholy relationship with the world. Such a relationship is associated with fornication, idolatry, and adultery.

And a relationship with the world of this nature, according to Scripture, *can end ONLY one way. It can end ONLY in death* (vv. 20-23; cf. Rom. 8:13).

Doctrine, Deep Things

“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not known this doctrine, and which have not known the depths [‘deep things’] of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come” (Rev. 2:24, 25).

The teachings of the woman called "Jezebel" in the Church in Thyatira are referred to in a twofold, synonymous respect:

- 1) The "doctrine" of Jezebel.
- 2) The "depths ['deep things'] of Satan."

That is, what is referred to as *the doctrine of Jezebel* had to do with "the depths ['deep things'] of Satan."

God has His "deep things," and Satan has his "deep things" (I Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:24).

The deep things of God are associated with that which is separate from the present world kingdom under Satan, *the coming world kingdom under Christ*. Such is evident from the context of I Cor. 2:10.

The deep things of Satan, on the other hand, are associated with that which is diametrically opposed to the coming kingdom of Christ, *the present kingdom under Satan*. Such is evident from the context of Rev. 2:24.

1) As These Things Affect Israel

Israel's standing among the nations is that of *firstborn*.

When God instructed Moses to say unto Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Ex. 4:22), God was announcing the proper place which Israel had been called to occupy in relation to the Gentile nations of the earth.

Israel, as God's firstborn son, was the nation in possession of the birthright; *and NO Gentile nation has ever or will ever come into such a position*. Among the nations of the earth, *a firstborn status is reserved for Israel ALONE*.

God has stated concerning Israel, "*You ONLY* have I known of all the families of the earth."

God has chosen Israel to be "a special people unto himself, *ABOVE* all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; Amos 3:2; cf. Ps. 147:19, 20; Rom. 9:4, 5).

During the days of Jezebel in the Old Testament, one of the world's false religions was brought over into the camp of Israel, into the worship of the one true and living God. This was done under the direction and leadership of Satan in an effort to thwart the plans and purposes of God concerning Israel, God's firstborn

son, the nation in possession of the rights of primogeniture.

Israel had previously been called out of Egypt to ultimately realize these rights in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And the introduction of Baal worship into the camp of Israel, through Jezebel, was nothing more than *Satan's attempt to prevent Israel from assuming her God-ordained position as "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation"* (Ex. 19:6).

The birthright possessed by Israel consisted of three things:

- 1) *Ruler of the household, under and for the Father.*
- 2) *Exercising the office of priest in the family.*
- 3) *The reception of a double portion of all the Father's goods.*

The first segment of the birthright placed the firstborn in the position of "heir" with respect to a *rule* of the Father's house, under and for the Father. "Sonship" implies *rulership* and carries the thought of *supremacy*.

In this respect, Israel, a national power, was to be *the supreme nation and rule over ALL the other nations — ALL the Gentile nations of the earth.*

This earth, a province in the kingdom of God, constitutes *the Father's house* when the birthright with respect to nations is in view; and *Israel, as God's firstborn son, was to bear rule over ALL the nations in this house, under and for the Father.*

Israel occupied the standing as *firstborn among ALL nations* while still in Egypt, but Israel would not actually realize these rights *UNTIL* the nation had been removed from Egypt and established in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The second segment of the birthright would place Israel in a *priestly* position with respect to both God and the nations. Israel was to be a "kingdom of priests" in the midst of the nations (Ex. 19:6), resulting in the nations being blessed through Israel, in accord with Gen. 12:1-3.

A first-mention principle relating to these blessings had previously been established in Gen. 9:25-27. "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:6) was *first* "the God of Shem" (Gen. 9:26).

NEITHER Ham NOR Japheth had a God, and the ONLY way either could receive spiritual blessings was through Shem and his God.

Or, to say it another way, the descendants of Ham and Japheth (the Gentile nations) are "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12) *and can receive spiritual blessings ONLY through the descendants of Shem (the nation of Israel) and their God.*

Although the lineage of Shem also, among others, includes the descendants of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, spiritual blessings for nations emanating from these lines are derived through the same means as those for the Gentile nations (for, in this respect, these nations are looked upon as Gentile nations [Gen. 17:18-21; 21:5-12; 22:2; 25:1-6]).

The third segment of the birthright placed Israel in a position to receive *the double portion* of all the Father's goods. This segment of the birthright, as the first two segments, also had to do with Israel's position among the nations. There are two spheres of governmental power and authority in a rule over the Gentile nations — *earthly* and *heavenly* — and the double portion of the birthright pertained to Israel ultimately coming into possession of *BOTH* (cf. Gen. 22:17, 18).

It was necessary that *BOTH* be extended to Israel at some point in the corridors of time, for Israel, as the firstborn, was the appointed heir.

The way was opened under the leadership of Moses at Kadesh-Barnea, and later under Joshua on the east side of Jordan, *for Israel to go into the land and realize the earthly portion of this inheritance.*

BUT, the heavenly portion of the inheritance was NOT to be opened to the nation UNTIL almost fifteen hundred years later.

Under Moses and Joshua, when *the earthly portion* of the inheritance was in the offing, God Himself dwelt in the midst of the nation.

Some fifteen hundred years later, when *the heavenly portion* of the inheritance was in the offing, God Himself once again (in the person of His Son) dwelt in the midst of the nation.

Satan is the "god of this world ['age']." He is the "anointed cherub ['messianic angel']," *the one created to rule and reign* (Ezek. 28:14; II Cor. 4:4).

Satan and his angels presently rule the earth through the Gentile nations.

They rule from the heavens through counterparts among the Gentile nations upon the earth (note Dan. 10:12ff; the “prince of the kingdom of Persia,” and the “kings of Persia” [v. 13] are heavenly beings [angels in the kingdom of Satan] who rule through counterparts in the kingdom of Persia [Iran today] on earth; and it is the same with all other Gentile powers, past and present [ref. Appx. II in this book]).

The nation of Israel though has been placed in *an entirely separate and distinct position* from that occupied by the Gentile nations.

Israel is *NOT* to be “reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:9). Israel is *NOT* a nation through which Satan and his angels rule, as they do through the Gentile nations. The angelic prince of Israel in Daniel chapter ten (where the princes of Gentile nations are mentioned) is *Michael* (vv. 13, 21); *and Michael is NOT one of the princes ruling under Satan.*

Thus, the deep things of Satan in relation to Israel and her calling in the Old Testament involved taking things from his kingdom, from the Gentile nations of the earth, and placing them among a separate and distinct people who were not to be reckoned among those nations.

In the case of his work through Jezebel, it was Baal worship which was transferred from the Gentile nations into the camp of Israel. And the Israelites, following Baal, associated themselves with Gentile idolatry *and could, under NO circumstances, realize their calling as firstborn while in this condition.*

Rather than Israel ruling over the Gentile nations of the earth, Satan’s rule over these same nations would continue unabated, with Israel uprooted from her land and scattered among these nations.

And rather than Israel realizing national blessings, with the Gentile nations in turn being blessed, Israel would incur God’s wrath.

And it was to this end that Satan vented his wrath against Israel throughout the Old Testament, and it is to this end that he continues to vent his wrath against this same nation today.

(God's dealings with Israel on a national basis have been put on hold. Israel has been set aside for a dispensation, during which time God is removing from the Gentiles a people for His name.

But Satan *knows* that God's discontinuance of His dealings with Israel in this manner is only temporary. He *knows* that God will once again turn to and resume His dealings with Israel relative to the nation's standing as *firstborn* [else the complete, revealed program of God — which Satan knows all too well — would remain unfulfilled].

Satan *knows* that Israel is yet to be placed at the head of the nations upon the earth, with the Gentile nations being blessed through Israel; *and he continues to do ALL within his power to prevent this from happening.*)

2) As These Things Affect Christians

A part of that which was being made known to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places" in time past through Israel is *NOW* being made known through the Church (Eph. 3:9-11; cf. 6:11ff).

In time past, Israel was in possession of both *earthly* and *heavenly* promises and blessings, having to do with both *earthly* and *heavenly* spheres of power and authority in the kingdom (Gen. 22:17, 18; Heb. 11:8-16).

However, at the time of Christ's first advent, Israel forfeited *the heavenly portion* of the kingdom; *and an entirely new creation, the one new man "in Christ," was called into existence to be the recipient of the proffered positions of power and authority with Christ from the heavens* (Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

The calling possessed by the Church is to ultimately inhabit, with Christ, the very realm where Satan and his angels presently dwell.

The incumbent rulers (Satan and his angels) have forfeited their right to continue exercising power and authority from this realm, and Israel has forfeited her right to one day supplant these rulers.

Thus, within God's plan for the ages, the Church was brought into existence to ultimately occupy this heavenly realm (cf. Eph. 6:11, 12; Heb. 3:1).

Although Israel still retains her *earthly calling* and will yet be removed from the nations of the earth to fulfill this calling, the Church will fulfill God's plans and purposes for *the heavenly portion* of the kingdom (along with certain O.T. saints who looked beyond an earthly calling to a heavenly [cf. Matt. 8:11, 12; Luke

13:28, 29; Heb. 11:8-16]).

Christians are the ones who will be called forth to dwell in the heavens and reign as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.

And Satan, knowing these things (things which very few Christians seem to have any understanding of at all [cf. II Cor. 4:3, 4]), *presently NOT ONLY directs his wrath against Israel BUT against the Church as well.*

The reason Satan placed “that woman Jezebel” in the Church in Thyatira is the same reason that he placed “Jezebel” in the camp of Israel during Old Testament days. The deep things of Satan, introduced into the camp of Israel in the Old Testament and into the Church in Thyatira in the New Testament, have to do with the incumbent ruler’s (Satan’s) efforts to thwart God’s plans and purposes concerning others moving into regal positions of power and authority presently under his dominion and control.

Satan has done, is doing, and will continue to do *ALL* within his power to prevent either Israel or the Church from realizing their respective calling. And the intensification of his efforts during the closing days of the dispensation in which we presently live is something which Christians who aspire to be overcomers and realize their calling *MUST be keenly aware of and understand.*

Satan’s efforts in his warfare against Christians today has *ONE primary goal* in view: *to overcome Christians rather than seeing Christians overcome him, resulting in their disqualification to occupy proffered positions in the coming kingdom of Christ.*

The deep things of Satan introduced into the Church today, as in the camp of Israel during Elijah’s day, have to do with the things of the world brought over into the things of God — the world in the Church — resulting in Christians (as the Israelites) being led astray.

And, in the light of the Old Testament counterpart, this is what is involved in Jezebel’s seduction of the Lord’s servants “to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” in the Church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:20); and those Christians, defiled after this fashion, through her efforts, who fail to repent of their deeds, will suffer “death” (vv. 21-23; cf. Rom. 8:13), which could *ONLY* be an allusion to the previously mentioned “second death” (v. 11).

Christians, as the Israelites, possess a birthright; and this birthright consists of the same three things as the one possessed by Israel:

- 1) *Ruler of the household*, under and for the Father.
- 2) Exercising the office of *priest in the family*.
- 3) The reception of *a double portion of all the Father's goods*.

Overcoming Christians will realize *the first* aspect of the birthright through ruling as "joint-heirs" with Christ in the kingdom (Rom. 8:17), *the second* through ruling as "kings and priests" (Rev. 5:10), and *the third* through coming into possession of both heavenly and earthly aspects of the inheritance with Christ — ruling from *the heavens over the earth* (Ps. 2:8, 9; I Peter 1:4; cf. Gen. 24:10, 36, 53; John 16:13-15).

Non-overcoming Christians though will have forfeited their rights of primogeniture, realizing *NO* aspect of the birthright. They *will NOT* be among the "many sons" Christ will bring unto glory with Him to rule "the world ['inhabited world'] to come" (Heb. 2:5, 10). "The deep things of Satan" will have accomplished their purpose in the lives of such Christians; and they, as Esau, when they realize that which could have been theirs, *will lift up their voices and weep* (Heb. 12:14-17; cf. Gen. 25:27-34; 27:26-38).

Kingly Power

One day the Lord Jesus Christ is going to receive a kingdom. "The kingdom of the world" will become "the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15, ASV; cf. Ps. 2:1ff; 110:1ff; Dan. 7:9-14).

Satan and his angels will be put down, Christ and His co-heirs (forming His bride) will move in and take over the government, THEN, the overcomer's promise given to Christians in the Church in Thyatira will be fulfilled.

The main thrust of the matter leading into and including this overcomer's promise centers around two world kingdoms — *the present kingdom of Satan, and the coming kingdom of Christ.*

The overcomer's promise then revolves around *being victorious over the things of the present kingdom* (introduced into the Church by Satan through "that woman Jezebel").

A Christian allowing himself to be overcome by the things of the present kingdom *will be denied participation in the coming kingdom*, but a Christian overcoming the things of the present kingdom *will be given "power over the nations" in the coming kingdom*.

Concerning the Christians' present activities in relation to one kingdom or the other, there is a specific promise concerning recompense:

"I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (v. 23b).

Christians involving themselves with the present kingdom of Satan will be recompensed accordingly.

Christians looking out ahead toward the coming kingdom of Christ, refusing to involve themselves with the present kingdom, will also be recompensed accordingly.

The time for the rendering of a "just recompense" to every Christian, according to the context and overall message of chapters one through three, will be at the future "judgment" of Christians — the judgment seat of Christ; *the issue*, as in I Cor. 3:11-15, will be "works," with a view to every Christian being revealed as either an overcomer or a non-overcomer, on the basis of works; and *the outcome* of this revelation has been clearly made known.

Christians revealed as overcomers will be given "power over the nations," while those Christians revealed as non-overcomers will be denied such power.

That the overcomer's promises *are not only millennial in their scope of fulfillment but are also connected with regal positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom* is further made plain by the message *to the Church in Thyatira*.

NO such scene as that depicted in verses twenty-six and twenty-seven exists during the present dispensation preceding the Millennium; *NOR* will such a scene exist during the eternal ages following the Millennium. And that which is true of the overcomer's promise here is equally true of the overcomer's promises

throughout chapters two and three.

Christians before the judgment seat of Christ will be judged on the basis of *works* to determine their status relative to *overcoming*, with a view to *regal positions in the kingdom*.

The Morning Star

Not only were the overcoming Christians in Thyatira promised kingly power with Christ but they were promised "the morning star," which is *Christ Himself* (Rev. 22:16).

In Rev. 2:26-28, the promise of "the morning star" appears immediately following the promise concerning "power over the nations"; and in Rev. 22:16, the identification of Christ as "the bright and morning star" immediately follows His identification as "the root and offspring of David."

The clear implication in the latter reference, in the light of the overcomer's promise to the Church in Thyatira, is an allusion to *His regal position as David's Son*. The promise of "the morning star" to the overcoming Christian is an apparent reference to a special, peculiar relationship with Christ, *which can ONLY be connected with His reign*.

The expressions "morning star" in Rev. 2:28 and "bright and morning star" in Rev. 22:16 are used of Christ's relationship with His Church (anticipating His reign), as the expression "Sun of righteousness" in Mal. 4:2 is used of His relationship with Israel (anticipating His reign).

The morning star appears in the sky before the dawn, shortly before *the sun* appears on the horizon to lighten the sky. The apparent thought is that Christ will appear as the "bright and morning star" for the Church near the close of the time of this world's darkness; and He will appear to Israel, following the darkness, as the "Sun of righteousness...with healing in his wings."

Christ will first complete His dealings with the Church, with overcoming Christians being brought into a special, peculiar relationship with Him, *anticipating their reign as co-heirs*.

Christ will then turn to Israel and deal with His brethren after the flesh in such a fashion that their future confession, as

recorded in Isaiah chapter fifty-three, will include the statement, in fulfillment of Mal. 4:2:

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we are healed*” (v. 5).

Concluding Thoughts:

There is a battle presently being waged, it is being fought on two fronts, and the central issue involves *governmental control over the earth*. This battle is being waged by Satan and his angels, and it is being waged against Israel on one front and against the Church on the other.

God has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places,” through Israel in the Old Testament and through the Church in the New Testament, that a completely new order of rulers (sons) *is about to be brought on the scene*.

And Satan with his angels, continuing to have this demonstrated to them, remain constantly at war against these two creations God has called into existence to be heirs in the coming kingdom.

Satan knew in the beginning when he sought governmental power and authority beyond that which had been delegated to him, seeking to be “like the most High” (Isa. 14:13, 14), *that he MUST be wholly successful OR face eternal judgment; and he knows today that failure in his onslaughts against Israel and the Church can ONLY bring about his long-impending, awaiting judgment*.

Thus, the picture we presently have set before us is that of warfare being waged by a mighty fallen celestial being and his minions — *the god of this age and those ruling under him* — *who know that their time is short unless they can somehow thwart God’s plans and purposes concerning Israel and the Church*.

THAT is what the warfare is about! And Satan knows, from his own experience in the past, that in failure *there can be NO room for mercy*.

Resultingly, he placed a Jezebel in the camp of Israel in the Old Testament, and he placed a Jezebel in the Church in the New Testament. These two moves had to do with the *deep things of*

Satan, he continues with *his deep things* today, and he will continue as long as he is allowed to remain in power.

NOTHING has changed in his plans and methods; *NOR* will anything change, aside from a progressive intensification of his efforts as the dispensation draws to a close.

5

Clothed in White Raiment

The Righteous Acts of the Saints

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Rev. 3:5).

The message to the Church in Sardis presents a continued, extended view of the “children” of the adulterous woman, Jezebel, from the preceding message to the Church in Thyatira. And matters can be viewed in this manner, as Scripture moves from one epistle to the next, for most of the Christians comprising the Church in Sardis possessed a name that they *lived*, though they were actually *dead* (v. 1; cf. 2:23).

Along with a continued, extended view of the Church in this *spiritually destitute condition*, attention is also called to a “few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments” (v. 4).

Thus, there was a remnant within this Church, comparable to the remnant of seven thousand who had not bowed their knee to Baal during Elijah and Jezebel’s day in the Old Testament (1 Kings 19:18).

This remnant in the Church in Sardis was comprised of those Christians presently overcoming the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And these are the ones who will one day be revealed as overcomers, subsequently realizing the overcomer’s promises during the 1,000-year reign of Christ.

Many expositors have sought to associate the Church in Sardis with the Reformation period in Church history, which began with events during the sixteenth century.

The allusion to this period of time and beyond — if the message to the Church in Sardis is to be associated with a particular period in Church history (though not really to the Reformation *per se*) — would appear to be correct, with the emphasis placed in two realms:

- 1) That which continued in existence within the mainstream of Christendom from the days represented by the preceding message to the Church in Thyatira.
- 2) That which would ultimately result within a smaller segment of Christendom because of the Reformation, represented by the succeeding message to the Church in Philadelphia.

And, as previously seen, these two segments of the Church in Sardis were represented by *those who were dead* (v. 1) and by *those who had not defiled their garments* (v. 4).

Then, the following two epistles, the messages to the Churches in Philadelphia and Laodicea, then project these two segments of Christendom *on into the latter days of the dispensation*. *They will exist side-by-side for a time, with the Church increasingly becoming more and more Laodicean, "till the whole" has been leavened* (cf. Matt. 13:33; Luke 18:8).

The Reformation itself was *NOT* a recovery of the doctrine surrounding "that blessed hope" but rather a recovery of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith.

The reformers gave little attention to events surrounding Christ's return.

Although they knew Christ would return at some future date, they turned their attention almost exclusively to evangelizing the unsaved.

Many of the reformers looked upon the Church as an instrument through which God would ultimately effect world conversion, something to be accomplished *prior* to His Son's return. And, to these men, Satan's main thrust to counter this goal was channeled through the Roman Catholic Church, with each succeeding pope holding the dubious honor of being the Antichrist.

The origin of much of the false postmillennial thought, still present to some extent in Christendom today, can be traced to the eschatological views held by many of the reformers.

Postmillennial thought in Christendom today though is usually seen in a different form than in the past.

Today, it can be seen mainly in an increasingly popular ideology known as *theonomy* (a name given to the false teaching that the Church will be instrumental in bringing about the kingdom of God on earth through gradually taking control of the present government under Satan).

However, there is another side to the picture surrounding the course which Christendom began to take at the time of the Reformation. The truth concerning the return of Christ within the framework of premillennial thought, also present within the Church today, is something which likewise grew out of the Reformation.

During the seventeenth century, small numbers of Bible students in Europe (who, themselves, were among those ultimately reached with the true message of the gospel of the grace of God as a result of the Reformation) began turning their attention to the prophetic Scriptures.

Their work was furthered by other students in the eighteenth century; but the main impetus awaited the work of students in the nineteenth century, who built upon and brought to fruition the work of their predecessors.

It was during this latter period that the great advances in prophetic study were made, according a proper treatment to the numerous truths surrounding Christ's return.

The recovery of these truths was accompanied by a great resurgence in missionary endeavor, and it is this *recovery* and *resurgence* which appears to mark the beginning of that period covered concurrently by the messages to the Churches in Philadelphia and Laodicea.

There is *nothing bad* said about the Church in Philadelphia, and there is *nothing good* said about the Church in Laodicea.

An *apex* of the outworking of that which had its beginning during the days of Martin Luther *can be seen in the message to the Church in Philadelphia.*

And the end of that which began centuries earlier — seen on the one hand when the leaven was placed in the three measures of meal, and on the other hand through that which occurred during the days of Constantine and the ensuing years — can be seen reaching its completion at the end of the dispensation in the message to the Church in Laodicea.

Dead... Unfiled

The thought of many of those in the Church in Sardis described as *living, but being dead*, *MUST be looked upon in an opposite sense to the thought of a few in the Church having "undefiled garments"* (vv. 1, 4).

In this sense, "dead" would be equated with *defiled*, and "undefiled" would be equated with *living*. And Christians *ALONE* are in view, those capable of producing *works* pleasing unto the Lord (vv. 1, 2; cf. Eph. 2:10).

"Death" in a *spiritual sense* is associated with both the unregenerate and the regenerate.

The unregenerate are spoken of as being "dead in trespasses and sins" because of *unbelief* (Eph. 2:1).

And the regenerate can be spoken of in the sense which they are presented in Rev. 3:1 — *living, but dead* — because of *unfaithfulness* (cf. I Tim. 5:6; James 5:5), associated with what James calls a *dead faith*.

(The words "faith" and "believe" are different forms of the same word in the Greek text — noun [faith] and verb [believe] forms. Thus, either usage would carry the same meaning [e.g., Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8].)

James is the great epistle dealing with *faith* and *works* in the sense that they are presented in the messages to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three.

Works emanate out of faith; and James 2:14-26 refers to a *dead faith* which is incapable of producing the type works necessary to bring faith to its proper goal, the exact condition of those in Sardis whose existing state ("dead") was associated with *works*.

They possessed *works*, but these works *did NOT* emanate from a living, active faith. Rather, such works emanated from a dead, inactive faith and were the type works which would be burned at the judgment seat (works described in I Cor. 3:12 by three combustible materials, “wood, hay, stubble”).

The distinguishing characteristic between those who were *dead* and those with *undefiled garments* in the message to the Church in Sardis is, thus, seen in their “works.”

This is really the overriding subject matter in each of the seven messages to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three.

Each message, following descriptive aspects of Christ as *Judge* in the midst of the Churches (in keeping with the description given in chapter one), begins the same way:

“I know thy works...” (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).

And to properly understand the entire matter, along with the review and manifestation of two types of works at the judgment seat of Christ, *one MUST understand the relationship between faith and works in James chapter two.*

James, as all of the New Testament epistles, deals centrally with *the future salvation of the soul* rather than the salvation which we presently possess, the salvation of the spirit (cf. James 1:12, 21, 22; 5:19, 20).

BOTH are wrought on the basis of WORKS.

Our present salvation (salvation of the spirit) has been wrought *on the basis of Christ's past, completed work*; and our future salvation (salvation of the soul) will be wrought *on the basis of the present works of those who have been justified on the basis of Christ's past, completed work.*

The review of works at the judgment seat will be *to determine the TYPE works, with a view to the salvation or loss of the soul.*

James 2:14-26 opens with two self-answering questions, and the structure of these questions in the Greek text *requires that both be answered in the negative* (the Greek negative “*me*” appears in the latter question [designating a “no” response], and *the integrally, inseparable nature of the two questions shows that the first MUST be answered in the same sense*).

The first question presents the relationship between faith and works in connection with *profit*, and the second question presents the relationship between faith and works in connection with *salvation*.

These two questions could possibly be better understood by translating the verse,

"My brethren, if anyone says he has faith, but does not have works, he cannot profit, can he? Faith cannot save him, can it?" (v. 14).

"Profit" and "salvation" are linked together in such a manner in James 2:14 *that one CANNOT be realized apart from the other.*

That is, apart from an accrual of "profit," *salvation CANNOT be realized*; or, to state the matter another way, an accrual of "profit" leads to (is for the purpose of) the realization of *salvation* (at a future date).

And James specifically states *that neither can be realized by faith alone. Works MUST enter in and have their proper place in the matter.*

One *CANNOT profit* apart from an initial investment, and one is in *NO position* to procure the salvation of which James speaks apart from presently possessing salvation.

The Greek word translated "profit" is derived from a root word which means "to increase"; and the thought of an "increase" *does NOT enter into the picture UNTIL one has an initial supply, making an "increase," or "profit," possible.*

"Profit" is *always* something in addition to that which one already possesses. Initial investments, from which individuals can profit, are possessed *ONLY* by the Lord's Own servants (Christians).

There is *NO such thing* as the word "profit" being used in this sense in connection with the unsaved, for *they have NO initial investment in this realm.*

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27) provide two of the best Scriptural examples concerning "profit" on an initial investment in relation to the Lord's servants during the present day and time.

As brought out in these parables, *the Lord has delivered ALL His goods to ALL His servants and has left them with the command, "Occupy till I come."*

The servants of the Lord *are to trade and traffic in the Lord's business during His time of absence*. Those who do so, under the leadership of the Lord, will realize a "profit" (cf. Matt. 25:15-17, 19-23; Luke 19:15-19). And through realizing a profit, or increase, on the initial investment, they will experience *the salvation of their souls* (cf. Matt. 16:24-27).

On the other hand, those who refuse to use the initial investment will not only remain profitless but they will, as a consequence, suffer "loss" (cf. Matt. 25:15, 18, 19, 24-30; Luke 19:15, 20-26). They will experience *the loss of their souls* (cf. Matt. 16:24-27).

Consequently, that which is involved in James 2:14, as explained in subsequent verses, is simply *faithfulness* to one's calling (resulting in works), or *unfaithfulness* to one's calling (resulting in no works [or valueless works NOT associated with faith]).

Works of the nature referred to in this verse emanate out of "faith" and bring faith to its proper goal, which is the salvation of one's soul (James 2:22; I Peter 1:9).

Apart from such a manifestation of faith, giving rise to works, *there can be NO profit; NOR can the inherently connected salvation follow* (the salvation of the soul).

In the message to the Church in Sardis in Revelation chapter three, two types of works are in view. The first type has to do with *works not emanating from faith*, and the second type has to do with works of the opposite kind, *those emanating from faith*.

The first type works are those performed by Christians apart from the leadership of the Lord. *Faith*, associated with the Lord's leadership, *is NOT involved*; and such works are *invariably* performed under the leadership of man for the praise, honor, and glory of man.

The second type works are those performed by Christians under the leadership of the Lord. *Faith*, associated with the Lord's leadership, is the primary factor; and such works *ALWAYS* redound to the praise, honor, and glory of the Lord.

BOTH type works will be very evident at the judgment seat — those which are worthless (comparable to "wood, hay, stubble") and those of intrinsic value (comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones").

The result of the manifestation of *works* at the judgment seat will be twofold:

- 1) The revelation of an *ACCRUAL of profit, resulting in the salvation of the soul on the one hand.*
- 2) The revelation of *NO profit, resulting in the loss of the soul on the other hand.*

Such will be the end of all works viewed, as seen in the seven messages to the seven Churches.

White Raiment

The "white raiment" in which the overcomers in Sardis are to be clothed *can ONLY have to do with the wedding garment* mentioned in Matt. 22:11, 12 and Rev. 19:8. The overcomers, synonymous with the bride, are to "array themselves" rather than "be arrayed"; and this fact should be reflected in the translation of both Rev. 3:5 and Rev. 19:8.

The verb appears in the middle voice in the Greek text in both instances, showing the subject (the overcomers, forming the bride) participating in the results of the action, necessitating the thought that the overcomers are the ones who, themselves, will accomplish this feat.

The "fine linen, clean and white" is specifically said, in Rev. 19:8, to be the "righteousness ['righteous acts'] of the saints."

The word translated "righteousness" (KJV) is *plural* in the Greek text and can only be a reference to "righteous acts [*i.e.*, the 'righteousnesses of saints']," *which are specifically said to form the wedding garment.*

Such righteous acts are synonymous with works emanating from faithfulness to one's calling; and unfaithful Christians, accordingly, will not possess works of this nature.

Their works, revealed as comparable to "wood, hay, stubble" at the judgment seat, will be burned (*cf.* Isa. 64:6); and without acceptable works/righteous acts, they will possess no material to make up the "fine linen" comprising the wedding garment.

Thus, such Christians will appear naked and ashamed in the presence of their Lord in that day.

The two types of righteousness in Rom. 5:17 and Rev. 19:8 correspond to the two types of justification in James 2:24 (one is acquired on the basis of *the work of Another [Christ]*, and the other is acquired on the basis of *the Christians' own works*).

There is a justification by faith, and there is a justification by works.

ONLY those who have been justified by faith are in a position to be justified by works.

That is, a person *MUST first be justified on the basis of the work of Another before he can be justified on the basis of his own works (emanating out of faithfulness to his calling).*

Or, to state the matter within another frame of reference, note the Christians' calling.

A person MUST first be "called" BEFORE he can be "called out" of the "called." He MUST first be a part of the body (be "in Christ") BEFORE he can be removed from the body (removed to form the bride, comprising the antitype of Eve removed from Adam's body to form his bride).

Those in Sardis who had *NOT* defiled their garments would be allowed to walk with Christ, *arrayed in white raiment.*

They *would NOT* be found among those whose works were lacking, those described by the word "dead." But even to the Christians with defiled garments the call was to "remember...and hold fast, and repent" (v. 3).

It was not too late for those possessing works which would one day be shown worthless at the judgment seat to become faithful servants of the Lord and produce works of intrinsic value.

The overcomer's promise was extended to *ALL* in Sardis; *BUT, not all* would heed the message, overcome, and realize this promise.

The clear, simple lesson taught by comparing Matt. 22:11, 12; Rev. 3:5; 19:8 is *the absolute necessity* of possessing a wedding garment if one would be numbered among those forming the bride of Christ.

The wedding garment is associated with *overcoming* (Rev. 3:5), *possessing righteous acts* (works emanating out of faithfulness [James 2:14-26; Rev. 19:8]), and *gaining admittance to festivities surrounding the marriage of the Lamb* (Matt. 22:11, 12; Rev. 19:9).

The overcomers alone will possess the wedding garment, and this garment alone will be recognized as the proper attire necessary for admittance to and participation in the marriage festivities.

The Book of Life

The possibility of Christians having their names *blotted out* of the book of life, in accord with Rev. 3:5, has troubled many individuals.

Such individuals view the book of life as a record containing the names of all who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and they know that for a Christian to have his name blotted out of such a book is *an absolute impossibility*.

One's eternal salvation is just as secure as the finished work of Christ upon which it rests.

And to infer that a Christian could possibly one day lose his eternal salvation would be bringing into question the complete efficacy of this finished work, or of the corresponding work of the Spirit breathing life into the one having no life (on the basis of Christ's finished work).

The problem emanates from wrongly associating "the book of life" with *eternal salvation*.

God has many books; and in these books He keeps records of many different things, records which will one day be opened (cf. Ps. 56:8; 139:16; Zech. 5:1-3; Mal. 3:16; Rev. 5:1, 2; 13:8; 20:12).

Note, for example, that at the future judgment of the unsaved dead in Rev. 20:11-15 a number of books will be opened, including "the book of life" (v. 12). God has a library in heaven, and *the book of life* is only one book within this library.

A book which seems to be entirely separate and distinct, but often confused with the book of life, is *the Lamb's book of life* in Rev. 13:8 (cf. Rev. 21:27). *This book would appear to be the place wherein the names of redeemed individuals have been inscribed rather than the book of life* in Rev. 3:5; 20:12.

The book of life will be opened at the judgments of both the saved and the unsaved. The entire scene in Rev. 3:5 has to do with issues of the judgment seat of Christ, with *the book of life*

being the only book from God's library of books singled out and mentioned by name.

The same thing can be found in the judgment of the unsaved dead in Rev. 20:11-15. *The book of life alone is singled out and mentioned by name.*

The purpose and content of the book of life are clearly revealed in Rev. 20:12: "...the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

The book of life is a book, among other books, containing *the deeds/works* of individuals, both those of the saved and those of the unsaved; and from the emphasis placed upon the book of life in connection with both judgments, along with information concerning other books in Scripture, one could conclude that this is probably God's primary record book containing *the deeds/works* of every individual.

Other books also record *deeds/works*, such as those mentioned in Ps. 56:8 and Mal. 3:16.

But the primary record book in this realm, one in which a name can be retained or blotted out (depending on the record of that individual contained in the book), appears to be "the book of life."

The blotting of one's name out of the book of life in Rev. 3:5 is strictly for the non-overcomer, with the Messianic Era in view, and *has NOTHING* to do with eternal verities.

One's relationship to Christ *can ONLY be looked upon as a settled, closed matter prior to judgment, a matter which can NEVER enter into any future judgment in any fashion or form.*

Different companies of the saved are judged at different times, with their works in view (works recorded in a book, or books [Ezek. 20:34-38; Matt. 25:34-40; I Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 20:4-6]); and the unsaved are judged at a subsequent time, with their works in view as well (works also recorded in a book, or books [Rev. 20:11-15]).

There is *NO such thing in Scripture* as a judgment of the saved and a judgment of the unsaved occurring together at the same time; *NOR is there any such thing in Scripture* as the issue of one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation being brought up at any future judgment.

Judgment in this respect, for both the saved and the unsaved, *occurred in past time*; and this past judgment can *NEVER* be brought up as an issue again.

All future judgments will be based *strictly upon the works of those being judged, which renders it impossible for issues surrounding eternal verities to ever enter into these judgments.*

Relative to the saved, judgment has already occurred, based on *their belief and Christ's finished work*; relative to the unsaved, judgment, as well, has already occurred, based on *their unbelief and Christ's finished work*:

"He that believeth on him is not condemned ['judged']: but he that believeth not is condemned already ['has already been judged'], because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

(For additional information on the past judgment of both the saved and the unsaved, as seen in John 3:18, refer to the foreword in this book.)

The book of life contains records that have been *lived*, and the blotting of a Christian's name out of this book *follows* his judgment on the basis of that which has been recorded in the book and involves *millennial verities alone.*

Such a Christian will be shown, *on the basis of his own works* (works burned at the judgment seat), to have been overcome; and he will suffer loss — the loss of his soul/life. *Rather than his name being left intact, it will be blotted out of the book of life;* and he will be among those denied positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

And the converse of the preceding will, as well, be true for the faithful Christian shown, in that future day, to have overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. *His name will be retained in the book of life,* and he will be among those occupying positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

Confession or Denial

Christ, in Rev. 3:5, has extended a twofold promise concerning

the name of the properly-clothed overcomer in Sardis (“clothed in white raiment”) in that coming day:

- 1) “I will not [a double negative in the Greek text, ‘I most certainly will not’] blot out *his name* out of the book of life.”
- 2) “But I will confess *his name* before my Father, and before his angels.”

This will occur in heaven *following* issues of the judgment seat, for the person whose name is to be confessed *MUST first be shown to have overcome through the record contained in the book of life* (and possibly other books as well).

Christ referred to this future event (along with the negative aspect [*denial of a confession of his name, resulting from his name having been blotted out of the book of life*]) on at least two occasions during His earthly ministry (Matt. 10:32, 33; Luke 12:8, 9).

The verses in Matthew refer *to confession* or *denial* before “my Father which is in heaven,” and the verses in Luke refer *to confession* or *denial* before “the angels of God.”

The thought of one’s name having previously been blotted out of the book of life is not seen in these passages from the two gospel accounts, though it is seen when Scripture is compared with Scripture (these two passages compared with the message to the Church in Sardis).

Further, in the Book of Matthew, this matter appears in a context referring to *the salvation* or *loss* of one’s soul (vv. 38, 39; cf. Matt. 16:24-27).

Thus, this places the entire matter, as in Rev. 3:5, in connection with events surrounding findings and determinations at the judgment seat.

Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, calls attention to the same thing (2:10-13); and the contextual setting has to do with *a future salvation, the glory of Christ, and the coming reign of Christ*:

“Therefore I endure [‘patiently endure’] all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the *salvation* which is in Christ Jesus with *eternal* [‘age-lasting’] *glory*.

It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

If we suffer ['patiently endure' (same word in the Greek text as in v. 10)], we shall also *reign* with him: *if we deny him, he also will deny us.*

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."

Note that verse thirteen refers to the fact that Christ *CANNOT* accept as faithful an individual who has proven unfaithful. To do so would be to deny His Own character, whether seen through statements in the written Word or actions of the living Word.

And the converse of that could only be true as well. Christ can *ONLY* accept as faithful an individual who has proven himself faithful.

Again, to do otherwise would be to deny His Own character, whether seen through statements in the written Word or actions of the living Word.

Christ MUST remain faithful to do EXACTLY what He has said that He would do concerning confession or denial of Christians before His Father and before His Father's angels.

Thus, the parallel Scriptures to the confession of one's name before the Father and before His angels, as revealed in Rev. 3:5, have to do with *confessing Christ before men and patiently enduring.* And it is within these two realms that the entire matter is set forth.

Confessing Christ before men has NOTHING to do with a public confession of one's faith in Christ at the point of salvation, as is often taught.

Rather, such a confession is for *those who are already saved*, and this confession will be a natural outworking in the life of one exercising faithfulness to his calling. Confession or denial of Christians by Christ *in heaven*, during that coming day, is conditioned upon their overcoming or being overcome and has the coming Messianic Era in view.

And confession or denial of Christ *by Christians here upon the earth*, during the present time, should be looked upon as having the same end in view.

There is a life to be lived, and the unfolding of this life under the leadership of the Lord should bring praise, honor, and glory

to the Lord, as the individual looks out ahead toward events at the judgment seat and the reign of Christ which follows.

Patiently enduring, within its context in II Tim. 2:12, MUST be understood in the light of Paul's patient endurance in verse ten.

He patiently endured ALL things for the sake of other Christians in order that they might obtain the salvation having to do with age-lasting glory, ultimately occupying a position with Christ in the kingdom.

The record of Paul's life (now recorded in the book of life, awaiting the opening of this book at the judgment seat) was one of his concern for others, with the coming kingdom of Christ in view.

For the sake of other Christians, Paul let NOTHING stand in his way.

And Christians today are to govern their lives in a comparable manner, with the same end in view, as they too patiently endure ALL things.

Concluding Thoughts:

Decisions and determinations concerning *receiving rewards or suffering loss* will emanate out of issues surrounding the judgment seat, and the realization of these decisions and determinations will be brought to pass in "the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ."

God has offered *rewards* for faithfulness; and Christians are exhorted to "strive [Gk., *agonizomai*, from which the English word "agonize" is derived, i.e., 'exert every possible effort']" in the present race of the faith, with rewards in view, while moving toward the goal of their calling (cf. Luke 13:24; I Cor. 9:25; I Tim. 6:12).

"Rewards" are offered as *compensations in order to encourage Christians as they are being tested and tried while engaged in the Lord's business during the time of their present pilgrim journey.*

And compensations of this nature are NOT to be taken lightly. Disdaining, ignoring, or neglecting proffered rewards is completely out of line with any Scriptural presentation of this subject.

The mother of James and John possessed Godly aspirations for her two sons concerning future rewards, James and John themselves possessed the same aspirations, the other disciples in like manner possessed such aspirations, and Christians are exhorted to also possess aspirations of this nature (Matt. 19:27-30; 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; I Cor. 9:24-27; Eph. 1:17, 18; I Tim. 6:11, 12; II Tim. 4:7, 8; Titus 2:12, 13; II Peter 1:10, 11).

A day is coming in the near future when every Christian will be called to an accounting. *Lives lived* will be reviewed from the records which the righteous Judge will have on hand. When the books containing records of *the deeds/works* of Christians are opened, there will be a *just recompense* on the basis of that which is revealed.

Every Christian will be judged *SOLELY* on the basis of the things written in these books, and the entire matter will be carried out in *an equitable, just manner*.

Receiving rewards or suffering loss will, in each instance, be *commensurate with revealed works*. *There will be NO exceptions*.

The Christians' *deeds/works*, emanating from faithfulness or unfaithfulness, will come under scrutiny through being subjected to fire. Some works will be revealed as comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones" and endure the fire; other works though will be revealed as comparable to "wood, hay, stubble" and be consumed by the fire.

Christians with works enduring the fire *will receive rewards and positions in the kingdom*.

BUT, Christians with works consumed by the fire *will suffer loss and be denied positions in the kingdom*.

Such will be the outcome of the judgment of *ALL Christians* at the end of this dispensation, preceding the Messianic Era.

6

A Pillar, A City

I Will Keep... I Will Write...

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev. 3:12).

If the message to the Church in Philadelphia is to be looked upon as referring to a particular period in Church history, it could only be placed during a time which began in the nineteenth century and extended to the end of the dispensation. Then, the succeeding message to the Church in Laodicea would cover the same time as well.

Both messages form continuations of two segments of Christendom referred to in the message to the preceding Church, the Church in Sardis (those with undefiled garments, and those with a name that they lived but were dead). The message to the Church in Philadelphia constitutes a continuation of the former segment (those with undefiled garments); and the message to the Church in Laodicea constitutes a continuation of the latter segment (those with a name that they lived but were dead), *with both extending to the end of the dispensation.*

BUT, as evident from Scriptures such as Matt. 13:33 and Luke 18:8, along with the arrangement of the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, *that segment of Christendom represented by the Church in Philadelphia could ONLY continue in a diminishing manner.*

This segment of Christendom could ONLY progressively be engulfed by that segment of Christendom represented by the Church in Laodicea.

The status of *Christians ALONE* is in view in the messages to the seven Churches; and the condition in which Christians find themselves, as viewed in these messages, is *ALWAYS* brought about by *WORKS*.

In this respect, *the reference to a condition described by the word "dead" could only refer to a spiritually destitute condition brought about by the absence of acceptable WORKS, which in James 2:14-26 is associated with a DEAD faith.*

Such individuals in the Church in Sardis *MUST* be looked upon in an opposite sense to those in the same Church who had not defiled their garments. Thus, the word "dead" could be equated with *defiled*; and in the message to the Church in Laodicea, *the SAME condition* is described another way by the word *naked* (vv. 17, 18).

The "white raiment" is also in view in the message to the Church in Laodicea (as in the message to the Church in Sardis); and those described as "naked" were said to be in a position wherein they would have been able to array themselves in "white raiment," through *WORKS* (as were their counterparts in Sardis), a position which *could NEVER* be held by an unsaved person because of his alienated position outside of Christ (vv. 15, 18; cf. Rev. 19:7, 8).

The Church in Philadelphia is mentioned first, calling attention to *an open door* set before those who had exercised *patient endurance* through the trials and testings of this life ("patience" [v. 10] should be translated "patient endurance"). The full fruition of the work of the reformers and those who followed in their steps appears to be in view in the message to the Church in Philadelphia; and such a fruition *could refer ONLY to the condition in which the Church, for the first time following the Reformation, found itself during the nineteenth century.*

Two things marked the activities of Christians during those days:

- 1) Worldwide missionary activity, paralleled only by the missionary activity of Christians during the first century of the Church's existence.

- 2) A restoration of the great truths surrounding Christ's return, seen in the first-century Church.

If matters are viewed in this respect, *the open door* may relate to the former and *the patient endurance* to the latter.

(See Chapter V in this book for comments concerning the association of “patient endurance” on the part of Christians with events surrounding Christ’s return.)

The planting and watering would have been carried out by the sixteenth century reformers and those who followed in their steps during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

But the forthcoming *increase* which God would give awaited the Church during the nineteenth century (*cf.* I Cor. 3:5-7).

Missionary endeavor became a major activity of the Church in the sixteenth century, and there was a beginning of the restoration of prophetic truth during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but the full fruition of the entire matter was not seen until the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century, God raised up great missionary-minded individuals who entered into the labors of the reformers and those following in their steps, taking advantage of open doors in countries worldwide; and during this same time, God raised up great prophetic students who built upon the work of their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century predecessors.

God continued to raise up great missionary-minded individuals and great prophetic students for over one hundred years, extending well into the twentieth century. But then events took a different course. Mission doors around the world began to close, and, correspondingly, the ranks of the great teachers of prophecy began to diminish.

In this respect, there is an apparent connection between the Church being allowed to involve itself in great missionary activity and the ministry of the prophetic word. Such a connection existed at the beginning of the dispensation, and such has also existed near the end of the dispensation.

The terminus of the matter though has, for the past few decades, been rapidly *moving more and more away from* that sphere of activity typified by the Philadelphian Church and *moving more and more toward* that sphere of activity typified by the Laodicean Church.

The deteriorating effect produced by the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 *could ONLY cause the Laodicean Church to become more and more prominent UNTIL, for all practical purposes, that seen in this Church ALONE would prevail at the end of the dispensation.*

The Hour of Temptation

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

The words "hour of temptation" in Rev. 3:10 are taken by most Bible students to be a reference to the coming time of *Tribulation*, with the promise being given in the message to the Church in Philadelphia that Christians will not enter into this time. The word "from" is a translation of the Greek word "ek," meaning "out of." Thus, the correct translation is, "I also will keep thee *out of* the hour of temptation..."

And many Bible students, seeing "the hour of temptation" as a reference to the coming Tribulation period, see this verse as a reference to the rapture, a promise that Christians will be kept *out of this time, out of the Tribulation*. That is, they see this verse as a promise to Christians that they will be removed from the earth before the Tribulation begins.

In turn, this has also led many Bible students to follow a *selective rapture ideology*, for all Christians *are NOT* included in this promise. Note that *ONLY those who have kept the word of His patience* have been promised that they will be kept "out of the hour of temptation..."

Thus, if this verse centers around a promise that Christians will be removed before the coming Tribulation, then a major problem exists, for a teaching of this nature would be in direct conflict with that which Scripture reveals concerning the rapture. Scripture is quite clear from both the Old Testament types and the New Testament antitype that the rapture will be *ALL-inclusive*. *ALL Christians will be removed at this time, NOT just those who have kept the word of His patience.*

The Tribulation comprises the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. And, accordingly, this period of time has to do with seven years which will complete God's dealings with Israel during the preceding dispensation.

This preceding dispensation was interrupted seven years short of completion. Israel's sin had reached an apex (at Calvary); and God stepped in, stopped the chronometer marking off time for the dispensation, and instituted a new dispensation. Israel was set aside, and fifty-three days following the events surrounding Calvary, God sent His Spirit into the world to procure a bride for His Son.

God, at this time, through events beginning on the day of Pentecost, called into existence *one new man* (which was neither Jew nor Gentile); and the Spirit began His search for the bride among those comprising this *new man*, a search which would last for one dispensation, for 2,000 years.

Once the Spirit has completed His search, this *new man* (comprised of all Christians) will be removed from the earth and dealt with at Christ's judgment seat in the heavens.

THEN, once this has been accomplished, God will turn back to Israel and complete His dealings with this nation during Man's Day, completing the last seven years of the previous dispensation.

THIS will complete Man's 6,000-year Day.

Christ will *THEN* return, restore Israel, overthrow Gentile world power, and the 1,000-year Messianic Era will be ushered in.

Revelation 3:10 really has *NOTHING* to do with either the rapture or the Tribulation. Both are dealt with in the Book of Revelation, showing a pre-Tribulation rapture of all Christians. *BUT, NEITHER the rapture NOR the Tribulation is dealt with in this verse.*

The rapture is dealt with in Rev. 1:10; 4:1, 2a, and the Tribulation is dealt with in Rev. 6-19a. *BUT*, Rev. 3:10, understood within context, can *clearly* be seen to deal with something else entirely.

Revelation 3:10, within context, has to do with *WORKS emanating out of FAITHFULNESS* (cf. James 2:14-26), with a view to *OVERCOMING* (cf. vv. 8, 10a, 12). And the Christians in Philadelphia were promised that, because of their faithfulness, *they would be kept OUT OF a particular time of testing/trials — about to come upon "all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."*

This promised *deliverance could ONLY* be the same as that seen in what is commonly called "the Lord's prayer" in Matt. 6:9-13: "And lead us not into temptation, but *deliver* us from evil [*lit.*, 'from the evil one' — from Satan]..." (v. 13a). This would be the same temptation which Christ spoke of in Mark 14:38 and which Paul wrote about in I Cor. 7:5. And it is the same temptation from which the Lord promised *deliverance* in II Peter 2:9.

Testings or trials are seen in Scripture within two spheres. They are seen as something which God uses in connection with the maturing process, with a view to *the person ultimately being approved at the judgment seat* (James 1:2-4, 12); and they are seen as something which *Satan uses in his efforts to bring about defeat in a Christian's life* (Mark 14:38; James 1:13-15).

The promise concerning *deliverance in Rev. 3:10 would have to be understood within this overall frame of reference, in keeping with Christ's statement to His disciples in Matt. 6:13.*

This "temptation ['trial,' 'testing']" by Satan *was about to* (literal rendering from the Greek text) come upon "all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

The fact that this testing would be worldwide is another thing which has led many individuals to believe that the coming Tribulation was in view. *But, NOT so. Christians are being dealt with, NOT the world at large;* and the expression, "all the world," *MUST* be understood in the same sense as it is used in Col. 1:5ff, where *Christians ALONE are also in view.*

In Col. 1:5, 6, 23, Paul states that the gospel (his gospel, the good news surrounding the mystery which had been revealed to him) had been proclaimed throughout "all the world," "to every creature which is under heaven." However, the message in this gospel, in Paul's gospel — "if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (v. 23) — *was for Christians ALONE. The content of the message restricts this good news to Christians, allowing for ONLY one understanding of the passage.*

"To every creature which is under heaven" *can ONLY* be a reference to Christians (all Christians) scattered throughout the then known world, *NOT* to unsaved individuals in the world as well.

And the extent of the promise surrounding deliverance from a coming time of testing/trials in Rev. 3:10 is the same.

This is a promise *to faithful Christians* relative to a time of testing/trials which Satan would bring upon Christians (all Christians) scattered throughout the then known world, *seeking to bring about their defeat*.

They, because of their faithfulness, would overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And, through this means, they would be delivered out of the onslaughts of Satan, as seen in Rev. 3:10.

And the context of this verse is *in complete keeping with this thought, NOT with thoughts surrounding the rapture*. Efforts to use Rev. 3:10 as a verse relating to the rapture *can ONLY have one end result, which is negative*. Such efforts *can ONLY serve to do away with that which actually is dealt with in this verse — a facet of teaching surrounding the Word of the Kingdom*.

There is an abundance of Scripture — in both the Old Testament and the New Testament — to show that the complete Church will be removed prior to the Tribulation. And, with this in mind, *one need NOT attempt to make Rev. 3:10 deal with something that it doesn't deal with*, in an effort to teach that which is clearly taught so many places elsewhere in Scripture, even elsewhere in the Book of Revelation itself.

Behold, I Come Quickly

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11).

The Greek word translated “quickly” (*tachu*) is used six times in the Book of Revelation referring to the coming of the Lord for His saints (2:5, 16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20). This word, within its context in these passages, *can ONLY refer to the suddenness or swiftness* of an event coming at a completely *unexpected time* for many, though others will be *watching and waiting*.

This would be a continuation of thought from the previous verse relative to *patient endurance under trials and testings*. Individuals are exhorted to hold onto *that which they have*, for a revealed

reason which both precedes and follows the exhortation. *That which they have*, contextually, *can ONLY have to do with the end result of patient endurance (v. 10) — occupying regal positions with Christ in His kingdom (v. 11b).*

That which is in view in Rev. 3:11 has to do with the *sudden, swift* nature of the Lord's return. This is a parallel passage to that seen in I Thess. 5:1-9. Some Christians will be watching and some will not be watching when the Lord returns in this manner. Some will have patiently endured, holding fast that which they had. Others though will not have done so. And the end result will have to do with either occupying or being denied a position with Christ in the kingdom.

The suddenness or swiftness of Christ's return is described in I Cor. 15:52 by the use of the Greek word *atomos*, translated "moment." (Our English word "atom" is simply a transliterated form of *atomos*.)

When associated with *time*, as in I Cor. 15:52, *atomos* refers to the smallest, most minute unit into which time can be divided (*e.g.*, hours are divided into minutes, minutes are divided into seconds, and seconds are divided into fractions such as a millisecond [one-thousandth of a second], or a microsecond [one-millionth of a second]).

And there are divisions beyond a microsecond.

Events surrounding Christ's return for His saints will occur within the scope of a unit of time lasting less than a microsecond — so *sudden* and *swift* that it will be beyond all finite comprehension. And the warning to Christians concerning *the unexpected nature* of this event occurs numerous places in Scripture (*cf.* Matt. 24:45-51; 25:10-13, 24-30; Luke 12:42-46; 13:24-30; 19:20-26).

Christians being removed from this world (removed from Man's Day on earth and placed in the Lord's Day in heaven) is really *NOT* the main thrust of the matter though. Interpreters have too often erroneously sought to make it so.

The main thrust of the matter has to do with *the Christians' present manner of living (patient endurance) in view of the sudden, unexpected nature of the Lord's return (Behold, I come quickly [suddenly, swiftly]) and that which will be brought to light following His return (that NO man take thy crown).*

Christians, in actuality, will be removed from the earth preceding a judgment befalling the earth-dwellers, with a view to their appearance before the judgment seat of Christ in the heavens; and it is at this judgment that all decisions and determinations concerning *the presently proffered crowns* will be made.

Revelation 3:11 anticipates these events at the judgment seat following the removal of Christians from the earth. And, as previously shown, *Rev. 3:10, leading into verse eleven, deals, NOT with the rapture, BUT with the same subject matter seen in verse eleven, providing introductory material for this verse.*

“Crowns” have to do with *regal power and authority*.

Rulers are the ones who wear crowns, and crowns are presently being offered to Christians in view of their occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.

Christ will wear a crown in that day, and all who rule with Christ will likewise wear crowns.

There will be NO such thing as an uncrowned Christian occupying a position as co-heir with Christ during the day of His power.

These positions of power and authority are REAL, the proffered crowns are REAL, and the warnings concerning the possibility of a forfeiture of these crowns are just as REAL.

The Overcomers

Thoughts from verses ten and eleven concerning faithfulness in view of the Lord’s return, the judgment seat, and the reign of Christ, lead directly into the overcomer’s promise in verse twelve.

This promise has several interrelated parts and brings matters introduced in the preceding verses to their climax. Those who *patiently endure* during the present time will be shown (through the issues of the judgment seat) to have overcome, they will receive crowns, and they will occupy positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.

The overcomer’s promise to the Church in Philadelphia describes certain things about the nature of these positions; and, *for the first and only time in the overcomer’s promises, reference is made to the city from which Christians will conduct this rule.*

1) Pillars in the Temple

The promise to the overcomer in Philadelphia that he will be made a "pillar in the temple" is, of course, a figure of speech. "Christ" is *the temple* in one respect (Rev. 21:22); and in another respect, Christ is presently building a temple.

The temple presently under construction is being built with "living stones [Christians, who themselves are temples (temples of the Holy Spirit)]" (I Peter 2:5; cf. Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19).

The figurative use of "pillar" in Rev. 3:12 must, for the spiritual lessons being drawn, refer back to that which is literal; and for these spiritual lessons it seems apparent that the reference can only be to "Solomon's temple," where special, specific reference is made *to pillars in the temple*.

(The only other temple built during Old Testament days was "Zerubbabel's temple," built following the Babylonian captivity. Centuries later, following a reconstructing process, beginning under Herod the Great, this temple became known as "Herod's temple"; and this is the temple which was destroyed in 70 A.D.)

The grandeur of Solomon's temple so far overshadowed the grandeur of Zerubbabel's temple that the latter was looked upon as "nothing" in comparison to the former [Haggai 2:3].)

The son of David, Solomon, built a temple for the Lord; and the greater Son of David, Christ, is presently building a temple.

Revelation concerning the construction of the former has been given in such a manner that great spiritual truths can be drawn pertaining to the construction of the latter. The prophets recorded far more than just Jewish history. Their writings, recorded under the supernatural direction of the Holy Spirit, are fraught with significance and meaning.

When Solomon built the temple following his ascension to the throne, he had a worker of brass from Tyre construct two massive pillars for the porch. Solomon named one of these pillars "Jachin," meaning *establish*; and he named the other pillar "Boaz," meaning *strength* (I Kings 7:13-21).

The overcomers in Philadelphia were promised future positions with Christ which appear to be described by the meanings of the

names given to the two pillars in Solomon's temple.

The promise to the overcomers that they would "go no more out" refers to their fixed position as pillars in the temple; and with the two massive pillars in Solomon's temple in view, saying that overcoming Christians will be placed in the position of pillars in the temple is saying that these Christians will occupy *sure, secure, firmly established* positions of *strength* and *power*. And positions of this nature, in complete accordance with Rev. 3:12, will be realized when they rule and reign as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.

The manner in which Christians will conduct themselves during that coming day should be thought of in the same sense as the manner in which Christ will conduct Himself.

In the words of the psalmist, Christ, during His rule over the nations, will "break them with a rod of iron" and "dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. 2:8, 9); and in the overcomer's promise to the Church in Thyatira, Christians are promised that their coming rule will be conducted after the same fashion:

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he [the overcoming Christian] shall rule them [the nations] with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26, 27).

The position which Christians are to occupy today is, in many respects, diametrically opposed to the position which Christians are to occupy during the coming age. Matt. 5:5 states, "Blessed are *the meek* [present]: for they shall *inherit the earth* [future]."

The word "meek" refers to one's present manner of living, in view of a future inheritance. This word has to do with being "gentle," "humble," or "unassuming" as one patiently endures the trials and testings of life.

The same word is used in Matt. 21:5 relative to Christ at the time He rode into Jerusalem as Israel's *King, anticipating His rejection and crucifixion*:

"Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, *meek*, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

This verse is a fulfillment of Zech. 9:9, where the word "lowly" is used in the translation rather than "meek."

"Lowly" is the translation of a Hebrew word meaning *poor* or *afflicted*, and this word refers to the position Christ assumed on our behalf. He Who was rich became poor that we, *through Him*, might be made rich (II Cor. 8:9).

The sufferings of Isaiah chapter fifty-three are in view, *but these sufferings do NOT stand alone; the glory MUST follow the sufferings, as the day follows the night* (Luke 24:26; Heb. 12:2; I Peter 3:13).

When Christ was upon earth the first time, appearing to Israel as *the meek* or *lowly* One, He allowed the governing Gentile power of that day to array Him as a mock King. He was clothed in purple, crowned with a wreath made from thorns, and given a reed for a sceptre. He was then mocked, spat upon, and smitten (Matt. 27:27-31). *He, the One destined to break the nations with a rod of iron, ALLOWED this to happen.*

WHY? Simply because it was NOT time for Him to take the sceptre.

This occurred during the time of His sufferings and humiliation, which was during the Times of the Gentiles (the interval during which Gentile nations hold the sceptre); and *NOT ONLY MUST events surrounding His sufferings and humiliation (past) be fulfilled, BUT the Times of the Gentiles (presently continuing) MUST be fulfilled as well before Christ can come into His glory.*

Christ remained in a completely "unassuming, gentle, humble" state while being persecuted unjustly at the time of His first coming.

However, the day is coming when He will return and be seen by the world after an entirely different fashion.

He will *THEN* be seated upon a "white horse" rather than an "ass," and He *WILL* come forth to "judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11ff).

The words "meek" or "lowly" *will NOT fit His character at all in that day, for He WILL take the sceptre and break the nations* (cf. Ps. 2:6-9; 110:2-5; Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45).

In this light, Christians, as *partakers* with Christ (I Peter 4:12, 13; cf. Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 2:12), are to conduct their affairs (both present and future) after the same manner in which Christ conducted and will conduct His affairs (both past and future).

The government of the earth, continuing under Gentile dominion, is *NO more* the Christians' concern during the present time than it was Christ's concern when He was upon earth almost two millenniums ago.

Christians *are NOT* to hold the sceptre today. Rather, they are to assume the same position relative to world government which Christ assumed.

They are to patiently endure the trials and testings of life in an "unassuming, humble, gentle" spirit; and if called upon to so do, they are to continue in this manner through any unjust treatment which God may allow to befall His people, *looking forward to ANOTHER DAY — the day when Christians, with Christ, will hold the sceptre and break the nations.*

2) Engravings on the Pillars

Christ returning to the earth at the termination of the Tribulation, as the conquering King, will put down all power and authority. He will have "on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords"; and He will possess a "new name" which no man will know (Rev. 3:12; 19:12, 16).

In the ancient world, the columns of cities were often inscribed with the names of conquerors, and this appears to be the thought in Rev. 3:12. Christ will inscribe upon the pillars of the temple (upon overcoming [conquering] Christians) three things:

- 1) "The name of my God."
- 2) "The name of the city of my God...new Jerusalem."
- 3) "My new name."

This will be brought to pass after Christ puts down all present ruling powers/authorities and assumes, with His co-heirs, governmental control over the earth.

At that time Christians will be intimately identified, after the fashion revealed in Rev. 3:12, with *God the Father, God the Son, and the new Jerusalem*. And they will then exercise *sure, secure, firmly established* positions of *strength and power* as they rule with the Son from the new Jerusalem.

It seems evident that the new Jerusalem will be a satellite city of the earth during the coming age. Overcoming Christians, along with a select group of Old Testament and Tribulation saints (those who qualified to rule from the heavens), will dwell in this city.

This, however, is *ONLY* for the coming age. Once the new heavens and the new earth have been brought into existence (Rev. 21, 22), the new Jerusalem will rest upon the new earth and so remain throughout the ages of eternity. And during these ages, the new Jerusalem will continue to be the dwelling place of a segment of the redeemed and continue as the center of governmental power and authority.

The new Jerusalem is described in Rev. 21:9-21, with additional information concerning the city and its inhabitants given in the verses following (21:22-22:21). This city measures about fifteen hundred miles in length, in breadth, and in height; it is constructed of "pure gold, like unto clear glass"; and a wall over two hundred feet high, constructed of "jasper" (with "twelve gates" constructed of "twelve pearls," resting on foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones), surrounds the city. Certain things are also stated concerning the "street" of the city, the "temple" in the city, the "light" for the city, the "tree of life," and a "pure river of water of life."

The fact that the length, breadth, and height of the new Jerusalem are equal should not lead one to conclude that the city has been constructed in the shape of a cube, with possibly numerous tiers or levels to the city within the cube.

No geometric shape is given in Scripture; and it would seem to be more in keeping with that which is revealed to think of the new Jerusalem in the same sense as walled cities in the Middle East down through history, with one exception — the possibility of an elevated central point (elevated to equal the length and breadth), housing the center of government (allowing matters to remain as they have always existed in God's universal government, *a rule from the heavens over a domain*).

Many things seem to fit much better by viewing the city after this fashion (*e.g.*, the wall surrounding the city, the gates to the city, the street in the city, and the river flowing out from the

throne of God, appear to depict the city built on a single level [Rev. 21:17-21; 22:1, 2]).

Another thing which should be understood about the new Jerusalem is the fact that this city was brought into existence either prior to or during the days of Abraham (Heb. 11:16) and has, since that time, been associated with *Abraham and his seed*.

The seed of Abraham in the Old Testament, to whom heavenly promises and blessings pertained, were *the lineal descendants of Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons*. And the seed of Abraham, to whom these same heavenly promises and blessings pertain today, are *Christians* (Gal. 3:16-18, 26-29; cf. Gen. 22:17, 18; Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

BUT, in reality, Abraham and a segment of his seed from both dispensations will ultimately enter into the proffered heavenly promises and blessings.

(Though the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel and is presently being offered to a new nation — *the one new man* “in Christ,” comprised of Christians [cf. Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10] — *certain Old Testament saints aspired to and qualified to occupy heavenly positions in the theocracy prior to that time when the kingdom was taken from Israel.*

And the nation of Israel, forfeiting the right to rule from heavenly places in later years, *CANNOT do away with the promises made to these Old Testament saints*. Regardless of that which the nation did at Christ's first coming, *these Old Testament saints WILL realize that which has been promised to them.*)

The “place” presently being prepared for Christians in John 14:2, 3 has *NOTHING* to do with a supposed present construction of the new Jerusalem. In the “Father's house are many mansions [lit., ‘abiding places’],” and Christ has gone into heaven to “prepare a place” for Christians *in the Father's house*.

The new Jerusalem is *a city in the Father's house, NOT the Father's house*. His “house” includes *ALL under His sovereign control*, and in the broadest sense of the word would include the entire universe.

However, Biblical revelation concerns itself with *this earth*; and Christ going away “to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return” relates itself to *governmental control over the earth*.

The "place" which Christ has gone away to prepare for Christians is *a position with Him in this kingdom.*

Overcoming Christians *in that coming day will dwell in the new Jerusalem and occupy their place with Christ upon His throne, in complete accordance with that which is revealed in the overcomer's promise in Rev. 3:12.*

7

Seated on the Throne

Christ and His Co-Heirs Together

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

The first thing which a person *MUST* get fixed in his mind when studying the message to the Church in Laodicea is the fact that the Spirit of God is addressing *Christians*. The unsaved are *NOT in view at all; they CANNOT be in view*. This message is to a *Church* (vv. 14-22), and the New Testament knows *NOTHING* about unsaved people having a part in the formation of a Church (*i.e.*, saved and unsaved together).

WORKS, with a view to either overcoming or being overcome, are seen throughout the passage. And, with spiritual values involved, this is a realm into which the unsaved CANNOT enter.

Thus it is with the structure of each of the other six messages to the six Churches preceding the message to the Church in Laodicea.

In this respect, the Church in Laodicea is *NO different* than the Church in Philadelphia, or any of the other Churches. *ALL seven messages are to Christians, to those “in Christ”; and ALL have to do with WORKS, resulting in Christians either overcoming or being overcome.*

Too many people deal with certain problems which arise in the Christian life in a rather loose manner. When, for example, sin manifests itself in the life of an individual claiming to be a Christian, one of the most common ways which other Christians often deal with the matter is to begin questioning the person's salvation.

The thought often centers around the premise that if a person is saved he will follow a certain course of action; and if he doesn't follow this course of action, his conduct reveals that he was never really saved in the first place.

This type thinking though is *completely contrary* to any Scriptural teaching on salvation by grace through faith. It is a *corruption* of the pure gospel of the grace of God, *for works have been introduced into a realm where works CANNOT exist* (cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 11:6).

A person can NO more show by his works (any type actions on his part) that he has been saved than he can perform works to be saved in the first place. Works CANNOT enter after any fashion, either preceding or following the time one is saved.

A person CANNOT perform works to be saved.

A person CANNOT perform works to stay saved.

And a person CANNOT perform works to show that he has been saved.

Salvation is *by grace through faith* apart from works, and it *MUST* forever so remain. As in Jonah 2:9, "*Salvation is of the Lord*" (cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5).

The Church in Laodicea is described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

This description applies to a group of "lukewarm" Christians, "rich" in the things of the world, that Christ is about to "spue ['vomit']" out of His "mouth ['stomach']" (vv. 15-17). The scene within that portion of Christendom depicted by the Church in Laodicea, in this respect, is one portrayed as producing sickness to the very stomach.

These Christians had been called into existence with the things of the coming age in view.

But, instead, they had prostituted their high calling through their intimate association with the things of this present age, the present world system under Satan. And it is the One Who made this calling possible, through His sacrifice on Calvary, Who is associated with sickness in the respect that it is set forth in this passage.

Being vomited out of the stomach has no reference to eternal verities, for such *are NOT in view*. The message is to those who already possess eternal life, and *it is life for the coming age ALONE which is in view*.

The scene in these verses anticipates the judgment seat of Christ, with Christians standing *naked and ashamed* in the presence of Christ (v. 18). Such Christians will be rejected for positions with Christ on the throne, with the attitude which Christ exhibits toward their revealed works expressed in very vivid language.

However, there is another side to the picture presented in these verses. Despite the attitude of such Christians as set forth in the message to the Church in Laodicea, Christ still extends an invitation for them to “repent.”

They have forsaken Him; *BUT, He has NOT forsaken them.*

Christ still holds out before them proffered crowns, necessary for positions on the throne with Him in that coming day.

It is *NOT* too late for them to buy “gold tried in the fire” (that they might be rich), clothe themselves in “white raiment” (that the shame of their nakedness *might NOT be manifested*), and anoint their “eyes with eyesalve” (that they might see).

Christ stands at the door of the lukewarm Church of today and knocks, as He stood at the door of the Laodicean Church in Revelation chapter three after the same fashion; and the invitation to the individual Christian within the Church — whether in the Laodicean Church then, or the Laodicean Church of today — is the same:

“...if *any man* hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him [not come into that individual, but come inside the Church to that individual], and will sup with him, and he with me” (v. 20b; cf. vv. 18, 19).

The End, Goal

The present dispensation will one day end, be brought to a close; and Scripture presents the Church at the termination of this dispensation in a dual respect. The messages to the Churches in Philadelphia and Laodicea present these two facets within

Christendom, forming God's Own commentary concerning the concluding period of Church history, *with the Church in Laodicea becoming MORE and MORE prominent as the age nears its completion.*

There will always be faithful Christians, extending right on up to the time of the rapture. God will always have a faithful remnant (*cf.* I Kings 19:14, 18; Rev. 11:3ff), a witness on earth, seen by the presence of the Church in Philadelphia. But Christendom, by large — the Church as a whole, foreshadowed by the Church in Laodicea — through an unholy alliance with the world, will, for all practical purposes, *stand ALONE* as the Church in the world at the end of the dispensation.

1) *Beginning and Working of the Matter in History*

As seen in previous chapters dealing with the seven Churches in Asia during John's day, *there is an event in Church history which precipitated conditions as they exist today, almost two millenniums later.*

And that event was the placing of leaven in the three measures of meal by the woman in Matt. 13:33.

Once this act had been accomplished, which appears to have occurred very early in the history of the Church, the end of the matter was set. The leaven would work in the meal "till the whole was leavened," and such would ultimately result in conditions existing in the Church at the conclusion of the dispensation which would parallel those existing in the first century Church in Laodicea.

"Leaven" in Scripture has to do with that which is *evil, vile, corrupt.*

The Israelites, immediately following the Passover, were told to "put away leaven" out of their houses (Ex. 12:14-20); Jesus told His disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. 16:6); and Christians are told, "Purge out therefore the old leaven" (I Cor. 5:7), with an allusion made in the following verse (v. 8) to the feast of unleavened bread in Exodus chapter twelve (showing a type-antitype arrangement of the teaching set forth).

The leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 was destined to ultimately corrupt the entire mass.

And this is *EXACTLY* the climactic time we are nearing (or, seemingly already at) in Church history today. *The whole* is to be permeated by the working of the leaven, and the message to the Church in Laodicea shows *the end result of the matter*.

Leaven actually works best in a place *where the temperature is not too hot nor too cold, and the lukewarm state of the Laodicean Church points to ideal conditions after this fashion*. And the leaven, after many centuries of deteriorating work, *will be brought into the advanced stages of its action and do its MOST damaging work within the lukewarm confines of the Laodicean Church near the end of the dispensation*.

The working of this leaven will be so complete that the question is asked in Luke 18:8, "...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith ['the faith'] on the earth?"

The response to the question, designated by the wording in the Greek text, is *negative*. The Son of Man *will NOT* find "the faith" upon the earth when He returns. Rather, He will find conditions as depicted in Rev. 3:14ff.

"The faith" in Luke 18:8 can only be synonymous with *faith* exhibited by Christians in passages such as I Tim. 6:12 and Jude 3.

This is the *faith connected with laying hold on eternal life [life for the age]* in I Timothy, the *faith in opposition to the great apostasy of the latter days* in Jude, the *faith destroyed by the working of the leaven within the lukewarm confines of the Laodicean Church, producing the conditions described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."*

This is *the reason* Christendom exists as it is seen today.

The corruption brought about by the leaven, destroying "the faith," has produced a condition in which the return of Christ is either *NOT taught at all* or it is invariably taught in such a way that things surrounding "the faith" *are NOT dealt with*.

(Christendom today, from a humanistic standpoint, can be seen in all types of stages, covering a wide panorama of differences.

For example, there are Churches which are either exclusively homosexual or churches openly accepting homosexuals into their fellowship, both seeing homosexuality as simply an alternate lifestyle [in line with the world's view].

Then there are very liberal Churches which bear little resemblance to that which Scripture teaches; there are more orthodox-type Churches which are seemingly teaching correct Biblical doctrine in a number of areas; and there are Churches which pride themselves on their fundamentalism, etc.

But there is ONE thing which, with rare exception, ALL of them have in common, revealing their true identity — as being Laodicean, NOT Philadelphian. With rare exception, NONE of them either know anything about or will have anything to do with the Word of the Kingdom, the central message of Scripture which the leaven has been centering its attack around for two millenniums.

In fact, many of the Churches which pride themselves on their fundamentalism, unlike many of the more liberal Churches which are out of the mainstream of things in this respect, *will often go out of their way to fight teachings surrounding the Word of the Kingdom.*

And, because of the working of the leaven throughout two millenniums of time, the preceding is perfectly understandable.

The leaven knows NO boundaries within Christendom, ONLY ONE object: Destroy ANY and ALL teaching pertaining to the Word of the Kingdom.

True fundamentalism in Christianity *would necessitate an adherence to the fundamentals of the Christian faith, which, of necessity, would have to center around the Word of the Kingdom. This is the way it WAS in Ephesus [the first of the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3], UNTIL they left their first love.*

And this is the way it *MUST be* in any Church today which would look upon itself as *Philadelphian* rather than *Laodicean* — which would require an adherence to or a return to that taught and believed in Ephesus, *to true fundamentalism, BEFORE the Church left its first love.*

Between these two points, *there is NO middle ground. A person, or a complete Church, is either for Christ or against Christ [Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23].*

A Church is either *Philadelphian* [centers its teaching around the Word of the Kingdom] or *Laodicean* [centers its teaching around other than the Word of the Kingdom]. And the latter, *regardless of how fundamental they might appear to be, is STILL Laodicean, NOT Philadelphian.*)

The very reason for the existence of Christians upon the earth *is inseparably linked to the coming kingdom.*

Christians are the ones destined to occupy the throne with Christ; and this is *the heart of that which has come under attack through the working of the leaven.*

Every Christian is in line to inherit the rights of the firstborn, the rights of primogeniture; and these rights, in their entirety, *have to do with positions in the coming kingdom.*

EVERYTHING moves toward that day when Christ will take the kingdom; and this appears to be something viewed in a somewhat similar respect by BOTH the world around us and by the worldly-minded Laodicean Christians.

("The world" though really doesn't possess a spiritual capacity to understand the things surrounding that day when Christ takes the kingdom. All that "the world" can know is *fact* concerning the matter, *i.e.*, that Christ one day will take the kingdom.

The worldly-minded Laodicean Christians, on the other hand, possess a capacity for spiritual truth. But the things surrounding that day when Christ takes the kingdom *are of little to no interest to them.* They usually know little more [often no more] about the matter than "the world" itself.

They, as the world, are often quite content with the status quo.)

2) Goal and Conclusion of the Matter in Prophecy

When the birth of the nation of Israel occurred in Egypt, followed by this nation being removed from Egypt, there was a *purpose, a goal*, behind the matter.

Israel, as *God's firstborn son*, was to be removed from one land, placed in another, and realize the rights of primogeniture in that land.

Israel was to enter into the land of Canaan and rule over the Gentile nations of the earth. And not only was Israel to rule after this fashion, but Israel was also to be "a kingdom of priests" through whom all the Gentile nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5, 6).

Israel being placed in this position would bring about the fulfillment of one part of Gen. 22:17 (*the earthly seed of Abraham* ["*the sand* which is upon the seashore"]) would "possess the gate of his enemies [rule over his enemies]"); and, through this means, Gen. 22:18 could be fulfilled insofar as the earthly aspect of the kingdom was concerned ("And in thy seed shall all the nations [all the Gentiles] of the earth be blessed").

(For the earthly aspect of the kingdom to be brought into full fruition though, the entirety of Gen. 22:17, 18 would have to be brought to pass. The heavenly aspect of the kingdom would have to be brought into existence as well.

The seed of Abraham would have to possess the gate of the enemy in both *heavenly* and *earthly* realms. The removal of Satan and his angels from the heavenly realm of the kingdom in the middle of the Tribulation and their being bound and cast into an abyss at the end of the Tribulation, an abyss which is sealed for 1,000 years, anticipates this [Rev. 12:7; 20:1-3].

And the establishment of the kingdom in an overall respect demands this, for Scripture clearly reveals that *BOTH the earthly seed of Abraham [Israel] and the heavenly seed of Abraham [the Church] will reign with Christ in the kingdom at this time — one upon earth, the other in the heavens.*)

When God called the Church into existence, as when He called Israel into existence, there was *a purpose/a goal* behind His calling; and the thought of eternal redemption in connection with Christianity (which too often is erroneously made the key issue) doesn't even begin to deal with the matter.

Christians have been called into existence (they have become possessors of eternal life) in order *to realize an inheritance "reserved in heaven," associated with a "salvation" to be revealed* (I Peter 1:3-11). Christians have been called into existence to be removed from one land, be placed in another, *and realize the rights of primogeniture in that land.*

Christians are to inhabit a heavenly land and occupy the throne as co-regents with Christ when He rules the nations with a rod of iron.

And Christians, comprising "the Church of the firstborn [a called out group of firstborn sons]" — as Israel fulfilling the rights of primogeniture on earth — are to exercise a priestly function in this rule. Christians are not only to be "kings" but they are to also be "priests" in that day (Heb. 12:23; Rev. 5:10; cf. Ex. 19:5, 6).

The nations are not only *to be ruled* by Christians (from a heavenly sphere) but the nations are *to receive spiritual blessings* through the position which Christians will occupy as well (as Christians exercise the full rights of the firstborn); and, as this

rule progresses through Israel on earth (as a restored and believing Israel is placed at the head of the nations), *spiritual blessings* will flow out to the Gentile nations through Israel (as Israel exercises the full rights of the firstborn).

Christians being placed in this position in the heavens will effect the fulfillment of one part of Gen. 22:17 (*the heavenly seed* of Abraham [*“the stars of the heaven”*]) will “possess the gate of his enemies [rule over his enemies]”; and Israel being placed in this position on earth will effect the fulfillment of the other part of Gen. 22:17 as well (*the earthly seed* of Abraham [*“the sand which is upon the seashore”*]) will “possess the gate of his enemies”.

Then Gen. 22:18 will be fulfilled in relation to both heavenly and earthly aspects of the kingdom (“And in thy seed shall all the nations [Gentile nations] of the earth be blessed” [cf. Gal. 3:17, 18, 29]).

And this will bring a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees at the time of his call (Gen. 12:1-3), long before either Israel or the Church was ever brought into existence.

Genesis 22:17, 18 will, thus, find its proper fulfillment in the coming age when God’s firstborn sons (Christ, Israel, and the Church [following the adoption]) occupy their proper places in relation to the earth as they exercise the rights of primogeniture.

Israel will occupy the earthly sphere of the kingdom in the capacity set forth in these verses; *the Church will occupy the heavenly sphere of the kingdom* in the capacity set forth in these same verses; and *Christ will rule in both spheres of the kingdom*.

Christ will rule *from His Own throne in the heavenly Jerusalem*, with Christians occupying positions as co-heirs on the throne with Him (Rev. 3:21; cf. Rom. 8:14-21); and Christ will also rule *from David’s throne in the earthly Jerusalem*, in the midst of His people Israel (Luke 1:31-33).

And within this complete structure of the kingdom (heavenly and earthly spheres), *the seed of Abraham* will “possess the gate” of the enemy, and the Gentile nations of the earth will “be blessed.”

The nation of Israel in the Old Testament moved beyond the things surrounding the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt and advanced toward the land of Canaan. However, the actions of

"many" brought displeasure to the Lord; and these individuals were overthrown in the wilderness, short of realizing the purpose for their deliverance from Egypt (I Cor. 10:1-5). They were overthrown on *the right side* of the blood but on *the wrong side* of the goal of their calling.

Thus it is with Christians during the present dispensation. They have appropriated the blood of the Passover Lamb and placed themselves in a position to move toward a heavenly land, wherein their calling will be realized.

But the actions of "many" will bring about the displeasure of the Lord, resulting in their overthrow, short of realizing the purpose for their deliverance from this world. Their overthrow will occur on *the right side* of the blood but on *the wrong side* of the goal of their calling.

The Laodicean Church sets forth the far-reaching heights of failure on the part of the Church in this respect.

The Church in the latter days of the dispensation, saturated through and through with leaven, will be filled with Christians *having NO regard for the purpose surrounding their salvation.*

And one day, appearing at the judgment seat in this condition, they will suffer the fate awaiting those in the Church in Laodicea who spurned the call to "repent." *They will be REJECTED for positions with Christ in the kingdom, FAILING to realize the very purpose for their salvation.*

The Overcomer's Promise

The promise that the overcomer will one day be allowed to sit with Christ on His throne comprises the pinnacle toward which all of the overcomer's promises move.

ALL of the promises are *millennial* in their scope of fulfillment, and *ALL* have to do with Christians occupying future positions as co-heirs with Christ. *ALL* point to and find their fulfillment in Christians exalted, with Christ, to the place for which they were called into existence.

Overcoming Christians occupying the throne with Christ *MUST* be properly equipped to fulfill all the functions of the office which

they are to hold. Merely being seated on the throne in fulfillment of the seventh and last of the overcomer's promises will be insufficient in and of itself.

All the things contained in the first six overcomer's promises MUST also be realized in the lives of Christians as they occupy positions on the throne, for ONLY in this manner will Christians come into possession of all which God requires for those ruling as co-heirs with His Son.

1) Overcoming or Being Overcome

The analogy given in Rev. 3:21 has to do with Christians patterning their lives after Christ's life, with *overcoming* and *the throne* in view.

Christ overcame and is presently occupying a position with the Father on His throne, and Christians are to overcome and one day occupy a position with the Son on His throne. The exact wording of the text is, "...to him that overcometh...even as I also overcame..."

A conflict, ending in victory, is in view FIRST; and THEN the throne comes into view. The latter is NOT attained without the former.

Christ's overcoming is associated with His *sufferings* during the time of His shame, reproach, and rejection; and Scripture makes the matter very clear that overcoming for Christians is to be no different.

Christ has "suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps"; *and overcoming Christians MUST enter into these sufferings.*

Regarding this matter, Christians are told:

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are *partakers of Christ's sufferings*; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:12, 13; cf. I Peter 2:21-23).

The thought is very simple:

Christians are to follow the example which Christ has left, knowing, as He knew, that connected with the SUFFERINGS is the shame, reproach, and rejection; BUT, beyond all of this lies the GLORY (Heb. 12:1, 2).

In Revelation chapters two and three, *overcoming* is with a view to *the throne*; and in portions of Scripture such as the Book of I Peter, *suffering* is with a view to *glory*. *Overcoming* is inseparably connected with *suffering*, as is *the throne* with *glory*.

The sufferings of Christ find their beginning in the fact that He "came unto his own ['own things'], and his own ['own people'] received him not" (John 1:11).

(There is a distinction in the Greek text between two words in this verse which is not brought out in the English text at all. The gender of the first word translated "own" is neuter [pl.], indicating "things"; but the gender of the second is masculine [pl.], indicating "people.")

The "things" to which Christ came refer to those things which were rightfully His: the Davidic throne, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc.; and the "people" to whom He came refer to His brethren after the flesh, the nation of Israel.

Christ suffered at the hands of His Own people, among others, because of things which were rightfully His, to which He came.

ALL the sufferings of Christ, after some fashion, were associated with His "own things"; and coming into possession of His "own things" is something which *MUST NOT ONLY follow His sufferings BUT is something which CAN ONLY be millennial in its scope of fulfillment.*

His "own things" are intimately linked with His coming rule over the earth. He was born "King of the Jews," He presented Himself to Israel as the nation's "King," He was crucified "King of the Jews," and when He returns it will be as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Matt. 2:2; 21:5; 27:37; Rev. 19:16). Christ *at THAT time, NOT before, will come into the realization of His Kingship and come into possession of His Own things.*

While here on earth the first time, at the beginning of His earthly ministry, Christ met the incumbent ruler (Satan) face to face in order to reveal that He was fully qualified to redeem that which the first Adam had forfeited in the fall. Such included not only fallen man ultimately being placed back in the position for which he was originally created but it included the restoration of the ruined creation itself (the forfeited domain, which was rightfully His).

Following this, Christ suffered rejection time and time again by the Jewish people; and the entire matter was climaxed by His being arrayed as a mock King by those to whom the Jewish religious leaders had delivered Him — the Gentile power of that day, the Romans.

Arraying Christ as a mock king, they placed a robe on Him, a crown of thorns on His head, and a reed for a sceptre in His right hand.

Then they bowed the knee to Him in a mocking fashion, ridiculing His true position as King, spitting upon Him, and taking the reed and striking Him on the head.

And crucifixion then followed (Matt. 27:27ff).

During all of this, His “own things” *were held in abeyance*. There was no attempt on Christ’s part to interfere with the incumbent powers and authorities, whether of Satan and his angels holding the sceptre in the heavens or of the Gentile nations holding the sceptre here on earth.

It was NOT time for Him to take the sceptre. He suffered through all of this, climaxed by Calvary itself.

He has overcome, and the call has gone forth for Christians to overcome *as He overcame*. And overcoming, as He overcame, looks ahead to that future day when Christ will come into possession of His “own things,” *with overcoming Christians ascending the throne with Him*.

The things of that day though are *future* in their entirety and have *NOTHING* to do with man during the present day and time.

Man during the present day and time is still living during the day of Christ’s shame, reproach, and rejection; and the attitude which Christians are to exhibit toward the “things” to which Christ came *MUST* parallel the attitude which Christ took toward these things when He was upon earth the first time.

Involvement in the affairs of the present world system *does NOT* become Christians at all.

Such involvement would result *in their being overcome by the world rather than their overcoming the world*.

Such involvement would be *occupying an opposite position to that which Christ occupied relative to a world controlled by Satan and his angels through the Gentile nations*.

The words, "as I also overcame," and the words, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps," *MUST be pondered and heeded by any Christian aspiring to be an overcomer.*

When Christ returns to earth the second time, He will once again come to *His Own things* and to *His Own people*; *BUT, this time He will come into possession of His Own things, and His Own people will receive Him.*

Many of the things to which Christ came in the past and will come in the future, given to Him by the Father, are presently being extended to Christians. Overcoming Christians are to inherit with Christ; and, insofar as the heavenly aspect of the kingdom is concerned, these Christians are to participate with Christ in the things to which He came almost two millenniums ago.

Christians occupying their proper place in Christ's rejection, shame, and reproach today will result in these same Christians occupying their proper place in Christ's acceptance, glory, and exaltation yet future.

2) *My Throne, My Father's Throne*

The Son is *presently* seated with His Father on His Father's throne (Ps. 110:1). *BUT*, at the end of Man's Day — for the duration of the Millennium, when the Lord's Day will exist on earth — Christ will sit on *His Own throne*; and it will be during this time that the overcomer's promise in Rev. 3:21 will be fulfilled.

Following the Millennium, after all things have been brought under subjection to Christ, *the kingdom will be delivered up* "to God, even the Father." At that time the Son will also Himself "be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all [*lit.*, '... that God may be all things in all of these things']" (I Cor. 15:24-28).

The Son's throne will then cease to exist as a separate throne, and *there will be ONE throne* — "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1, 3).

The Father's throne is the point from which God presently administers His rule throughout the entire universe.

Messianic angels — Satan among them, though as a rebel ruler — presently rule under God throughout God's creation (Job 1:6;

2:1; Ezek. 28:14). And the earth, in this respect, is one of numerous provinces in God's kingdom which are ruled by messianic angels.

Scripture clearly infers that numerous provinces (worlds) exist throughout the universe, over which messianic angels rule.

The scene presented in Job chapters one and two is that of Satan appearing in the midst of certain other angels who can only be his equals (*i.e.*, other messianic angels who rule under God over other provinces, as Satan rules the earth under God). And it appears that within the sphere of God's government of the universe these messianic angels are summoned into His presence at scheduled times in what could be called *congresses of the sons of God*.

(Man, during the past few years, has, for the first time, been able to look through his powerful telescopes and see some of the other solar systems in his own galaxy [similar to the one in which he lives].

Man now knows, through his own scientific achievements and discoveries, that other solar systems exist in the universe. And the more man views the heavens with his increasingly powerful telescopes, the more he realizes that these other solar systems are far more numerous than he at first thought.

But this is as far as man can go with the matter within his science.

Scripture though *begins beyond the point* where man presently finds himself. Scripture begins at the point of revealing that messianic angels rule over provinces in the universe, simply inferring that other provinces exist [provinces other than the earth, provinces which man is presently discovering]. And these can only be other provinces in other solar systems [*i.e.*, planets revolving around other stars (the earth's sun is a medium-size star)], not only in our galaxy but evidently in all the estimated billions of galaxies scattered throughout the universe.

Scripture no more attempts to prove the existence of these other provinces than it does the existence of God Himself. As with the existence of God, Scripture simply deals with these other provinces from the standpoint that they exist, providing revelation beginning at this point.

It is left to finite man to believe that he has wrought some great astronomical achievement through recent findings, made possible by his use of more powerful telescopes and an orbiting telescope.

Man though, in his scientific achievements in this realm, *has NOT even arrived at the point where Scripture, dealing with these things, begins; NOR can man ever arrive at this point through his science.*

Actually, man, in his quest for knowledge pertaining to all which exists in the universe, has yet to arrive at and believe or understand the simplicity of the very opening words of Scripture — "In the beginning God created the heaven ['heavens'] and the earth" [Gen. 1:1].

Had man simply turned to and believed the Scriptures in the beginning, rather than seeking answers through science, he could have learned millenniums ago things concerning how the universe was brought into existence [something which *he can NEVER discover* within his science] or how the universe is structured [something which *he can ONLY begin to discover* within his finite, scientific ability].

For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *The Most High Ruleth.*)

Christ is presently seated with His Father upon a throne from which the government of the universe is administered. The future government which Christ will administer from His Own throne though will be limited to the earth over which Satan presently rules, for He is to replace Satan and rule over the same domain.

The other messianic angels are not in view at all in this sphere of activity. They administer affairs over provinces unrelated to Satan's domain and unrelated to the reason for the appearances of the first man, the first Adam, and the second Man, the last Adam.

The creation of man, in keeping with the entire matter, is peculiar to the earth. Man's creation is *directly related to the governmental administration of THIS earth*; and once man finds himself in the position which he was created to occupy (when he finds himself seated on the throne with the second Man, the last Adam, ruling over the earth), his rule will have to do with *THIS earth ALONE*.

Angelic rule on the earth will THEN end, for man will replace angels (Heb. 2:5); *BUT, angelic rule elsewhere in the universe will remain completely unaffected*. Angelic rulers elsewhere in the universe *had NO involvement* with Satan's fall and man's subsequent creation.

Satan and his angels are the ones who rebelled, resulting in their disqualification to rule and necessitating their ultimate removal. Satan sought a regal position above that in which God had placed him; he sought a regal position above the other messianic angels; he sought to occupy a position in which he would

be like God Himself, from which he could administer power and authority throughout the universe.

He led a great host of the angels ruling under him in this rebellion, and his failure to succeed brought about a wrecked kingdom and the pronouncement of judgment (Gen. 1:1, 2a; Isa. 14:13-17).

The creation was later restored, and man was brought into existence *for the express purpose of taking the sceptre which Satan had forfeited.*

However, man's fall resulted in both *a ruined creature and a ruined creation*, necessitating the appearance at a later date of the second Man, the last Adam, with a view to the subsequent "restitution of all things" (Gen. 1:2b-28; 3:6, 7, 17, 18; Acts 3:21).

ONLY after all things have been restored will man realize his calling — *holding the sceptre while seated on the throne with Christ.*

ALL things relating to man — his creation, fall, redemption, and coming rule — are peculiarly related to the earth.

Thus, during the coming age, the only change in governmental affairs throughout God's universe will be in the sphere of Satan's present governmental administration — *his rule over the earth upon which man resides.*

On this province, man, realizing his high calling, will come into the position previously occupied by angels; but elsewhere in the universe, angelic rule over other provinces in the kingdom of God can only continue unchanged.

Concluding Thoughts:

Christendom, near the conclusion of this dispensation, *will be marked by one main feature, foretold almost two millenniums in advance: APOSTASY.* This is the situation revealed by the sequential arrangement of the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, the books of II Peter and Jude, and by portions of Scripture such as I Tim. 4:1ff and Luke 18:8.

The working of the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 *CANNOT* be checked or stopped within the lukewarm confines of the Laodicean Church of today.

Deterioration will continue UNTIL the whole has been leavened.

The people of God though *have NOT been left alone and helpless* against the deteriorating process of the leaven. God has promised that He will *NEVER leave NOR forsake* His people (Deut. 31:6; Heb. 13:5).

Christians are in possession of *God's Word* and *the indwelling Holy Spirit*; and a knowledge of this Word, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is *the ONE great protection, the ONLY protection*, which Christians possess against the false doctrine produced by the working of the leaven (*cf.* Isa. 8:20; John 16:13-15; 17:14; II Cor. 4:16; Phil. 1:6; Col. 3:10).

Then, as depicted in the message to the Church in Laodicea, Christ stands and knocks at the door of the lukewarm Church during the final eroding stages of the working of the leaven, extending an invitation *to ANY Christian who will heed His voice*.

This invitation, contextually, is with *a view to overcoming*; and overcoming is, in turn, with *a view to ultimately occupying a position with Christ on His throne*.

APPENDIX I

PRESENT CLEANSING FROM SIN

Significance of Christ's Present High Priestly Ministry

“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (I John 1:5-10).

(This third appendix will deal with three inseparably related parts of Scripture to show *EXACTLY what is involved in Christians keeping themselves clean, unspotted by the world, along with positive and negative consequences for Christian adherence or non-adherence.*

The Old Testament type will be dealt with first, *showing the God-established foundation, upon which ALL else on the subject MUST rest.*

Then, *drawing from the Old Testament type, Christ's act of washing the disciples feet near the close of His earthly ministry will be discussed, providing vital information for Christians today.*

Then, *continuing to draw from the Old Testament type, the place which Christians occupy in the whole of the matter will be discussed.)*

The Old Testament Type

Levitical priests in the Mosaic Economy were taken from the tribe of Levi, and these priests, upon their entrance into the priesthood to perform priestly functions, were given a bath. *Their complete bodies were bathed at this time, an act NEVER to be repeated (Ex. 29:4).*

Then, *once they had entered into their priestly ministry, washings of another type were to occur, which had to do with parts of the body, not with the whole body.*

And these washings were *SOLELY* for those whose complete bodies had previously been bathed. These were washings occurring during the course of their ministry as priests.

Priests ministering between the brazen altar in the courtyard and the Holy Place of the tabernacle became defiled during the course of their ministry. They still lived in a world where sin and death were present, and they still possessed the old sin nature.

Ministering under these conditions, this defilement was shown through their hands and feet becoming soiled, *necessitating cleansing.*

To provide this cleansing, there was a brazen laver in the courtyard of the tabernacle, located between the brazen altar and the Holy Place. This laver had upper and lower basins filled with water; and the priests, ministering between the brazen altar and the Holy Place, though their complete bodies had been bathed upon their entrance into the priesthood, had to stop and wash their hands and feet prior to entering into the Holy Place.

They had to stop at the brazen laver and wash that which had become soiled prior to entering into the place where there was a seven-leaved candlestick, a table of shewbread, an altar of incense, and a veil separating them from God's presence in the Holy of Holies (Ex. 30:18-21).

John 13:4-12

It was these established truths pertaining to washings within the Mosaic Economy which Jesus drew from in John 13:4-12 when He washed the disciples' feet.

In this account, Jesus, following supper, arose, laid aside His garments, girded Himself with a towel, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. But when He came to Peter, there was an adverse reaction.

Peter, in a very emphatic manner (a double negative appears in the Greek text), said:

“Thou shalt never [*lit.*, ‘never, not ever’] wash my feet” (v. 8a).

Jesus responded:

“If I wash [Gk., *nipto*, referring to a part of the body] thee not, thou has no part with me” (v. 8b).

This was near the end of Christ's earthly ministry, preceding His crucifixion. And Christ's ministry (along with the ministry of the disciples whom He had called and sent out) *had centered around ONE thing* — *an offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, conditioned upon the nation's repentance* (Matt. 4:17-25; 10:1-8).

And Christ's statement, within context, *could ONLY have been understood ONE way by the disciples*.

Unless the disciples allowed Christ to wash their feet, as He was demonstrating and doing, *they could have NO part with Him in the kingdom being proclaimed and offered to Israel*.

Peter, knowing that Christ was referring to a place in the kingdom with Him, and desiring one of these places above everything else, responded to Jesus' statement by saying:

“Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head” (v. 9).

As evident by Peter's response, *IF* allowing Christ to wash his feet was a prerequisite to his having a part with Christ in the kingdom, *THEN* he wanted to go beyond this.

Peter wanted Christ to wash his complete body, making absolutely sure that he would have a part with Him in the kingdom.

But Jesus responded:

“He that is washed [Gk., *louo*, referring to the complete body] needeth not save to wash [Gk., *nipto*, referring to part of the body] his feet, but is clean every whit...” (v. 10a).

Jesus could only have been alluding to washings of both the complete body and parts of the body experienced by the Levitical priests in the type (in the Septuagint translation [Greek translation] of the Book of Exodus, the words *louo* and *nipto* are used to show the same distinction seen in John 13:8-10 [cf. Ex. 29:4; 30:18-21; 40:12-15]).

And Jesus' actions in this passage in John's gospel, pointing to a future high priestly ministry which He was to occupy following His resurrection and ascension, would have to be understood in the light of this overall Old Testament type.

(Note that this act of washing the disciples' feet, as the washings in the O.T. type, had NO power in and of itself.

This washing, as all washings seen in Scripture, was symbolic of something else; and the power lay in that to which the act pointed, that which it foreshadowed.)

The washings associated with the Levitical priests in the Old Testament (a washing of the complete body, followed by washings of parts of the body), in turn, pointed to, foreshadowed respectively, both *Christ's past work at Calvary* and *His present work in the heavenly sanctuary*.

Christ died for our sins, providing a cleansing typified by the complete bath which the priests were given upon their entrance into the priesthood.

And Christ presently ministers as our High Priest to provide subsequent cleansings, typified by the subsequent cleansings at the laver in the type.

Thus, Christ, through washing the disciples' feet in John chapter thirteen, was demonstrating truths typically seen through the Levitical priests washing their hands and feet at the laver in the courtyard of the tabernacle as they carried out their priestly ministry on behalf of those forming the nation of Israel.

Then, the allusion to a washing of *the entire body* which Christ made as He was about to wash Peter's feet, was a reference to the *prior experience of the priests upon their entrance into the priesthood*.

And, as in the type, Christ's present ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is *solely for the saved*, for those who in the antitype of the

experience of the Levitical priests at the time of their entrance into the priesthood have already had their complete bodies washed, *NEVER to be repeated.*

Christ's present ministry is for those forming *the one new man* "in Christ," for those who have been saved in past time and are now in a position to receive cleansing from present defilement through Christ's present ministry in the sanctuary.

Thus, as in the type, Christ's present ministry *has NOTHING to do with the unsaved.*

The unsaved are dealt with *SOLELY on the basis of Christ's past work at Calvary — His death and shed blood.*

As previously stated, from a typical standpoint, the unsaved being dealt with in this manner is connected with the Levitical priests receiving *a complete bath upon their entrance into the priesthood, NOT with subsequent washing of the hands and feet.*

ONLY after a person has been saved, has passed from death unto life, can he be dealt with on the basis of Christ's present work in the sanctuary — performed by a living Christ, on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat.

(Jesus' statement in John 13:10, 11 is often used in an effort to show that Judas was not among those viewed as having been washed completely, as the other disciples, placing him in an unsaved state.

However, the passage *CAN'T* be understood in this manner, for it would be out of line with both Jesus' actions in this chapter and other Scriptures dealing with the disciples and their ministry.

It appears clear from John 13:12 — "after he had washed their feet" — that Christ washed the feet of *ALL twelve disciples, with NO distinction made between Judas and the other eleven in this respect. And He could NOT have included Judas among those whose feet He had washed apart from having looked upon Judas in the antitype of previously having had his complete body washed.*

Christ's act of washing the disciples' feet in John chapter thirteen foreshadowed His present ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, which *is for the saved ALONE.*

Thus, through this act of washing Judas' feet, Christ acknowledged something which is really not even an issue in the text [or any other text in Scripture for that matter] — that Judas was *a saved individual, NOT unsaved as is so often believed and taught.*

In this respect, John 13:10b, 11 would have to be understood in the sense of *Judas' uncleanness being associated with Christ's present actions* [washing a part of the body, following a complete bath]; and, as stated in the text, it had to do with Judas' future actions — betraying Christ [v. 11].

Judas' betrayal of Christ, mentioned in this verse, could, *in NO way*, be a grounds for questioning his salvation. If it were, salvation would be brought over into the realm of works, *where it CAN'T exist* [e.g., note that Peter denied Christ three times — a similar act in many respects (Matt. 26:58, 69-75); and his salvation *CAN'T* be brought into question for this denial, for *EXACTLY* the same reason that Judas' salvation *CAN'T* be brought into question for his betrayal].

It would really make no sense to associate Judas' actions *with saved-unsaved issues* [which have to be read into the text to do so].

On the other hand though, it would make perfect sense to associate his actions *with unfaithfulness* [as Peter's subsequent actions, also foretold by Jesus immediately before they occurred], which is really what the text deals with.

Then note Jesus' previous calling of Judas as one of the Twelve, to be numbered among those carrying the good news pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens to Israel.

It would be COMPLETELY UNTENABLE to believe that Jesus would call someone among the Twelve, who was spiritually dead, to carry a message necessitating spiritual life and understanding to a nation possessing spiritual life and capable of this type understanding.)

I John 1:5-2:2

The opening part of I John deals specifically with the same thing seen in John's gospel — *cleansing provided through Christ's present ministry in the sanctuary, drawing from the typology of the tabernacle and the ministry of the Levitical priests.*

And, with that being the case, *the ONLY way* in which this section of Scripture can be properly understood and explained is through continual reference to the type, given to shed light upon the antitype.

This section of Scripture begins with a reference to *light and darkness* (1:5-7a). Individuals either walk *in light* or *in darkness*, and two things exist for those walking in light which do not exist

for those walking in darkness:

- 1) They have fellowship with the Father and the Son.
- 2) They receive continuous cleansing from their sins.

Then, this section in I John goes on to explain this through dealing with *confession of sin* (1:7b-10) and *Christ's high priestly ministry* (2:1, 2).

(Note that both textually and contextually, I John 2:1, 2 *has to do with the saved, NOT with the unsaved*. The word "advocate" [v. 1] is a translation of *parakletos* in the Greek text [cf. John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; ref. Chapters III, IV in the author's book, *Search for the Bride*], and the word "propitiation" [v. 2] is a translation of *hilasmos* in the Greek text.

Hilasmos is derived from the same root form as the word for "mercy seat" [*hilasterion*] in Heb. 9:5. And Christ's high priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary, on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat, is what is in view in I John 2:1, 2.

"The whole world" at the end of verse two would have to be understood contextually. *Salvation by grace is NOT in view in the text or context*, and the expression would have to be understood in the same limited sense as seen in Col. 1:6, 23, *where salvation by grace is NOT in view either*.

Colossians 1:6, 23 has to do with the proclamation of Paul's gospel, "in all the world...to every creature which is under heaven." And Paul's gospel has to do with *a message for the saved, NOT the unsaved*.

Accordingly, the expressions, "in all the world" in Col. 1:6 and "the whole world" in I John 2:2, *are dealing, NOT with everyone worldwide, BUT with the saved worldwide.*)

Thus, this whole section in I John is about *keeping oneself clean through confession of sin, allowing an individual to walk in the light and have fellowship with the Father and with His Son*. And this is all made possible *through Christ's present ministry in the sanctuary, on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat*.

That seen in this section of Scripture can be properly understood and explained *ONLY* through referring back to the layout of the tabernacle and the ministry of the Levitical priests as they carried out their priestly duties.

Light existed ONLY ONE place in the tabernacle (aside from the fact that *God is Light* and dwelt in the Holy of Holies). *The ONLY light*

in the tabernacle came from the seven-leafed golden candlestick in the Holy Place. And *the ONLY WAY* a priest could enter into the Holy Place, where light existed, was to first wash his hands and feet at the laver in the courtyard.

ONLY THEN could he enter the place where light, a table of shewbread, an altar of incense, and a veil separating the person from God existed.

OTHERWISE, if he did not wash his hands and feet, he would find himself *on the wrong side of the laver*, separated from the light, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and the veil in the Holy Place. He, in the words of I John 1:6, would be *walking in darkness, separated from fellowship with the Father and with His Son*.

In this respect, two types of Christians are seen in the opening section of I John — *faithful* and *unfaithful* — those who allow Christ to wash their feet, and those who do not. And teachings surrounding the matter, to aid in one's understanding, are drawn from Old Testament typology.

APPENDIX II

THE PRESENT KINGDOM

*The Kingdom of the Heavens, Now
The Kingdom Covenanted to David, Past, Future*

“Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days...

Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince” (Dan. 10:12-14, 20, 21).

Daniel chapter ten presents certain insights into how the present kingdom of Satan is structured, along with the location of those administering power and authority in this kingdom.

In this chapter (vv. 4-20), a heavenly messenger who had been dispatched to Daniel on the earth from that part of the heavens where God resides and rules (“the uttermost parts of the north [a superlative in the Hebrew text]” — the northernmost point in the universe in relation to the earth [Isa. 14:13, ASV]) was detained at a point en route to the earth.

This messenger was detained in the heavens above the earth by “the prince of the kingdom of Persia.” Then Michael was dispatched from heaven, and the messenger remained there with “the kings of Persia” while Michael fought with the prince of Persia for his release (vv. 12, 13).

The picture presented is that of *powerful angels in the kingdom of Satan ruling the earth from a heavenly realm (a heavenly realm in relation to the earth) through counterparts in the human race on earth.*

There was a prince (a ruler) of Persia in the heavens, and there was a prince (a ruler) of Persia on the earth.

Then, in the heavens, there were lesser rulers associated with Persia (the kings of Persia); and the same would have been true in the earthly kingdom (*cf.* Dan. 2:39; 5:28-31; 7:5; 8:3-6, 20).

Beyond that, "the prince of Greece" is mentioned — another heavenly ruler, the angelic heavenly ruler over the Grecian kingdom on earth (v. 20). And the reason why attention is called to this heavenly ruler is easy to see and understand.

Daniel, throughout his book, deals with the kingdom of Babylon, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the days of Antichrist; and Dan. 10:20, "...the prince of Greece shall come," anticipated that day when Alexander the Great, in the Grecian kingdom on earth, would conquer the kingdom of Babylon under the Medes and the Persians (*cf.* Dan. 2:39; 7:6; 8:7, 8, 21, 22).

Thus, there is not only a breakdown of powers in the heavenly kingdom under Satan corresponding to a breakdown of powers in the different earthly kingdoms under fallen man but there is also a shifting of powers in the heavenly kingdom corresponding to a shifting of powers in the earthly kingdoms.

In this respect, any person occupying a position of power in any Gentile earthly kingdom during the present age is merely occupying a position of power under Satan and his angels, as they rule from the heavens through counterparts on the earth.

(Thus, note how out-of-place Christians are / would be who involve themselves in the political structure of this present world kingdom under Satan rather than *keeping their eyes fixed out ahead, biding their time, waiting for and anticipating that future day when Christ and His co-heirs take the kingdom.*

This is simply NOT THE DAY in which Christians are to rule and reign in this kingdom. THAT DAY lies in the future, AFTER the kingdom changes hands.)

There though, as previously stated, is *ONE exception* to this present

type governmental rule by angels in Satan's kingdom through men upon the earth.

The nation of Israel is the exception. This nation, a special creation in Jacob (Isa. 43:1), is NOT to be "reckoned among the [Gentile] nations" (Num. 23:9; cf. Deut. 7:6). Scripture reveals that *Michael* is the "prince" among heavenly angelic beings over Israel (Dan. 10:21); and Michael, along with his angels (cf. Rev. 12:7-9), is NOT part of Satan's present kingdom.

In this respect, earthly rulers in the nation of Israel, with heavenly counterparts, *rule completely separate* from earthly rulers among the nations, with heavenly counterparts. Not only are two separate creations involved on earth, Gentile and Jew, but two entirely different contingents of angels are involved in the heavens, one fallen, the other unfallen.

(The preceding is the major governmental distinction between *Israel* and *the Gentile nations* which would have allowed God to place Israel at the head of the nations within a theocracy during Old Testament days, out from under Satan's governmental control.

Israel could have ruled the nations, within a theocracy, apart from exercising power emanating from Satan's kingdom [Ex. 19:5, 6]. But no Gentile nation has ever occupied or can ever occupy a governmental position of the nature occupied and held by Israel.)

Thus, there is a present existing kingdom associated with the earth upon which man lives; and this kingdom has two spheres — *an earthly, and a heavenly.*

(This is *THE ONLY KINGDOM* in relation to the earth which has ever existed, continuing *unchanged* in its rulership [except for man's appearance 6,000 years ago (presently ruling under Satan)] to the present time.

And there is *NO present mystery form of this kingdom* [an expression which some Bible students use, attempting to explain certain passages, though the expression explains *nothing, adding only to an already existing confusion on the subject*].)

Scripture plainly states that "the heavens do rule," a rule which begins with God and is enacted through angelic rulers under God, located in heavenly places (even, in this case, through Satan, though a rebel ruler).

It is after this manner that "the most High" rules "in the kingdom of men," positioning and removing rulers among the nations (Dan. 4:17, 25, 26).

And it is in this manner that God rules anywhere in the universe — through angels — with man presently having a part in God's universal rule, under angels, on one province in God's kingdom, on the earth.

To succinctly summarize:

In the present kingdom of this world, referred to as "the kingdom of the heavens" in Matthew's gospel, two entirely different groups of rulers exist, both in the heavens and upon the earth.

In the heavens, Satan and his angels occupy one realm, and Michael and his angels occupy the other, though in separate locations in heavenly places.

Then, *upon the earth*, all of the Gentile nations occupy one realm, and the nation of Israel occupies the other (in the land which God gave to the Jewish people through an everlasting covenant [Gen. 15:7-21], separate from the nations, with the nations occupying all of the other lands).

In one realm, Satan and his angels rule from the heavens through the Gentile nations upon the earth.

And in the other realm, Michael and his angels rule from the heavens through the nation of Israel upon earth.

Then, the Old Testament theocracy, existing in the camp of Israel from the days of Moses (about 1443 B.C.) to the time of the Babylonian captivity (about 605 B.C. [the Glory departing, ending the theocracy, about 586 B.C.]), existed as a kingdom within a kingdom, as previously discussed.

(For additional information on the present world kingdom under Satan and the coming world kingdom under Christ, refer to the author's books, *The Most High Ruleth* and /or *The Spiritual Warfare*.

Also see Appx. III in this book.)

APPENDIX III

THE COMING KINGDOM

*The Kingdom of the Heavens, in That Day
The Kingdom Covenanted to David, in That Day*

“Ask of me, and I will give to thee the heathen [the Gentiles] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Ps. 2:7b-9).

When Christ takes the kingdom (Dan. 7:13, 14; Luke 19:11-27), He will rule the nations with “a rod of iron,” and He has promised His co-heirs that they will exercise this power and authority with Him (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:26, 27; 12:5; 19:15).

(Christ taking the kingdom [the same kingdom which Satan and his angels presently rule over] portends the removal of Satan and his angels from their position in the heavens, followed by their consignment to the abyss [Isa. 14:4-19; Ezek. 28:12-19; Rev. 12:4, 7-9; 20:1-3], the conversion and restoration of Israel to the nation’s land [Isa. 1:27-2:4; 14:1-3; Ezek. 37:1-28; Joel 2:18-32; 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15], and the destruction of Gentile world power [Isa. 63:1-6; Ezek. 38:1-39:29; Joel 3:2-16; Rev. 19:11-21].)

Absolute Power and Authority

The words “*break* them with a rod of iron” rather than “*rule* them with a rod of iron” — as in Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15 — are used in Ps. 2:9. The Hebrew word translated “break” in this passage, contextually, refers to *absolute force* which will be used to bring and keep the nations under subjection to the “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” along with His co-heirs.

A cognate form of this word appears in Dan. 2:40 where, contextually, the word refers to a similar (but not absolute) force which will be used by Antichrist to bring and keep the nations under subjection to him during the Tribulation.

The words "broken to pieces" and "break in pieces" in Dan. 2:35, 44, 45 are the translations of a different word though, which, through comparing Ps. 2:1-9, has to do with *the absolute, total destruction* of the kingdom of Antichrist by Christ at the end of the Tribulation; and this will be followed by *Christ's absolute control* over the nations during the succeeding Messianic Era, when the "great mountain" (Christ's kingdom) *fills* "the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35).

The Greek word translated "rule" in Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15 means *to shepherd*. This is the same word translated "feed [*lit.*, 'shepherd' (referring to *shepherding the flock of God*)]" in Acts 20:28 and I Peter 5:2.

The thought behind this word when used in the sense of "rule" can possibly best be seen by its use in Matt. 2:6:

"And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall *rule* [*'shepherd'*] my people Israel."

The Governor, in this respect, will be a *Shepherd* over the nations; and His co-heirs will exhibit like qualities.

However, this shepherding will be accomplished through *absolute force*. There will be *NO such thing* as a toleration of disobedience among the Gentile nations in that day (*cf.* Ps. 110:1-7; Isa. 66:19-24; Zech. 14:16-21). This shepherding will be carried out through the use of *authority described as "a rod [sceptre] of iron."*

A shepherd in Israel during Old Testament days possessed *a wooden staff*; but the Chief Shepherd and His co-heirs during that coming day will wield *a staff of iron*. And with this staff, the Gentile nations, as "the vessels of a potter" when struck, will be "broken to shivers."

Note that these same words are used relative to both the rule of Christ in Ps. 2:9 and the rule of His co-heirs in Rev. 2:27. The rule by both Christ and His co-heirs will, in this respect, be identical in nature.

Duration of Power and Authority

Scripture teaches that the exercise of governmental power and authority by Christ and His co-heirs *will NOT end* when the 1,000-year millennial day has run its course. Rather, the exercise of such power and authority will extend into and last throughout the eternal ages beyond the Millennium.

BUT, Scripture does NOT teach that this rule will continue *unchanged* into these eternal ages. To the contrary, Scripture teaches just the opposite. The rule by Christ and His co-heirs during the ages beyond the Millennium will be *quite different* than their rule during the Millennium.

First, there is the matter of Christ's throne. His throne is *eternal*, but not as a separate entity from the Father's throne.

Conditions of this nature are millennial *ONLY* (Heb. 1:8; Rev. 3:21; 22:3).

Christ, with His co-heirs, will reign from His Own throne *UNTIL* He has "put down all rule and all authority and power."

THEN, when "all things" have been subjected unto Christ, the kingdom will be delivered up "to God, even the Father," with all things subjected unto Christ, in order that "God may be all in all [*lit.*, 'all things in all of these things']" (I Cor. 15:24-28).

This will occur at the end of the Millennium, and Christ will then assume a position on a central throne with His Father called, "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1, 3).

Second, there is the matter of the location of Christ's throne. During the Millennium, Christ's throne will be in the new Jerusalem positioned in the heavens above the present earth.

During the eternal ages, "the throne of God and of the Lamb" will, likewise, be in the new Jerusalem; *BUT*, the location of the new Jerusalem will be quite different.

The present heavens and earth will be destroyed at the end of the Millennium, and a new heavens and a new earth will be brought into existence. The new Jerusalem will rest upon the new earth, and God Himself will reside therein, sitting on a throne, with His Son alongside.

A rule from the heavens over the earth (millennial) will be a thing of the past, and "the throne of God and of the Lamb" will become the central point in the heavens of an eternal rule extending throughout the universe (*cf.* II Peter 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1ff).

Third, there is the matter of the manner in which Christ will rule. During the Millennium, Christ and His co-heirs will rule the nations with "a rod of iron."

BUT, a rule after this fashion would be out of place during the eternal ages.

During the Millennium, *absolute force* will be used to bring and keep the nations under subjection.

BUT, such will be unnecessary during the eternal ages. Conditions on the new earth will be quite different than millennial conditions on the present earth. There will be no more sin, death, etc. (Rev. 21:3, 4); and this will allow for numerous changes in the manner of the administration of governmental affairs.

Satan will be bound in the abyss during the Millennium, but at the conclusion of the Millennium he will be loosed for "a little season [short time]."

The rebellion evident among nations during the Millennium, necessitating the rule with "a rod of iron," will then be brought to a head. The rebel nations will ally with Satan and under his banner march against Christ and His co-heirs in one final, vain, climactic thrust. And the entire matter though will be speedily brought to an end through *fire* "from God out of heaven" (*cf.* Ezek. 28:18b, 19).

Satan will then be cast into the lake of fire, the judgment of the unsaved dead from throughout Man's Day and the Millennium will occur, and the time for major changes will be at hand.

At this time the kingdom will be delivered up to the Father, the present heavens and earth will pass out of existence, the new heavens and new earth will come into existence, the new Jerusalem will descend from heaven to rest upon the new earth, and the throne of God and the throne of Christ will become *one* throne.

The nations will then dwell upon the new earth, with God Himself dwelling in their midst.

(God rules from a place in the heavens over the entire universe.

Then, provinces throughout His universe are governed by appointed rulers who evidently exercise their delegated power and authority from places in the heavens in relation to the province being ruled [e.g., Satan and his angels presently rule from a place in the heavens in relation to the earth (*cf.* Dan. 10:13-20; Eph. 2:2; 6:11, 20); *ref.* Appx. II in this book], and this structured rule would evidently be the same relative to provinces ruled by angels elsewhere in the universe [*i.e.*, ruled from places in the heavens in relation to the different provinces].

It is in this manner that “the heavens do rule” [beginning with God, the supreme Ruler over all].

During the Messianic Era, Christ and His bride will exercise delegated power and authority over the earth from the same sphere in which Satan and His angels presently rule [*cf.* Job 16:15; Rev. 12:7-12].

Then, during the eternal ages, the new earth will be the place in the heavens from whence universal rule will emanate [in the heavens in relation to the entire universe, as God’s present dwelling place is in the heavens in relation to the entire universe].)

1) Crowns, Rewards — Millennial or Eternal

Promises to Christians concerning crowns, rewards, etc. *are to be realized during the millennial age rather than during the eternal ages.* Many conditions surrounding proffered positions with Christ *will NOT exist during the eternal ages*, as noted in previous comments concerning differences in Christ’s reign during the Millennium and during the ages beyond.

(Note, for example, the overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three. That these promises *are millennial ONLY* in nature is made plain by several of the promises.

In the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Smyrna, it is evident that death will exist during the Millennium [Rev. 2:11; *cf.* Rom. 8:13]; but this *will NOT* be the case beyond the Millennium, during the eternal ages [Rev. 21:4].

In the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Thyatira, ruling with “a rod of iron” is in view [2:26-28]. And *NO* such scene as this exists during the present dispensation; *NOR* will such a scene exist during the eternal ages.

Then, in the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Laodicea, Christ’s throne is in view. Christ is *NOT* seated on His Own throne

today; *NOR* will this throne exist separate from the Father's throne beyond the Millennium [*cf.* Heb. 1:13; Rev. 3:21; 22:1, 3].

Thus, it is plain that the things seen in the overcomer's promises in these two chapters can be realized during the Millennial Era *ALONE*. They can have *NOTHING* to do with the eternal ages beyond the Millennium.)

This, however, *does NOT* at all teach that the reign of Christ and Christians will end at the conclusion of the Millennium. This *ONLY* shows that their reign during the eternal ages will be *outside* the scope of the overcomer's promises and *quite different* than their reign during the preceding Millennium.

(Note Rev. 22:1, 2, which depicts conditions following the Millennium, during the eternal ages.

Verse two reveals that fruit from the tree of life will be made available to the Gentile nations following the Millennium — "the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

[See Ch. I in this book for information on fruit from the tree of life having to do with *regality*, supplying man with the wisdom and knowledge to rule and reign].

The word "healing" in Rev. 22:2 is a translation of the Greek word, *therapeia*, a medical term. And the reference, contextually, would be that of allowing restored man to fulfill the reason for his very existence.

The kingdom, over 1,000 years of time, will have been restored to its proper orderly structure, with the kingdom then delivered up to God in this condition.

THEN, at THAT time, even those forming the Gentile nations [allowed access to fruit from the tree of life] will be brought into positions of rulership, which will evidently be universal.

And this will allow God to realize, in the fullest respect, the reason that He brought man into existence in the beginning.)

God's revelation to man concerns itself with "time" — *seven thousand years of time* — from the creation of Adam to the end of the Messianic Kingdom. Very little is revealed about that which occurred before the creation of Adam, and very little is revealed about that which will occur beyond the Millennium.

Scripture though does reveal that the reign of Christ and Christians will continue, and the length of this continuing reign is specifically stated to be “forever and ever [Gk., *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, ‘with respect to the ages of the ages,’ i.e., ‘throughout the endless ages]” (Rev. 11:15; 22:3-5).

The activity of Christ and Christians in this continuing reign is not revealed in so many words, but Scripture does present enough information that several observations can be made:

A) *Extent of Christ's Rule*

The rule of Christ itself during the eternal ages *will NO longer be limited to the earth. RATHER, it will extend beyond the earth (the new earth), out into the universe.*

Christ will be seated upon a throne from which there will be an administration of power and authority throughout the universe (“the throne of God and of the Lamb” [Rev. 22:3]); and the Christians’ continuing rule “with Christ” (Rev. 22:5) would have to be of a like nature, for the power *will NO longer emanate from Christ's throne, BUT from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

In this respect, the rule by Christ and His co-heirs *over the earth during the Millennium can ONLY be extended to a rule over worlds throughout the universe following the Millennium.*

B) *Millennial and Eternal Blessings*

To what extent though, if any, will rewards realized by overcoming Christians during the Millennium carry over into the eternal ages beyond? The question is really unanswerable.

The wiping away of all tears at the conclusion of the Millennium and the fact that the overcomer's promises are millennial only in nature would clearly indicate that distinctions which existed during the millennial age between overcoming and non-overcoming Christians will not exist during the eternal ages beyond the Millennium.

But, to take matters beyond this point and say that *no rewards* exercised by overcoming Christians during the millennial age will extend over into the eternal ages beyond the Millennium (or have any bearing on the place which they will occupy beyond the Mil-

lennium) would be carrying matters beyond Scriptural grounds. Scripture simply does not deal with the matter.

2) *All Things New*

The Millennium will not, as many envision, be a time of perfection. Such a state awaits the first of many ages beyond the Millennium. *The restoration of all things* will occur before the Millennium, at the end of six thousand years of time; but *the making of all things new* awaits the completion of the Millennium, at the end of seven thousand years of time (cf. Acts 3:21; Rev. 21:5).

ONLY THEN will a *perfect order* in all of God's creation exist.

(This alone would show that existing distinctions between overcomers and non-overcomers during the Millennium *CANNOT* be carried over into the eternal ages, for perfection would *NOT* then exist in the kingdom *IF* that were the case.)

As the present age (Man's Day) has a purpose, so will the millennial age (the Lord's Day); and the ultimate goal of *all* will be realized in the ages beyond.

The rulers for the millennial age are being acquired during the present age; and during the millennial age these rulers will, as co-heirs with Christ, participate in the age-long work of bringing all things under subjection to Christ. Such a work, brought to pass through a rule with "a rod of iron," anticipates the ages beyond the Millennium, in which a rule with "a rod of iron" will no longer be necessary; and the reason for man's creation will then be realized in its fullest sense.

Man will not only realize the reason for his creation during the Millennium (part of mankind) but also during the eternal ages beyond the Millennium (all of mankind).

Dominion will be restricted to this earth during the Millennium, but not so during the eternal ages after the new heavens and new earth have been brought into existence.

Man's rule in that day can only extend into places throughout the universe itself, and man will evidently have access to the universe (something which will not be true at all during the Millennium).

7:13, 14.....	135	25:14-30.....	19, 78	21:5-14.....	54
8:3-8, 20, 21.....	132	25:15-30.....	79	<i>Acts</i>	
10:4-21.....	131	25:30.....	35	3:21.....	121, 142
10:12-20.....	41	25:34-40.....	83	5:41.....	25
10:12, 13, 21.....	65	25:41.....	34	16:31.....	18, 76
10:13-20.....	139	26:29.....	54	20:28.....	136
<i>Joel</i>		26:58, 69-75.....	128		
2:18-32.....	135	27:27ff.....	117	<i>Romans</i>	
3:2-21.....	135	27:27-31.....	100	1:7, 8.....	7
<i>Amos</i>		27:37.....	116	5:12.....	37
3:2.....	62	<i>Mark</i>		5:17.....	81
9:11-15.....	135	10:35=45.....	87	6:23.....	9
<i>Haggai</i>		14:38.....	94	8:11, 13.....	67
2:3.....	98	<i>Luke</i>		8:12, 13.....	35
<i>Zechariah</i>		1:31-33.....	113	8:13.....	32, 61, 101
5:1-3.....	82	3:38.....	27	8:14-21.....	113
9:9.....	100	4:5, 6.....	41	8:17.....	28, 68, 100
14:16-21.....	136	11:23.....	110	8:18, 19.....	27
<i>Malachi</i>		12:8, 9.....	85	9:4, 5.....	62
3:16.....	82, 83	12:42-46.....	96	11:6.....	106
4:2.....	70, 71	12:46.....	27	<i>I Corinthians</i>	
<i>Matthew</i>		13:24.....	87	1:30.....	15
2:2.....	116	13:24-30.....	96	2:1, 2.....	18
2:6.....	136	13:28, 29.....	67	2:6-10.....	15
4:4.....	42	18:8.....	74, 89, 109, 121	2:10.....	62
4:17-25.....	125	19:11-27.....	19, 78, 135	3:5-7.....	91
5:5.....	99	19:15-26.....	79	3:11-15.....	26, 69, 83
5:22, 29, 30.....	35	19:20-26.....	96	3:12.....	77
6:9-13.....	94	24:26.....	100	3:16, 17.....	98
8:11, 12.....	11, 66	24:41-43.....	54	5:7.....	108
8:12.....	35	<i>John</i>		6:8-10.....	27, 28
10:1-8.....	125	1:4.....	16	6:19.....	98
10:32, 33, 38, 39.....	85	1:11.....	116	9:24-27.....	25, 36, 48, 87
12:30.....	110	3:18.....	84	9:27.....	6
13:4, 19, 31-33.....	44	4:14.....	17	10:1-5.....	114
13:19-24, 31, 33.....	43	5:24.....	48	15:3.....	18
13:33.....	5, 42, 51, 58	6:35.....	17	15:24-28.....	118, 137
.....	72, 74, 89, 108, 121	6:48-54.....	52, 53	15:26.....	32
13:42.....	34	6:48-56.....	14	15:52.....	50
16:6.....	108	6:48-58.....	15	<i>II Corinthians</i>	
16:18.....	1, 98	7:37.....	17	4:3, 4.....	67
16:24-27.....	19, 79, 85	8:12.....	17	4:4.....	64
16:25-27.....	36	10:10.....	16	4:16.....	122
19:27-39.....	87	11:25.....	16	8:9.....	100
20:20-28.....	87	13:4-12.....	124	<i>Galatians</i>	
20:25-28.....	50	13:8-10.....	125, 126	3:16-18, 26-29.....	103
21:5.....	99, 116	13:10-11.....	128	3:17, 18, 29.....	113
21:43.....	66, 103	13:12.....	127	<i>Ephesians</i>	
22:11, 12.....	80, 81	14:2, 3.....	103	1:5-14.....	7
22:13.....	35	14:16, 26.....	129	1:8.....	15
23:15, 33.....	35	15:1-5.....	17	1:14-18.....	27
24:45-51.....	18	15:6.....	34	1:17, 18.....	87
24:45-51.....	96	15:26.....	129	2:1.....	39, 48
25:10-13, 24-30.....	96	16:7.....	129	2:1, 8-10.....	76
		16:13-15.....	14, 68, 122	2:2.....	139
		17:14.....	122		
		20:22.....	17		

2:6.....45
 2:8, 9.....106
 2:12.....64
 3:9-11.....66
 5:5.....27
 5:25-32.....7
 6:10-18.....48
 6:11, 12.....66
 6:11, 20.....139
 6:12.....54

Philippians

1:6.....122

Colossians

1:5, 6, 23.....94
 1:6, 23.....129
 1:9, 28.....15
 2:3.....15
 2:13.....39
 3:10.....122
 3:24.....27

I Thessalonians

1:5-10.....7
 5:1-9.....7, 96

II Thessalonians

1:9, 10.....39

I Timothy

4:1.....121
 5:6.....76
 6:11, 12.....25, 87
 6:12.....109

II Timothy

2:3, 4.....45
 2:4, 5.....48
 2:10-13.....85
 2:12.....89, 100
 3:8.....6
 4:7, 8.....25, 36, 48, 87
 4:8.....5

Titus

1:16.....6
 2:12, 13.....87
 2:13.....20
 3:5.....106

Hebrews

1:2.....29
 1:8.....137
 1:13.....140
 2:5.....120
 2:5, 10.....68
 3:1.....66
 6:8.....6, 34
 9:4.....52

9:5.....129
 10:38, 39.....19
 11:8-16.....66, 67
 11:16.....103
 12:1, 2.....115
 12:2.....100
 12:14-17.....68
 12:23.....6, 7, 18, 112
 13:5.....122

James

1:2-4.....25
 1:2-4, 12-15.....94
 1:12, 21, 22.....77
 1:21.....19, 24, 36
 1:26, 27.....21
 2:14.....78
 2:14, 22.....79
 2:14-26.....54, 76, 77
81, 90, 93
 3:1ff.....21
 3:5-8, 13-18.....22
 5:5.....76
 5:19, 20.....19, 26, 77

I Peter

1:3-5.....20
 1:3-11.....112
 1:4.....27, 68
 1:9.....24, 79
 1:9-11.....19
 2:5.....98
 2:9, 10.....66, 103
 2:21-23.....115
 3:13.....100
 4:12, 13.....14, 100, 115
 5:2.....136

II Peter

1:10, 11.....87
 2:9.....94
 2:15.....45
 3:10-13.....138

I John

1:5-10.....123
 1:5-2:2.....128
 1:6.....130
 1:7-10.....129
 2:1, 2.....129

Jude

3

Revelation

Chapters 1-3.....5
 1:10.....93
 1:11-13, 20.....2
 2:1-7.....6
 2:2, 9, 13, 19.....77

2:4, 11, 26, 27.....2
 2:5-7, 15.....3
 2:5, 16.....95
 2:7.....1, 5, 8, 9, 10
11, 18, 21, 22
 2:7, 17.....17
 2:8, 11.....42
 2:9-11.....23
 2:10.....25
 2:11.....26, 30, 33, 35
 2:11, 26-28.....139
 2:13, 17.....41
 2:14.....45
 2:17.....15, 51
 2:20.....59
 2:20-23.....67
 2:20-25.....61
 2:23.....73
 2:24.....62
 2:26, 27.....8, 31, 56, 135
 2:26-28.....57, 70
 2:27.....135, 136
 3:1, 2, 4.....76
 3:1, 4.....74
 3:1, 4, 5.....73
 3:1, 8, 15.....77
 3:3, 5.....81
 3:5.....80, 82, 83
84, 85, 86
 3:5, 21.....2
 3:8, 10, 12.....93
 3:10.....92, 94
 3:10, 11.....95, 96, 97
 3:10, 15, 17, 18.....90
 3:11.....25, 49
 3:12.....89, 99, 101, 104
 3:14ff.....109
 3:14-18.....6
 3:14-22.....105
 3:15-17.....106
 3:18-20.....107
 3:21.....31, 56, 113
115, 118, 137, 140
 4:1, 2.....93
 4:11.....14
 5:1, 2.....82
 5:10.....68, 112
 5:12.....14
 6:9-11.....29
 11:3.....108
 11:15.....68, 141
 12:4, 5, 7-9.....135
 12:5.....136
 12:7.....112
 12:7-9.....133
 12:7-12.....41, 139
 13:1, 2.....110
 13:7-15.....29
 13:8.....82
 15:2.....29

19:7-9	6, 7, 18	20:11-15	31, 82	21:17-21	103
19:8.....	80	20:14.....	28, 29	21:22.....	98
19:8, 9.....	81	20:14, 15.....	39	21:27.....	82
19:11ff.....	29, 100	21:1, 3, 4.....	138	22:1, 2.....	103
19:11-21.....	135	21:1-4.....	32	22:1, 3.....	118, 137, 140
19:12, 16.....	101	21:1-22:5.....	33	22:1-3, 5.....	31
19:15.....	136	21:4.....	139	22:2.....	8, 10, 12, 14, 17
19:16.....	116	21:5.....	142	22:3-5.....	141
20:1-3.....	112, 135	21:7.....	29	22:7, 12, 20.....	95
20:4-6.....	11, 29	21:7, 8.....	28, 30	22:14, 15.....	33
20:4-6, 14.....	30	21:8.....	26, 32	22:16.....	70
20:4-6, 11-15.....	26, 83	21:9-22:21.....	102	22:18, 19.....	32