

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

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CHAPTER TWO

The Seven Churches:

“THE THINGS WHICH ARE”

THE SPIRIT’S MESSAGE TO EPHEBUS

Revelation 2:1-7

1. **Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;**
2. **I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:**
3. **And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.**
4. **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**
5. **Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**
6. **But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.**
7. **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.**

The first seven verses of chapter two contain the message to the church at Ephesus - the church at the end of the Apostolic Age, the church that had left its first love.

Please note that the “messages to the seven churches” are inserted between two visions. First, the vision of Christ standing in the midst of the “**seven lampstands.**” This vision is in Chapter One. The next vision in the book is the vision of “**the four and twenty elders**” round about the throne, and is found in chapter four.

In chapter four we see the vision of the glorified Church with the Lord Jesus after the Church has been caught out to meet the Lord in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-17). Then immediately the tribulation begins and runs its course in the following chapters.

What I want us to notice here is the fact that the message to the seven churches is located between the vision of the glorified Christ and the vision of the glorified Church. The seven churches represent the church age to the Rapture, and when the Rapture takes place the saints will be glorified and given bodies like unto the Lord's glorious body (I John 3:1-3).

Ephesus, the capitol of Asia in the time when John wrote Revelation, was known as "*the light of Asia*." Ephesus was the capital of heathen idolatry. The city was the stronghold of Satan's ungodly power, and from Ephesus idolatry spread all over the known world of that day. Read Acts 19.

Small silver shrines representing the great goddess Diana were bought by strangers and travelers and set up in their homes as deities to be worshipped. The huge temple of the goddess Diana was adorned and beautified by the wealth of all Asia, and was counted one of the seven wonders of the world. Ephesus became the scene of fierce warfare between the powers of righteousness and the powers of unrighteousness . . . between the God of Light and the devil of darkness.

There were two devoted believers there - Aquilla and Priscilla - and they labored untiringly for quite a long time in this city of idolatry. At an earlier date, twelve of John's disciples had helped in a small way to break the darkness of idolatry, but their efforts were undoubtedly very feeble, owing to their limited knowledge of the Scriptures at that particular time. Study Acts 19.

The very, very capable and eloquent Apollos was also there, but accomplished very little against the gigantic power of darkness in the great city of Ephesus. Paul was used of the Holy Spirit to break the power of darkness and lead converts against the terrible systems of idolatry and superstitions. The leaders in the idolatrous worship of Diana hated Paul beyond measure, and would have liked to annihilate him had not God protected this spiritual giant. Paul had a job to do for Jesus and the devil could not stop him. The forces of darkness and idolatry trembled under the preaching of the Apostle Paul.

Next in line was the beloved John. After leaving his home in Jerusalem, John lived in Ephesus and for about thirty years made that city the headquarters for his work for the Lord Jesus. The glory of Ephesus has departed and the once proud heathen city, the capital of idolatry, is now a miserable village. The city is now known as "*Ayasalook*."

When Paul moved into Ephesus to declare war upon the forces of darkness, he did not preach a series of sermons on the evils of Diana, nor did he use the subject, "Thou shalt not surely bow at the shrine of Diana." No, wherever Paul preached, he had a singular subject:

"God FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY, SAVE IN THE CROSS." And as always, Paul was determined not to know anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The message of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ will shake the forces of the devil even in the darkest city, spiritually speaking.

The Spirit opens His message to the church at Ephesus with the words, **"To the angel of the church in Ephesus, write."**

Note that the same words are repeated in the introduction to each of the seven churches. The message for each church is directed to the members of the local assembly. I am sure it was true in that day as it is today, there were some born again members and some who were just members . . . they had joined the church, but were not born of the Spirit.

Paul wrote to the saints in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1). John is writing to the angel of the church in Ephesus. No doubt the reason for the more distant form of addressing the church was because the church had sunk so low morally that the Lord could not address it through John as to the saints. No doubt they had declined to a spiritual status where they could not be referred to in the true sense of saints; but as babes in Christ, eating milk instead of meat.

During the day of Paul the church at Ephesus was made up of almost altogether devout saints; but in John's day the saints had departed from their first love.

“These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”

In chapter 1:20 the stars are seen IN His hand. In chapter 3:1 He has the stars, but here intense action is suggested: **“HE THAT HOLDETH THE SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND”**. He has a firm grip on the stars . . . the light bearers. The stars derive their light from Him who is **“the Light of the world.”**

- They are subject to His power (**“Without Him ye can do nothing”**).
- The stars are sustained by Him (**“In Him we live and move and have our being”**).
- He guides the stars (**“As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the children of God”**).
- He holds them fast (**“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, that we may boldly say, God is my helper”**).

My! My! What strength! What power! What security!

In Revelation 1:13, the glorified Christ is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; but here (chapter 2:1) we see Him walking in their midst. He is moving about, taking note of every need of every individual, not overlooking the difficulties that may arise, the trials and temptations that may come. Paul tells us, **“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”** (I Corinthians 10:13).

Jesus DOES walk among (or in the presence of) the believers. He never leaves us nor forsakes us, He neither slumbers nor sleeps. He is a very present help in time of need, and His help can be had instantaneously. He is available at all hours of the day or night. He walks in and out among the churches, He observes the ways of every believer, and He has grace sufficient for every need of every believer. He will trim our lamps and keep them burning if we will only allow Him to do so. The gates of hell shall never prevail against the true Church (Matthew 16:18), nor shall the gates of hell ever prevail against any individual member of the true, invisible body of Christ (Romans 8:38, 39).

Verse 2: **“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”**

I often make the statement in my sermons, “You may rest assured that you will receive from the hand of Almighty God exactly what is coming to you.” God is just, He cannot be unjust . . . He rewards fully. If a rebuke is needed, God rebukes. If any praise is due, commendation will certainly be given. God commends the church at Ephesus . . . the Lord Jesus loves to commend His saints when they allow Him to do so. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly, but the sad thing is that most of us will not permit God to shower His abundant grace upon us. We take God’s second best, when it is His good pleasure that we enjoy His very best.

God cannot bless us above what we allow by the way we live. Salvation is free . . . salvation is by grace; but rewards, happiness, and joy come as the result of faithful labor of love in the Lord.

In our present verse, God says, “I know thy works!” No doubt the good works of the believers at Ephesus were varied and many. The local assembly there was a working church. But all work is not necessarily well pleasing in the sight of God.

- The believers at Ephesus labored - and the Lord knew about their labors.
- They were patient, and the Lord knew of their patience.

They were patient toward the weaker Christians, but this did not cause them to close their eyes toward evil.

In this same verse, the messenger declares that the believers at Ephesus had tried them “which say they are apostles and are not, and found them to be liars” (read Romans 5:3, II Corinthians 6:4). Even in the midst of trial and opposition the church was neither patient nor indifferent toward evil. The word “tried” signifies that the Ephesians had put these apostles to the test and had found that they were not true apostles, but were liars. Paul called such men **“false apostles”** (II Corinthians 11:13). Read also I Corinthians 9:2 and Acts 20:29,30. Many churches need to reread and study this particular portion of God’s message to the church. Certainly there are false prophets, liars, and spiritual wolves in the pulpits all over the world today, and the sad thing is that only a very small minority of believers seem to care!

Verse 3: **“And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”**

In this verse, the Lord’s commendation to the believers at Ephesus continues. John, the “secretary of the Lord,” wrote, “. . . **and hast borne . . . for my name’s sake.**”

The church at Ephesus had suffered much, had been tried many times - but they were cheerful, they did not grumble; they were suffering for Christ’s sake . . . for the sake of the One who had suffered so much that they might have the forgiveness of sins (I John 2:12). They had not wearied. There was no thought of giving up nor of surrendering in the conflict with evil.

What a beautiful picture we have here, of complete surrender and wholehearted devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 4: **“NEVERTHELESS I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”**

Yes, the believers at Ephesus were hard workers.

They labored in patience, they hated evil; but in spite of that, the Lord had something against them.

Revealed here is the root of church and individual failure:

DEPARTURE FROM CHRIST!

“The first fruit of the Spirit is love” (Galatians 5:22). In Paul’s day the church at Ephesus was known for its **“love unto all the saints.”** But seemingly that love began to grow cold.

We learn from the New Testament record that only what we do because we love Jesus with all of our heart, soul and strength will receive a reward at the end of life’s journey. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do it all to the glory of God, not to the glory of man, a church or a denomination. Love is the heart of Christianity. Read I Corinthians 13.

The one thing that the Lord Jesus had against the church at Ephesus was, **“Thou hast left thy first love.”** When a church leaves its first love (or when an individual does), it is a serious and dangerous matter.

Notice here in verse 4, **“I have somewhat against thee.”** But in the same chapter, verse 14, we read, **“But I have a few things against thee.”** First, one thing - the church left its first love. Next, a few things. When a church or an individual departs from the virgin love of the new birth experience, that person or church will find itself slipping farther and farther as the days and weeks go by.

Verse 5: **“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”**

In this verse, judgment is threatened. The Lord Jesus had a positive cause of complaint against the angel of the church at Ephesus. The church had left its first love, and this was serious. The Lord never forgets His joy in the first love of His people: **“Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown”** (Jeremiah 2:2). The Lord God never forgot Judah’s first love; neither does the Lord Jesus forget the first love of His Church. The first commandment is to love the Lord with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your strength. Love is the center, the soul, the very essence of a genuine new birth experience.

The admonition to the believers at Ephesus was twofold:

1. Remember.
2. Repent!

The Lord is saying to the believers at Ephesus, “Remember the moral elevation you once occupied. Remember the heights of love you once demonstrated. And then cast your eyes upon yourself and see how far short you have fallen - and then repent. Judge the state of your own heart, lest I am forced to judge you. I will judge you quickly unless you repent and return to your first works and your first love. I will remove your candlestick out of its place - and the only way you can prevent the removal of the candlestick is to repent.”

The removal of the lampstand as a light bearer has nothing to do with the salvation of the individual. It has to do with the Church as a whole. Certainly the lamps which once shone so brightly in this particular part of the earth - especially in the city of Ephesus - have been taken out of their place, and gross darkness engulfs that part of the world today. Mohammedanism is the religion in the seven cities where these churches were located.

So we see that the lampstand HAS been removed.

The light of the pure Gospel does not shine as it did when Paul preached in Ephesus - or even as it did when John was there. I warn you, precious reader, unless the western world remembers and repents, the lampstand will be removed from this great country of ours - and from other countries that have been blessed exceedingly because of their faith in God and their love to Christ. Unfaithfulness - whether on the part of an individual or a church - must be judged (and WILL be judged) by a holy God. If Christendom continues as it is today, gross darkness will cover these lands if Jesus tarries. Read Isaiah 60:2.

Verse 6: **“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.”**

The believers in the church at Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. Some outstanding Bible authorities teach that the sect of the Nicolaitanes began with Nicolas of Antioch. Other authorities deny this suggestion. However, the word comes from *nikao*, which means “*to conquer*,” and *laos*, which means “*the people*” (the laity). No doubt the deeds of the Nicolaitanes hated by the church at Ephesus was the setting up of certain men to rule over the ordinary believers in the church, and this probably marked the beginning of the priestly order in the church, which continues in this day in the Roman Catholic church and others.

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” so said the Lord Jesus. God never intended His Church to be divided into priests and laity. No man has a right to be **“lord over God’s heritage”** (I Peter 5:3). **“There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”** (I Timothy 2:5) - Christ Jesus - not some two-legged fellow who calls himself a priest, or God’s representative here on earth - not the virgin nor the pope, nor the pastor - **BUT THE MAN Christ Jesus!**

Every born again believer is a priest . . . not just a priest, but a royal priest (I Peter 2:9), every believer is invited to enter boldly into the holy of holies (Hebrews 10:19-25).

There are no special persons in the Church of the living God. The New Testament Church knows no church bosses or priests. This business began in Ephesus - but it is not well pleasing to God. God appoints undershepherds to care for the flock, to feed the sheep and to keep out the wolves; but God does not appoint church bosses, or special men to pray for us or listen to our confession of sin. We are to confess our sin to the Lord God through our Mediator the Lord Jesus Christ.

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!” (John 8:36). “As many as are led by the Spirit of God (not a preacher, a priest or a pope) they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

I wonder what the Lord Jesus thinks of some of the modern set-ups. Folks are commanded to sign a pledge, sign a document, sign a resolution. They are commanded to promise this, or promise that before they can become a deacon or a teacher in Sunday school. I wonder what the Lord Jesus Christ thinks when He looks down upon all the little religious dictators we have today. These fellows who are lording it over God’s sons and daughters belong to the same sect that the spiritually minded believers at Ephesus hated. They did not hate the persons . . . they hated their deeds. God loves all men regardless of how sinful they may be; and certainly true believers should love all, regardless of their wickedness. We do not love their sins, but we love them because Jesus died’ for them.

Corruption spreads, and spreads rapidly.

- Ephesus hated these impurities - Pergamos sheltered them!
- Ephesus hated the terrible deeds of the Nicolaitanes; Pergamos accepted them.
- Ephesus was troubled only with deeds - but by the time the deeds reached Pergamos, they became doctrine (Revelation 2:15).
- Ephesus would not put up with the Nicolaitanes, but Pergamos held the corrupters to her bosom and permitted them to corrupt and poison the sources of purity and morality in the local assembly there.

We still have these poison peddlers with us today . . . and the sad thing is, they peddle their damnable poison in the name of religion!

Verse 7: **“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.”**

In this verse we have THE SPIRIT’S CALL TO HEAR.

At Ephesus the church is spoken to as a whole . . . not as individuals, but as an assembly. It is interesting to note that John uses the word **“repent”** seven times in Revelation, but in the other writings of John that word is not used even once.

After Ephesus, a remnant is admonished to repent. The call is no longer to the group, but to individuals, or to a small remnant. Individual and direct responsibility to Almighty God is a cardinal truth and a cardinal doctrine of the New Testament Church; however, in the Roman Catholic church, souls are commanded to follow the church. Individual conscience toward God is completely ignored. It is the church, the pope, the priest, the bishops who deal with God for the members of the church of Rome. But in the New Testament Church, individuals are commanded to repent and believe the Gospel. Individuals are invited to enter boldly into the holy of holies. The New Testament doctrine is, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith.”**

Not only in the church of Rome, but in many protestant churches there are spiritual dictators who command the people to follow them, and they change the Word of God to fit their own ideas; but according to God’s holy Word, there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus - not a priest, not a bishop, not a preacher, not an evangelist . . . but God’s Son, the Lord Jesus. He is the only One who can mediate between us and God. John even speaks of such a man in his Third Epistle:

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.
(III John 1:9-10)

“To him (the individual) **that overcometh”** will be given the glorious privilege of eating of the tree of life in the Paradise of God. The word **“paradise”** means *“Garden of Pleasure,”* and that is exactly what God intended Eden to be. It would have been God’s great Garden of Pleasure for Adam and Eve had they not disobeyed God and listened to the devil. The Paradise of God will be restored at the beginning of the eternal ages (Revelation 16:7, Revelation 22:1-7).

Jesus promised, **“I will give to him to eat of the tree of life.”** In the Paradise of God (yet to come) there will be no tempter, no devil, no sin. It will be the Garden of Pleasure. The devil will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10).

Paradise is referred to three times in the New Testament. In Luke 23:43 Jesus said to the thief on the cross, **“Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”** In II Corinthians 12:4, Paul said he knew a man caught up to the third Heaven, **“INTO PARADISE.”** Paul declared that this man who was caught up into Paradise heard words and saw things that were not lawful to utter. The third mention of Paradise is here in our present Scripture - Revelation 2:7.

The promise made here is to each individual who is an overcomer. That individual will be granted the glorious privilege of eating of the tree of life, in the Paradise of God, when Paradise is restored. Thank God, there will be no repetition of the Adam and Eve experience. When God restores Paradise and the tree of life, that restoration will be eternal. It will never be invaded by sin, sorrow and disappointment (Revelation 21:27).

Many believe that the only thing involved in Christianity is to be born again, and then just “take it easy” until Jesus comes for us. But certainly such an idea of Christianity is not according to Scripture. We are saved by grace, the gift of God. Salvation cannot be earned or merited. But to be a victorious Christian is our responsibility. If we trust and obey, we will be victorious. If we are careless and unconcerned, we will live a defeated Christian life. If we are an overcomer we will share a full reward; but if we are careless and unconcerned about spiritual things, we will **“suffer loss.”**

Salvation is free . . . rewards are earned. If we overcome, we will be granted certain privileges in Paradise that those who failed to overcome will not be granted. Certainly there will be degrees of reward in Heaven (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

It is interesting to me to note that the Lord Jesus Himself will present the rewards. (**“To him that overcometh WILL I GIVE to eat of the tree of life.”**) Jesus Himself will grant the privilege. This teaches me how closely believers are connected to the Lord - not only here, but in eternity.

Heaven will be a big place, there will be a lot of people there; but it will not be so big, nor will there be so many individuals, that Jesus will not have time for those individuals. I am glad I'm going there. If you are not on your way to Heaven - repent, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, **“and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31, John 5:24).

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO SMYRNA

Revelation 2:8-11:

8. **And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;**
9. **I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.**
10. **Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**
11. **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.**

The second church named in our Scripture is the church at Smyrna. The message to this church represents the period of the great persecution about A. D. 316. Smyrna was about forty miles north of the city of Ephesus.

It is now one of the most important cities of the Turkish Empire, and it is estimated that about 200,000 people now live there. In many respects, Smyrna was a rival of Ephesus. Its natural and commercial location brought commerce, and through commerce came much wealth and splendor. Its buildings, even in that day, won for the city the name of The Beautiful. Smyrna was not far behind Ephesus in the practice of idolatry. This city is not named in the book of Acts, nor does Paul name the church at Smyrna in any of his Epistles. Therefore, we have no way of knowing exactly when or how the Gospel was introduced to the people there, nor when the church there was founded.

The imperial laws against Christianity were enforced severely in Smyrna. Jews and heathen combined brought much persecution through the local authorities . . . they put pressure on local authorities and forced them to carry out their laws against the Christians. Polycarp, the bosom friend of John the Beloved, was slain in Smyrna in his ninetieth year. Most Bible authorities put the date at 168 A. D. Polycarp was possibly the last person to carry on a conversation with John the Beloved, according to Bible history and books on Bible antiquity.

The fierce and bloody persecution which raged in Asia Minor had its center in the city of Smyrna. The terrible persecution lasted about two hundred and fifty years. It was very, very fierce at times, and at other times grew lighter. During this time of imperial and pagan persecution, the Church went through a terrible blood bath; but not without the knowledge of Him who stands in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

Verses 8 and 9: **“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, AND TRIBULATION, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.”**

The briefest of the Spirit’s messages is the message to Smyrna. The longest message is to the church at Thyatira. The assembly at Smyrna is commended - not one word of reproach is addressed to the assembly there. By way of contrast, the message to the assembly at Laodicea is a message of rebuke. Not one word of commendation or praise is in the message to the Laodiceans.

Again by way of contrast, the poverty and tribulation of Smyrna stand out, while the rich and self-satisfied condition of Laodicea is unmistakable. There is but one other church that is not censured or condemned (or warned) and that is the church at Philadelphia. However, we are not to suppose that there was nothing wrong in either Smyrna or Philadelphia, because the local assembly will always have faults. The only perfect Church is the invisible body of which Jesus is the head. Where there are earthly members of a local assembly, weakness will be found; and any church stands to be censured by the Lord.

The Church in its Ephesian period lost its first love; therefore, the Lord permitted chastisement to come upon the Church to cause it to return to Him. Smyrna means “*bitterness*” and “*myrrh*” - an ointment associated with death. In the meaning of the word, a prophecy of persecution and death is seen, and is sure to befall the members of the church at Smyrna. These names are not accidental nor were they picked at random. The names Ephesus, Smyrna, and all the others have a very deep and special meaning in Scripture. However, the members of the assembly at Smyrna are told not to fear even though they were to suffer and many would be put to death. The reward for sealing one’s testimony with one’s lifeblood is to receive a “**crown of life,**” a martyr’s crown.

The message to Smyrna opens with the words, “**These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.**” The title used here is the spiritual Rock of Gibraltar, against which no power can stand. As The First, He is before all in time, and above all in power.

As The Last, He is after all - He closes all things, He is the consummation of all things. The One speaking to the saints at Smyrna is the Eternal One; but even though He is from eternity through eternity, He came into this world to die. Death had no claim upon Him, because He had not sinned; nevertheless, He died that we might have life.

He entered into the very heart of death, He conquered death - and rose again to die no more.

Verse 9 opens with the consoling words, “**I KNOW.**” The Lord Jesus, our Saviour, knows every heartache. He knows every pain, every tear, every burden. **WE FLOURISH BEST AND ARE THE RICHEST WHEN WE SUFFER.**

When the Church is persecuted it spreads like wildfire.

When the Church is at ease in Zion, God’s work suffers sorely!

- Jacob was a better man after wrestling all night with the angel (Genesis 32:24-32).
- Paul was given a thorn in the flesh. He prayed for God to remove the thorn, but God did not remove it. God promised and gave grace sufficient to bear it - and Paul was the richer for it (II Corinthians 12:7).
- The Hebrew Christians joyed in the spoiling of their goods (Hebrews 10:34).
- The three Hebrew children knew the Lord from the historical standpoint; but when they met Him in the midst of the fiery furnace they knew Him as they could never have known Him had they not stood when the king commanded them to bow (Daniel 3:1-25). Read this portion and feast upon it.
- Daniel knew the Lord - but I am sure he knew the Lord much better after spending a night in the lions’ den, in the company of lions and the angel of the Lord.

Sometimes we are the richest when we are the poorest. We may not realize it, but we are poorest when we think we are the richest. Sometimes we are the happiest when we think our heart is broken with sorrow. Just remember - God’s ways are not our ways - and never forget, God knows all about us at all times.

If we are born again, our treasure is in Heaven. Our inheritance is there also, from whence we look for the Saviour. An inventory of Christian wealth and assets is furnished in Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 3:21-23).

- If we are born again, we are in God (Colossians 3:3).
- Christ is in us (Colossians 1:27).
- Positionally, we are sons of God (Romans 8:14).
- We are destined to be conformed to the image of God’s Son (Romans 8:29).
- Our wealth as a son of God is limited only by Christ and His riches (Ephesians 1:10,11).

Yes, the Church is rich even though, materially speaking, she may seem to be in poverty. Some of the churches that seem to be in poverty so far as the local assembly is concerned, are much richer than some of the churches that have million dollar edifices. The true Church is rich, endowed with the love and the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The church at Smyrna was suffering from the pagan world without, and from an enemy of a religious character within.

It seems that there was a group in the church who claimed to be Jews, but who were not really Jews. They were in the church for what they could get out of it - not for what they could give to the Christ in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

In Ephesus we saw a company of clergy who promoted themselves - they were proud and lofty. (They were also exposed as pretenders and liars.) That particular movement was crushed for a time, but the devil does not take defeat easily. Even though that movement was crushed, a similar movement on a lesser scale began to show up in Smyrna.

Today we have the same element in many of our local assemblies . . . men and women who join the church for business or social reasons, and for gain. It would be interesting to know just why some people do unite with the local assembly, and sometimes keep pushing themselves until they are elected deacon, trustee, or Sunday school teacher. We have them; they have been in the church ever since Ephesus, and they will be there until the Church is raptured.

Thank God, they will be left behind when the true Church IS taken out!

The Spirit puts no frills or sugar-coating on the words that expose this crooked religious crowd. The Spirit clearly states that they are not Jews, **“but are the synagogue of Satan!”**

That does not sound like some of the sweet talk we hear from the pulpits today, does it? Today we hear, “All religions should get together; all denominations and cults should unite - and should teach the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.” No! there is a true Church, composed of true believers. All else is false and belongs to the synagogue of the devil. That may sound a little rough - but we need to speak words easily understood when making truth and error known to our listeners.

In Smyrna, this group of religious pretenders railed against the church in its suffering. They brought contempt and false accusations against it, and the Spirit declares they are of the synagogue of Satan.

In Revelation, two names are used when referring to the archenemy of man:

(1) Satan - which means “*adversary*,” and (2) Devil - which means “*slanderer*.” Of course, to the Church and to the child of God he is both Satan (the adversary), and the devil (the slanderer). He is the instigator of all persecutions and slander brought against the Church and the people of God.

Verse 10: **“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”**

The message begins, **“I KNOW”** - and since the Lord God Almighty knows all about His children and stands in the very midst of the Church, we are commanded, **“FEAR NONE OF THOSE THINGS WHICH THOU SHALT SUFFER!”** The devil is a powerful being, but his power is limited and controlled by the all-powerful One: **“Power belongeth unto God”** (Psalm 62:11).

Since the devil’s power is limited and controlled, he cannot judge even the most feeble of the saints without express permission of the Lord God Almighty, who is all-powerful and the Master of all, including the devil. Read Job, chapters one and two. Study them. It will do you good.

In the true sense of the word, **“There is no power but of God”** (Romans 13:1). All power is permitted by Almighty God, and the devil cannot make one move against God’s child without God’s permission. Read I Corinthians 10:13, and Hebrews 13:5. God’s purpose in permitting persecution to come upon the assembly at Smyrna was to cause the saints to repent and return unto Him. Thus God’s saints were purified. Their love, faith and courage were strengthened.

The church at Smyrna had a definitely appointed period of tribulation: “Ten days.” Some Bible authorities point out that there may be an allusion here to the well-known ten persecutions, and that there may also be an allusion to the tenth persecution under the ruler Diocletian. This persecution lasted exactly ten years, according to Bible history. The expression ten days certainly signifies a limited period.

In this Scripture, the command is **“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!”**

But Bible history and antiquity tell us that a few of the early Christians were appalled by the dread of the terrible torture and horrible death before them, and therefore they denied the Lord. Faithfulness - every step, every inch of the way, even unto death - is urged by the Spirit throughout the New Testament, and especially in our present Scripture during severe persecution. Steadfastness to the end must be maintained by the martyr, if the martyr’s crown is to be won.

The Word of God tells of various crowns that may be won by a believer. There are five crowns mentioned in different parts of the New Testament, and there is the crown of gold on the head of every redeemed one in Heaven!

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold” (Revelation 4:4). These four and twenty elders represent the Church after the Rapture. I have been reading Revelation for many years throughout my ministry, I have delivered the series on radio verse-by-verse seven times - and I confess until this study I had never seen the solemn truth that every saint will wear a crown of gold, especially at the marriage supper. After that, I do not know; but here in this Scripture, the saints are pictured wearing crowns of gold.

- The crown of righteousness will be presented to the believers who live holy and righteous in their daily walk here on earth (II Timothy 4:8).

- The crown of glory will be bestowed upon all who shepherd the beloved flock of God faithfully. This is the pastor's crown (I Peter 5:4).
- There is the martyr's crown - the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

There are still other crowns for rewards - and what makes me so happy is the fact that Jesus will personally present the crowns.

Verse 11: **“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.”**

As I have already pointed out, seven times the Spirit admonished individuals to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. It is the responsibility of the individual to hear the message of the Spirit. We will not be excused by God at the judgment seat if we depend upon others to do our hearing, our praying, our confessing. It is an individual matter. We must individually hear and obey what the Spirit has to say to us.

The message to Smyrna closes with a promise: *Overcomers shall in no wise be injured or hurt of the second death.* The synagogue of Satan raged on one hand, the mass of heathen raged on the other. These two powerful forces were allied together to crush Christianity and destroy the Church . . . and between them stood the believer - the one who had confessed the Lord Jesus. His only defense was patience and meekness. What was his human outlook? He could lose everything . . . friends; material goods, loved ones . . . yes, even life itself!

To be an overcomer under such conditions took strong faith, clear spiritual vision and understanding, looking to Him who is invisible. Even though He IS invisible, He is nearer than breath itself, promising never to forsake the saints, but to go with them faithfully even to the end, and through the valley of the shadow of death!

The overcomer may die under torture and in horrible suffering . . . his executioner may delight in shedding his blood; but the overcomer is assured that no matter how horrible physical death may be, the second death shall in no wise, under no circumstances hurt the one who lays down his life for the Gospel!

The second death mentioned here refers, of course, to the lake of fire, the everlasting abode of the wicked and of the devil himself (Revelation 20:10-14; Revelation 21:8). God give us grace, even though we may not be going through the terrible persecution endured by the believers at Smyrna to stand true in this hour when liberalism and modernism are sweeping the country.

To be an old-fashioned, fundamental, God-fearing, Bible-believing Christian may cost you your friends; it may cost you social popularity, or it may cost you your job; but if these dear believers at Smyrna were commanded to be faithful unto death, God pity you and me if we are not willing to suffer the persecution that may befall us in this hour.

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO PERGAMOS

Revelation 2:12-17:

12. **And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;**
13. **I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.**
14. **But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**
15. **So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.**
16. **Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**
17. **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.**

The message to the church at Pergamos is the message to the church under imperial favor . . . the church settled in the world. This period was about A. D. 316, and, of course, will continue on until the Rapture.

Smyrna was about forty miles north of Ephesus, and Pergamos was still farther north. The city of Pergamos had little or no commerce, but was remarkable for its institutions of learning. It was a city of refinement, science - especially medicine. Many kings lived in Pergamos over a period of years. Bible history tells us that the library at Pergamos consisted of 200,000 books! It was in Pergamos that the art of curing skins for writing, was perfected. (The word "parchment" was derived from the process of curing skins to be used for writing.)

The goddess Diana was the great idol in Ephesus, and the deity in Smyrna was Dionysus. Ephesus and Smyrna were evil and wicked cities of idolatry, but Pergamos was even worse. It was known as "**Satan's throne**" and also as the place "**where Satan dwelleth.**" In the outstanding and celebrated temple of Aesculapius was the wreathed serpent, and behind this serpent was Satan ("**the old serpent**"). What a terrible idol to have in a temple! This idol was used in ceremonies for healing.

In reality, this chosen deity of Satan was substituted for the Lord Jesus Christ in that city. Pergamos was the capital of Mysia, and the city today still exists under the name Pergamo. But it is not the city of glory that it was in the day when John wrote to the assembly there.

Verse 12: "**These things saith He that hath the sharp sword with two edges.**"

Thus began the message to the church at Pergamos. These words were used in the glorious description of Christ in the first vision in Revelation (chapter 1:12-16), and are applied several times in the addresses to the churches. In Chapter One, the sword proceeds out of His mouth, while here He is said to have a sharp, two-edged sword. The sword is a symbol of Judgment, and of course the sword that proceeds out of His mouth is the Word of God. Paul tells us that God's Word is quick and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword (Hebrews 4:12).

Verse 13: **“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.”**

Here we have those solemn words again - **“I know.”**

Historians tell us that probably the most severe persecution came under Decius, between A. D. 249 and the Emperor Diocletian, A. D. 284. Satan attempted to destroy Christianity *from without* - but failed. His next move was to destroy the Church in its true character and testimony *from within*. He used “religious” men and teachers to accomplish this deadly, damnable, undercover work.

Paul prophesied this in Acts 20:29-30, and the cruel, ungodly schemers of whom he wrote were certainly operating during the Pergamos period. At the time John wrote, Pergamos was the capital of Roman government in Asia.

Heathenism and idolatry reigned supreme. From Pergamos, which was the center of idolatry and persecution, suffering among the believers spread over all of western Asia. Because of this, Pergamos was called **“Satan’s seat”** (or throne) and **“the city where Satan dwelleth.”** Satan had his headquarters in Pergamos, and from that city he sought to strangle and crush Christianity in that part of the earth. I pointed out in the beginning of this study that the messages to these seven churches not only have to do with the seven local assemblies, but with the Church at different periods from its birth to the Rapture. We must keep this in mind if we are to understand the deep, spiritual meaning of the messages to these individual churches.

Thus, the message to Pergamos brings us up to the time of Constantine . . . the beginning of the fourth century after Christ. The repeated attacks of Satan as a **“roaring lion”** (I Peter 5:8), his open persecution against the Church for two hundred and fifty bloody years, left the Church spiritually richer, if seemingly poorer in the eyes of the world.

Diocletian was the last of the persecuting emperors and his persecution had failed to destroy the Church.

Now Constantine, the first Christian emperor, succeeded his bloody predecessor. When Constantine ascended to the throne, the edicts of his predecessor were repealed and liberty was granted the Christians to worship according to their conscience. This took place in A. D. 313.

However, the Christian religion was regarded as but one of the many religions of the empire. All religions were tolerated. As time went on Constantine learned more about Christianity and became better acquainted with Christians. He noticed that his Christian subjects could be relied upon and trusted, while his pagan subjects were continually causing trouble and giving him much difficulty throughout the empire. This being true, he realized that Christianity certainly had something the pagan religions did not have. Because of this, in A. D. 324 Constantine issued edicts against paganism and sought with all of his power to force Christianity on his empire as the one and only religion. He banished pagans from his court and from his government, and Christians were given posts of honor.

These Christians were not like Daniel.

Because the Emperor offered the gold and positions of honor, many of them eagerly swallowed the bait, sacrificed their convictions and allegiance to the Lord - and the church settled into the world. Before that time the church had walked apart from the world (John 17; II Corinthians 6:14-16). When Constantine made these kind gestures toward the church and believers, they locked arms with him and with the state, and thus the church made a fatal union. The unhappy and spiritually unprofitable alliance of church and state can be dated from that particular time.

Up until this time, the believers met in homes and ordinary places of worship, but now the gorgeous temples of heathenism and the vestments of the priests were consecrated by the Emperor for Christian service. Many times men were forced at the point of the sword to be baptized.

Whereas the church had been in poverty (yet spiritually rich), it now was walking in what seemed to be golden slippers and splendor. In order to keep the good graces of the people, the church was forced to become reconciled to some of the pagan superstitions of the priests who were forced to become Christian at the point of the sword. The admonition to believers is, **“Come ye out from among them . . . have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness . . . how can two walk together except they be agreed?”**

The effects of the unholy alliance that began with Constantine, remain to this present hour.

Verse 13 sheds light that we certainly need today, relative to the devil and his activities here on earth. We learned that the devil does have a throne, and that he does have a dwelling right here on this earth. He is the god of this world, he is the prince of the power of the air.

The New Testament Church is made up of a heavenly people. Our citizenship is in Heaven, the Head and the Foundation of the Church is in Heaven, our conversation is in Heaven, we sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are dead, and our lives are hid with Christ in God. It is a terrible thing when the Church sits down where Satan's seat is, and where Satan dwells.

The false church is minutely described in Revelation chapter 18. There are named 28 items in the false church. The first is GOLD, and the last is SOULS. We will study it carefully when we reach chapter 18.

In spite of the horrible persecution of the church at Pergamos, and in spite of the fact that the church was in the city where Satan had his headquarters, the message declared, **“Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.”** The saints had been tested, and even though their goods had been taken, they had been tortured, robbed and martyred, they did not deny the name of the Lord Jesus, nor did they deny the faith. Satan is a powerful person - but his overthrow is determined, and the moment of his eternal imprisonment is fixed (Revelation 12:7-13; 20:10).

The Spirit gives honor where honor is due. The believers at Pergamos, in spite of all that had come upon them, had not surrendered one article of fundamental truth, had not deviated from the faith **“even in the days in which Antipas, my faithful witness, was slain among you.”**

The name of Antipas, that faithful, uncompromising, fearless witness who sealed his testimony for Christ with his life’s blood, has been handed down to us on the pages of Holy Scriptures.

We do not know one thing about him save his name and the fact that he gave his life for his faith; but there is so much wrapped up in that one sentence, **“MY FAITHFUL WITNESS!”** What the Lord Jesus Christ was to God the Father (Revelation 1:5), Antipas was to the Lord Jesus Christ! Greater words could not be spoken about any saint of God.

Verses 14 and 15: **“But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.”**

Verse 14 opens with the words, **“But I have a few things against thee.”**

These words were spoken to the angel at Ephesus (chapter 2:4) and also to the angel at Thyatira (chapter 2:20). At Ephesus, it was the departure from first love. In Thyatira it was the corruption of doctrine; and here in Pergamos it is plural **“things,”** pointing to more than just one evil.

Always remember that when a minister begins to compromise in the least, the compromising will spread and grow. If we give the devil an inch he will take a mile. A believer cannot do business with the devil in any form, regardless of how insignificant or little it may seem. It does not seem to be such a terrible sin just to love the Lord Jesus a little less; but when our love cools, that always opens the door for other things to happen.

In the church at Pergamos, there were those in the assembly who held to the teaching of Balaam, and those who held to the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. Both groups were tolerated in the local assembly. What Ephesus hated, Pergamos accepted (Revelation 2:6 and 2:15).

If you will study the life of Balaam, you will readily see that his heart was not in the prophecies he was compelled by the Spirit of God to utter (Numbers 23 and 24). The king of Moab had offered him honor and gifts and his soul longed for these things. For enough money, he would curse the people of God. **“HE LOVED THE WAGES OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS”** (II Peter 2:15).

Balaam was exceedingly baffled in his wicked attempts to curse those whom God had abundantly blessed. The ungodly Mesopotamian prophet taught the wicked, demented Moabite king to cast a stumbling block in the path of God’s chosen people, Israel.

The Old Testament does not give us the record of the transaction between these two characters. The prophet and the king went their respective ways (Numbers 24:25). But the scheme succeeded.

Under the direction of their evil leader, the women of Moab caused the children of Israel to sin (Numbers 25-31). Thus Balaam, even more guilty than the king, was (through Satan) the real instigator of the fall of Israel, which led to the signal judgment inflicted through the power of God, upon 24,000 of the people (Numbers 25:9).

Paul refers to this terrible judgment in I Corinthians 10:8: **“Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.”** Peter, Jude, and John, three writers in the New Testament, specifically refer to Balaam. Israel committed two sins which brought this judgment upon them. The sins were idolatry and fornication.

Paul denounced both sins III I Corinthians 10:19-28 and I Corinthians 6:15-18.

In Pergamos, the teachers of these terrible, impure practices were sheltered and protected within the church itself! These sins were the result of the teaching of Balaam. For the born again child of God, any object, any person, place or thing that occupies the place God should OCCUPY in the heart and life of the individual, is an idol, and thus becomes idolatry (I John 5:21).

Verse 16: **“Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”**

Illicit intercourse with the world is spiritual fornication (II Corinthians 6:14-16). In the Old Testament, Israel is charged with adultery in having fellowship with the Gentiles (Jeremiah 3:8). Israel was married to the Lord; thus to be friends with the enemies of the Lord was adultery. In the New Testament, the church is charged with fornication in allowing friendship with the world (Revelation 2:21). (The New Testament Church is not yet married to the Bridegroom. The marriage will take place immediately after the Rapture.)

Thus, for the church to show friendship with the world is spiritual fornication. We are commanded to **“Love not the world . . . come ye out from among them . . . touch not the unclean . . . have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness . . . abstain from the appearance of evil.”** When a believer participates in the things of the world, that participation is spiritual fornication.

There was a difference between the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes and the doctrine of Balaam, but the result of both doctrines was the same-moral ruin to all who participated in such unholy teachings and practices. The outstanding sin in the church at Pergamos was the sin of tolerating evil men and their teaching in the church. Balaam, the false prophet, still has his representatives in the local assemblies today. Men who are twin brothers to Balaam occupy positions of responsibility in the local churches. The sin of Pergamos is still with us.

In the warning to the assembly at Ephesus, the Spirit said, **“Remember, therefore, and repent.”** No assembly on earth at that time had quite so much to be thankful for as the church at Ephesus. Paul had labored at Ephesus for three years. He served with tears and with much suffering. The result was abundant fruit. He had taught the people, suffered with them - and they had grown in grace.

But in spite of it all, they had left their first love. The Spirit admonished the Ephesians to remember the good days, the spiritual days, to remember what they had fallen from, and to repent and return to their former spiritual status, which they had enjoyed under the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

In Pergamos, there had been no Apostle Paul. That church had not had the privileges and the teaching Ephesus had enjoyed. So the Spirit leaves off **“remember,”** and simply states, **“REPENT!”** In Ephesus the message was **“Remember - and repent, or else I will come and remove thy candlestick.”** Here, the warning to Pergamos is **“Repent, or else I will come and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”** In other words, **“I will not only come in judgment - but I will declare war! I will fight with the sword!”** Thus the Lord distinguishes between evils committed by the assemblies. There are degrees of sin - and proportionately, degrees of punishment. The Lord also distinguishes between leaders and those who are led.

In the different forms of discipline suggested in the New Testament, in order to preserve holiness and purity in God’s house and among God’s people, this distinction should be carefully recognized and acted upon in all church discipline. **“Of some, HAVE COMPASSION, MAKING A DIFFERENCE: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”** (Jude 22 and 23).

“The sword of my mouth” refers to the judging power of the Word of God. **“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”** (John 12:48).

Verse 17: **“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.”**

To each of the seven churches is given the solemn admonition, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.”** We then have a promise to the overcomer, concerning special and personal rewards of hidden manna, and a white stone - and in the stone a new name written **“which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”**

Overcoming the world, the flesh, and the devil is an individual matter. WE must be overcomers. Overcoming refers to individuals, not to a group.

There is a peculiar sweetness to the promise given here: **“I give of the hidden manna.”**

In this verse, two times the Lord Jesus declares, **“I give.”**

Manna - and a white stone with a new name. In the Old Testament, manna is declared to be **“angels’ food”** (Psalm 78:25). John 6:33 speaks of manna as **“the bread of God.”** For 12,500 mornings, The Lord God rained down manna from Heaven for His people, Israel, on earth. The God of Israel is God, and He is even more to us in this day of grace than He was to them. This is the most glorious age ever known to man.

In the days when God fed Israel with manna, as a memorial of God's grace to His chosen people, a pot of the manna was laid up before the Lord (Exodus 16:13). Paul informs us that it was placed in a golden pot (Hebrews 9:4).

For approximately five hundred years, this hidden manna spoke of Christ in His humiliation; but the message was to God alone - it was not made for man. While hidden in the ark (the most sacred of all vessels), this manna was put away from the gaze of the people.

Now to the overcomers at Pergamos Christ says, **"I give of the hidden manna."**

Of course, the reward will be given in the future when the final struggle is over. The manna of old was rained down from Heaven for blessing and to satisfy the hunger of the people of God on earth. The hidden manna referred to here is to be given to the overcomers in Heaven. Not only will Christ give the hidden manna to the overcomer, but He also promises, **"I will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."** What are we to understand by the white stone and the secret name?

During the time in which John wrote, a white stone was used in social life and judicial customs. Days of great festivals were noted by a white stone, days of great calamity were noted by a black stone. If a host had a special guest whom he greatly appreciated, the guest was given a white stone with a name or a message written on it, directed only to the guest - not to be shared by any other. In the courts, a white stone meant acquittal. If the prisoner at the bar was given a black stone, that meant condemnation. In our Scripture, Christ promises to the overcomer a white stone, which means victory and final acquittal. We will enter God's glory without spot or wrinkle, without anything at all against us, completely free from any and all sin. The overcomer will have a new name written on the white stone. No one will know the name but the happy person who receives it.

In this expression the Lord Jesus is pointing out His interest in each and every individual overcomer. There are those who say if God is as great as we say He is, He would have no time for poor, finite creatures such as we are; but they are dead wrong. The Lord is concerned about each of His children. He has time for each of us, and He will personally present each overcomer with a white stone, with a message on the stone that no one can appreciate but the one who receives it.

THE SPIRIT'S MESSAGE TO THYATIRA

Revelation 2:18-29:

18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20. 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.

21. **And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.**
22. **Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.**
23. **And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.**
24. **But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.**
25. **But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.**
26. **And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:**
27. **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.**
28. **And I will give him the morning star.**
29. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

The city of Thyatira lay southeast from Pergamos, but is much less outstanding than Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos. However, it has been said that the road from Thyatira to Pergamos is one of the most beautiful in all the world, and this city is identified with Paul's missionary journeys and his labors in Europe.

Paul's first convert was a woman of Thyatira - Lydia, who was a merchant, dealing in purple and fine linen (Acts 16:14). In that day the city was famous for its **"guild of dyers,"** and the goods used in many cities were dyed in Thyatira and shipped out from there. The industry of dying goods was the number one industry of the city, and even until this day the brilliant scarlet cloth dyed in Thyatira is largely used throughout Asia and parts of Europe. Today, Thyatira is a flourishing little town with a population of about 20,000. The church at Thyatira represents the years between 500 and 1500 A. D.

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass."

In Chapter One of our study, in the vision of the Lord Jesus in all of His glory, His eyes were described as a flame of fire, and His feet **"as if they burned in a furnace."** The Spirit assures the assembly at Thyatira that it is the Son of God, the head of the Church, the One who stands in the midst of the assemblies, who is speaking and directing this message to them.

This is the only church in the seven where a woman is mentioned - Jezebel, the wicked wife of the apostate King Ahab, who was nothing more than a tool in her hands. The king was king in name only. The ungodly idolatress and murderess ran the kingdom. She was a very clever and determined woman. She is the prominent person named in the address to Thyatira. It is not just a coincidence that the Holy Spirit mentions a woman in connection with Thyatira.

In Acts 16 we learn of Lydia, whom we have already mentioned as Paul's first convert. However, there is a striking contrast between Lydia and Paul, and the woman Jezebel and Elijah.

Read the account in Acts 16, and then read the comparison in I Kings, chapters 18 and 19.

Of course, after Paul preached the Gospel to Lydia she was converted and invited Paul into her home and became a faithful friend and supporter of the Gospel. On the contrary, Jezebel sought to destroy God's prophet, Elijah.

The message to the church at Thyatira is the longest of the seven messages to the assemblies.

This fourth message is the beginning of the second group. The seven messages are divided into two groups. The first three churches make up one group, and the last four describe the Church minutely from this present day on until the Rapture takes place. The message to the assembly at Thyatira presents the hopeless, helpless, corrupt condition of the local assembly, a condition out of which the local church cannot and will not emerge, a condition that is absolutely incapable of being improved. The message here is to be distinguished from the three previous messages in that here corrupt teachers are permitted to teach corruption, and children are born . . . **"her children"** . . . the children of wicked, adulterous, murderous Jezebel.

What a terrible commentary on the local assembly!

Another thing to be noted here is that a remnant is recognized and addressed separately: **"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden"** (verse 24).

Here the Holy Spirit distinctly points out a group **"as many as have not this doctrine,"** referring to the doctrine taught by Jezebel. She called herself a prophetess, but she was an adulteress, a fornicator and a murderess. In pointing out this remnant, the Holy Spirit distinguishes between the mass in the local assembly, and a faithful company of true believers. I would like for you to notice that in the messages to Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos, the call to **"HEAR what the Spirit saith,"** PRECEDES the promise to **"him that overcometh."** But in the message to Thyatira, the call to hear is found AFTER the promises. In the messages to the first three churches, it is the church that is called to hear what the Spirit has to say; but in the last four churches, beginning with Thyatira, the message is in relation to individuals who hear the words and who overcome.

An outstanding feature of the message to the church at Thyatira is the introduction of the divine speaker by name - The Son of God. This title of personal and divine relationship is used here for the first and last time in the book of Revelation. **"These things saith the Son of God."**

Many believers do not distinguish between the names of Jesus. He is called Jesus; He is called Christ; He is referred to as Lord, as the Lord Jesus Christ, and as the Son of God - and all of these names have a significance. Before Christ was born, Isaiah prophesied, **"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"** (Isaiah 9:6).

We have not time and space to go into all of these names, but they each have a very definite spiritual significance.

- The humanity of the Lord, His relationship to mankind, is conveyed in the title “**Son of Man.**”
- His deity and relationship to Almighty God are conveyed in the title “**Son of God.**”
- His glory and His relationship to the churches, as witnessed by John, were as “**Son of Man**” (Revelation 1:13).

Why then is the divine title, “**Son of God.**” used by the Holy Spirit here in verse 18, and in no other place in the Revelation? The answer can be found only in the Word of God.

Historically, Thyatira covers the period known as the dark ages, and in the message to that church we see in brief the picture of the Roman system of worship and religion . . . the worst system ever to disgrace the earth God created for His people. During the dark ages, Popery was in power. In Popery, every true thought of the New Testament Church is denied and lost.

Certainly Rome boasts loudly of “unity” - but it is her own kind of unity, enforced by the sword, fire, and the dungeon, so unlike DIVINE UNITY which is effected by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 12:13). In the New Testament Church of which Jesus is the head, there IS unity. Popery completely shuts Christ out as the head of the New Testament Church.

Since the church at Thyatira represents the age when Rome took over the reins of religion on earth, we have the statement, “**These things saith the Son of God**” . . . no, not Peter, but the Son of God, the Foundation of the New Testament Church (Matthew 16:16-18). In our present verse the Spirit further identifies the Speaker by saying, “**He that hath His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass.**” This is part of the detailed description of the glorified Son of Man in chapter 1:14, 15.

We should always bear in mind that He to whom all judgment is committed, He who will execute His own judgment, is not only man (John 5:22-27), but He is God as well. He who will judge the quick and the dead is divine as well as human. His eyes “**as a flame of fire**” symbolize His moral hatred and intolerance of evil. He will search out sin and discover all hidden iniquity. Who would even entertain the idea of escaping those eyes as a flame of fire?

What His eyes discover, “**His feet as fine brass**” shall tread upon in judgment. Brass symbolizes judgment.

Every system of evil that bears the Christian name (verse 22) must be utterly and totally destroyed. When the Lord Jesus comes in person to make good His sovereign right to the whole world, His feet are likened unto “**pillars of fire**” (Revelation 10:1,2). Fire is the symbol of judgment (Mark 9:43, Luke 16:24, II Thessalonians 1:8).

Verse 19: “**I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.**”

But the faithful are also commended for their love their service, their faith, and their patience. The word works occurs twice in this commendation to the church at Thyatira. The angel at Ephesus had decreased in love, whereas the angel at Thyatira had increased in works.

The darker the night, the more devoted and zealous were the godly company; their **“last works more than the first”** - more numerous, and more pure. Love is mentioned first (Galatians 5:22) because love is the first and greatest of all Christian graces (I Corinthians 13:13).

Verse 20: **“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.”**

The general state and picture of the church in the middle ages is represented by Thyatira and the condoning of the evil that was present in the very assembly itself.

Why do you suppose the Holy Spirit chose Jezebel to be used as an illustration concerning the doctrine that was being set up and taught in the church at Thyatira? The only way to know the right answer is to compare spiritual things with spiritual.

- Jezebel was a woman,
- Jezebel was a queen,
- Jezebel was an idolatress.
- She was a persecutor and she was the virtual ruler and director of the government of Israel.

Her husband, King Ahab, was nothing more than a puppet in her hands. Read I Kings, chapters 18 through 21. ALL THIS AND MUCH MORE IS SET FORTH IN THE JEZEBEL OF THE REVELATION.

Here in Thyatira, her teaching, her doctrine, is certainly the beginning of the Papal system (read carefully Revelation 17 and 18). She (Jezebel) assumed the title **“PROPHETESS.”** She professed in the assembly at Thyatira to teach with authority. And as she taught, she seduced the minds of the people and trained them to follow her instead of following Him who stands in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.

The Lord had a grave and serious indictment against the assembly at Thyatira. The church was permitting in its midst an evil more serious in character than any evil that had yet appeared in the local assemblies. The Papacy is certainly in the forefront of the message to the church at Thyatira. The supremacy of the Roman pope is simply the development in full of the dispute among the disciples as to **“Who shall be the greatest”** (Mark 9:33,34).

Of course, popery had a beginning - and it certainly did not begin with Peter, because Peter was not a pope; he was just an ordinary human being like all the rest of the disciples.

Today Rome cries out, **“Hear the mother church!”** Again, Rome proclaims, **“The church cannot err in faith and in morals!”** When Rome says **“the church”** she means the Papacy and the Roman system.

It has never been a secret that the Pope claims to be the Vicar of Christ, and boldly declares that the church of Rome is THE church and all other churches and denominations are not right, but are definitely error. Rome claims to be THE church THE authority - and furthermore, Rome claims to be infallible. She cannot err, she cannot do wrong. Rome dreads the light, Rome fears the Bible. "THE CHURCH TEACHES, the church interprets," so says Rome. But the Lord Jesus says, "**Look on the fields. They are white unto harvest. The laborers are few. Go make disciples. Evangelize . . . work while it is day-for the night cometh when no man can work.**"

The Protestant claims to be only a witness in a dark world. The church of Rome claims to be THE church, THE authority, infallible and without flaw. Whenever the church of Rome chooses to make changes in the Word of God to fit her religion, she does so with what she claims to be authority.

But in the last chapter of Revelation, the solemn warning is made clear concerning those who add to or take from the words of prophecy. According to the rules laid down by the Holy Ghost, both teaching and preaching are to be carried out by individuals who are given such gifts by the Lord (Ephesians 4:8-12).

In Revelation 2:20, the Spirit continues by saying, "(Jezebel) **leads my servants astray. She teaches them, and seduces them to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.**"

Today we know Rome has led a great mass of humanity to follow Mary instead of following Christ, to pray to Mary instead of to the one Mediator and Intercessor (I Timothy 2:5, Romans 8:34). Rome has led teeming millions to the Pope instead of to Christ.

Those of us who read, believe, and accept the Bible as God's final word to man, ask, "How can people be so blind?" There is but one God; there is but one Church; there is but one door to Heaven. Jesus said, "**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.**"

Paul dearly teaches that Jesus is the Mediator between God and men, and John plainly tells us that if we confess our sins (to Jesus) He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And yet millions confess their sins to men. God pity some poor religious leaders when they stand before the Righteous Judge, to receive their due reward!

FORNICATION and IDOLATRY were the two great errors in the assembly at Pergamos.

These two satanic deadly evils were taught, practiced and condoned in the assembly at Thyatira. Fornication, as used here, symbolizes the professing Christian living in the world, condoning the world, fellowshiping with the world. This terrible sin began with the reign of Constantine, and grew into the Papacy. Constantine was the first to bring church and state together. He bestowed expensive temples, crowns of gold and much wealth upon the professing church in his day, and the unholy union of church and state was perfected in the Papacy.

Such union is spiritual fornication, and certainly brings judgment. In the end, it will bring horrible and final judgment upon the systems of spiritual fornication.

The Roman system is one of baptized paganism. Most of its doctrines - its holy days, its rites, its dogmas, its ceremonies, its vestments, its titles - are definitely pagan in their origin. If you will study Bible history, you will find that statement to be one hundred percent true.

Jesus Christ is the head and the foundation of the New Testament Church. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is already laid - Jesus Christ, the Lord.

All worship, all prayer, all service and all gifts are to be in His name, to His honor and glory, and they are to be given and performed out of a heart of love - not from fear or necessity.

All religions on earth can be catalogued under two headings: (1) FEAR, and (2) LOVE.

Under fear, you can list every religion on earth except one - Christianity. IT can be listed only under love. It is sometimes referred to as "the Christian religion," but Christianity is much, much more than a religion. Christ is not second to Mary. Christ is not second to any bishop, preacher, evangelist, pope, or what-have-you. He is the head of the Church. He will judge the quick and the dead.

He pleased the Heavenly Father - and He is the One with whom we have to do. Through His shed blood and His broken body we enter boldly into the holy of holies. Through His death, burial and resurrection we are saved.

Through His power we are kept. We are commanded to do all that we do to the glory of God in Jesus' name.

Verse 21: **"And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."**

From its beginning, the Papacy reigned as queen for more than one thousand years. Rome never repented. The Reformation came along, and for three hundred years now in many countries, Rome has been in the minority with Protestantism in the majority. But the Papacy is unchanged. It is as it was in the beginning. The Lord **"gave her space to repent."** There has been no repentance.

The Jezebel (the Papacy) of the last thirteen hundred years is the Babylon of Revelation. Read carefully Revelation 17 and 18 and you will have a clear picture of the progress, growth, power - and finally the destruction - of the Jezebel who first raised her head in Thyatira, announcing herself a prophetess.

God did not make that announcement, the church leaders did not make the announcement. Jezebel set herself up as a prophetess. Rome set herself up as the Vicar of God on earth - but that does not make it so. God has certainly been good in granting so many days of mercy. God has been longsuffering toward Rome - but the divine verdict is recorded in the holy Word: **"She will not repent of her fornication."**

It is not that she cannot repent, but the truth is she WILL not repent. The Papacy in Rome has always been the same. She has never changed. Her character is fixed, and, according to Revelation 17 and 18, her doom is certain.

Verses 22 and 23: **“Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto everyone of you according to your works.”**

In these two verses, three parties are named who will be judged. The first: Jezebel. The second: Those who commit fornication with her. Third: Her children . . . the offspring as a result of fornication.

Jezebel will not repent, her judgment is certain; and those who ally with her will be judged unless they repent of their wickedness committed with Jezebel. Her children will be killed with death . . . and frankly, I believe that goes further than physical death. I believe it means that they will be tormented forever and ever in the lake of fire, and will die eternally.

In verse 23 we find a very important statement: **“And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”**

One day every knee will bow, and every tongue shall confess to God (Romans 14:11). In that day, the masses will learn who is God’s Vicar, who is head of the Church.

They will learn who judges and who forgives. It is no secret that Rome claims to be the representative of God Almighty on this earth today. But beloved, God has but ONE representative on earth today - the Holy Ghost - and He (the Holy Ghost) is in the world, calling out a people who will make up the Bride, the New Testament Church.

- We are convicted through the power of the Spirit (John 16:7-9).
- We are born of the Spirit (John 3:5-7).
- We are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 12:12, 13).
- We are led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14).
- We are assured by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16).
- He indwells every believer (Romans 8:9),
- He seals every believer until the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

God’s Vicar on earth today is the Holy Ghost - not the pope.

No man or woman is God’s representative on earth in this - glorious Dispensation of The Church.

We are saved by God’s grace, through faith. Salvation is the gift of God - but all believers will be rewarded according to their works (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

The same is true concerning the wicked who die in their sin and open their eyes in hell, They will be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:11-15). Salvation depends upon whether or not we receive Jesus as Saviour. If we receive Him we are saved; if we reject Him we are lost. But our eternal reward, whether in Heaven or hell, will be determined by our labors. There will be degrees of rewards in Heaven. There will be degrees of torment in hell. Every person will be judged righteously - God cannot judge any other way.

Verse 24: **“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.”**

The medieval church of the dark ages was not entirely corrupt. The Albigenses and the Waldenses who lived in the thirteenth century stood aloof from Jezebel, the mother of harlots. These dear people, along with others, were witnesses against the corruption of Rome and the Papacy. They were sound and true in their faith.

They had a positive testimony - and they gave it. They boldly denounced Rome, the errors of the Papacy, the heresies of the church and of the Papal system. They were mostly simple, poor, unlearned peasants and mountaineers. They were ignorant - but they were spiritual.

They had not stooped to the **“depths of Satan.”** They were spiritual in their thinking and in their practices of life.

The Lord promised not to place upon them any other burdens. You may rest assured that God will not permit more to come upon us than we are able to bear through His grace. He always furnishes sufficient grace for every trial.

Verse 25: **“But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.”**

What these dear people had, they were not to surrender. They were to hold fast, regardless of the wickedness and immorality of all others. They were to stand fast, they were to refuse to compromise, resting assured that one day Jesus would deliver them from the trial and suffering through which they were passing.

The admonition to all believers is to hold fast **“TILL I COME!”** Always bear in mind, Christian, we are pilgrims and strangers in a strange land. This world is not our home, and we cannot feel at home in this world. We are not OF the world, as Jesus was not of the world. If they hated Him they will hate us. If they persecuted Him they will persecute us. If they crucified Him, do not be surprised if they nail us to a cross. But we have the promise that one day the moment of deliverance will come - HE will come **“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”** We are to stand fast, occupy, and be faithful until He comes. Then we will receive a full reward for our faithful labor of love in the Lord.

I can assure you, my fellow Christian, if you begin to look at churches, church members, preachers and church leaders, you will find yourself ready to give up and quit.

But if you will turn your eyes upon Jesus and look full in His wonderful face, all else will grow strangely dim “in the light of His glory and grace!” Remember - we are serving the Lord Jesus - not man or men, not religions or churches. But we are serving the One who is head of the Church - the Lord Jesus.

It may be true that you have been disappointed in preachers, churches and church members; but you will never be disappointed in Jesus. God help those of us who claim to be followers of fundamental Christianity to be faithful, hold fast, and stand true until Jesus comes.

Personally, I believe His coming is at hand!

The statement “**My works**” here is in contrast with the works of Jezebel (verse 23).

The works of Jezebel were unholy, ungodly - while the works of Jesus are holy and godly. On one occasion Jesus made a statement to His own people. They said, “**We want to work the works of God. What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?**” Jesus answered in these words: “**This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent**” (John 6:29).

Verses 26 and 27: “**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.**”

It is clearly taught in verse 26 that it is not enough to deny Jezebel, and refuse to fellowship with her and her works, doctrines and dogmas - but that we should go further: “**HE THAT KEEPETH MY WORKS UNTO THE END.**” That is the person who will be crowned. That is the person who will have power over the nations, and who will reign and rule with Jesus . . . some over five cities, some over ten cities. Certainly the true doctrine of the difference in rewards is taught here. All will be rewarded - but each one will receive the reward for his own labors.

Again we see that it is Jesus - not Mary, not the pope, not the priest, not the pastor, not the evangelist. I have just as much respect for the popery of Rome as I have for popery as practiced in the protestant denominations of the land. You need not travel to Rome to find a pope. We have popes in some of the protestant churches in the United States. Some preachers dare not preach anything that is not sanctioned by the church bosses in many of the big denominations of our land. When I refer to “popery” I am not only speaking of Rome - I am also talking about religious dictators in any religion, regardless of the brandname stamped on the group.

The promise in our present verse exceeds any promise thus far given to any of the churches - namely, “**authority (power) over the nations.**”

This is the goal of the Papal system. What are we hearing today? One world, one church - and you know as well as I know that in our time a gigantic system is being formed to bring all churches under one head.

The great church councils, the compromise among churchmen, the new revisions and translations of the Bible are breaking down the cardinal truths of fundamental Christianity. There is a powerful drive, energized by the devil himself, to put all religions under one head - and that one head is Rome. Any person who reads the papers and magazines and listens to the radio, knows that this gigantic movement is in progress this very moment. Surely the end must be upon us!

It has always been the ambition of Rome to rule the world - politically and religiously. That ambition will be realized for a short season, but her reign will be brief.

The very instruments of Rome's tyranny will become the means of her destruction. Study carefully Revelation 17:16,17.

The authority of the saints over the nations here on this earth will occur during the Millennium. Jesus will sit on the throne of David, and we will reign with Him for a period of one thousand glorious years. The overcomer shall rule and reign over the angry and rebellious nations with a rod of iron. Their stubborn will shall be broken, their pride shall be humbled, their glory shall be brought to the dust of the earth. All nations and all people will know that God is God, and that God sets in power and authority whom He will. One day all will own the eternal truth that God is sovereign. to that glorious day when evil will and righteousness will rule forever.

Notice the last words in verse 27: “. . . **even as I received of my Father.**” It is very interesting to notice that the grant of authority and power over the nations is made over to Christ, to give to whomsoever He Will. Study all of the second Psalm. But this authority to reign with Him will be given only to the overcomer. Read verse 27 and then compare it with Psalm 2:9. These two verses have much in common.

Verse 28: “**And I will give him the morning star.**” Not only will the Son of God give to the overcomer the authority to rule and reign over the nations, but a greater, richer promise is made to the overcomer . . . “**I will give him the morning star,**” a personal interest in Christ Himself.

Hear these precious words: “**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father! The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are THE CHILDREN OF God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together**” (Romans 8:14-17).

Here Paul reveals to us, through the Spirit, that we are the sons of God the Father, we are the children of God, we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ . . . that is, “**if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together.**” If we suffer with Jesus - If we overcome, if we bear the cross, we will share the crown. But if we deny the Cross we will be ashamed at His coming. Read Revelation 2:28, 22:16, and Malachi 4:2, and compare these verses. It will bless your heart.

Verse 29: “**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**”

This solemn admonition is directed to all the churches. The call to hear, in the preceding chapter, was given before the promise to the overcomer; but in this Epistle to the church at Thyatira, and in the following three, the admonition to hear what the Spirit saith is given after the promise is made to the overcomer.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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