

Message One

The Faithful Witness of God for the Testimony of Jesus

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:1-2, 5, 9-12; 7:9-17; 19:10

Rev. 1:1-2—The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show to His slaves the things that must quickly take place; and He made *it* known by signs, sending *it* by His angel to His slave John, ²Who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* all that he saw.

Rev. 1:5—And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

Rev. 1:9-12—I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea. ¹²And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

Rev. 7:9-17—After these things I saw, and behold, *there was* a great multitude which no one could number, out of every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb. ¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, ¹²Saying, Amen. The blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanks and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen. ¹³And one of the elders answered, saying to me, These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where did they come from? ¹⁴And I said to him, My lord, you know. And he said to me, These are those who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Because of this they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits upon the throne will tabernacle over them. ¹⁶They will not hunger anymore, neither will they thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat upon them, nor any heat; ¹⁷For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

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

I. Christ is the faithful Witness of God, the testimony and expression of God; His expressing God is His witnessing—Rev. 1:5; 3:14:

Rev. 1:5—And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

Rev. 3:14—And to the messenger of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God:

- A. Christ is the Witness of God, the testimony and expression of God; the church is the testimony and expression of Christ; as such, the church is the reproduction of the testimony and expression of God in Christ—1:5.

Rev. 1:5—And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

- B. Revelation presents to us the revealed Christ and the testifying church, which is the testimony of Jesus; Christ is the testimony of God, and the church is the testimony of Jesus, the enlarged Christ as the corporate expression of the Triune God—John 1:18; 5:31-37; 8:14; Rev. 1:2, 5, 9; 19:10; cf. Gen. 1:26.

John 1:18—No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

John 5:31-37—If I testify concerning Myself, My testimony is not true. ³²There is another who testifies concerning Me, and I know that the testimony which he testifies concerning Me is true. ³³You have sent *people* to John, and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴But *it* is not from man *that* I receive My testimony, but I say these things that you may be saved. ³⁵He was the lamp that was burning and shining, and you were willing to exult for a while in his light. ³⁶But I have the testimony *which is* greater than *that* of John, for the works which the Father has given Me to finish, the works themselves which I do, testify concerning Me that the Father has sent Me. ³⁷And the Father who sent Me, He has testified concerning Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor have you seen His form,

John 8:14—Jesus answered and said to them, Even if I testify concerning Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

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

Rev. 1:5—And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

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

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

cf. Gen. 1:26—And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

II. The testimony of Jesus is the seven golden lampstands—golden (divine) in nature, shining in darkness, and identical with one another—Rev. 1:1-2, 9-12:

Rev. 1:1-2—The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show to His slaves the things that must quickly take place; and He made *it* known by signs, sending *it* by His angel

to His slave John, ²Who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* all that he saw.

Rev. 1:9-12—I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea. ¹²And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

A. The golden lampstand symbolizes the Triune God; the Father as the substance is embodied in the Son, the Son as the embodiment is expressed through the Spirit, the Spirit is fully realized and expressed as the churches, and the churches are the testimony of Jesus—Exo. 25:31-40; Zech. 4:2-10; Rev. 1:10-12.

Exo. 25:31-40—And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand *with* its base and its shaft shall be made of beaten work; its cups, its calyxes, and its blossom buds shall be of *one piece with it*. ³²And there shall be six branches going out of its sides; three branches of the lampstand out of one of its sides, and three branches of the lampstand out of its other side; ³³Three cups made like almond *blossoms* in one branch, a calyx and a blossom bud; and three cups made like almond *blossoms* in the other branch, a calyx and a blossom bud—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand. ³⁴And *there shall be* on the lampstand four cups made like almond *blossoms*, its calyxes and its blossom buds; ³⁵And a calyx under two branches of *one piece with it*, and a calyx under two branches of *one piece with it*, and a calyx under two branches of *one piece with it*, for the six branches going out of the lampstand. ³⁶Their calyxes and their branches shall be of *one piece with it*; all of it one beaten work of pure gold. ³⁷And you shall make its lamps, seven; and set up its lamps to give light to the area in front of it. ³⁸And its tongs and its firepans shall be of pure gold. ³⁹It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. ⁴⁰And see that you make *them* according to their pattern, which was shown to you in the mountain.

Zech. 4:2-10—And he said to me, What do you see? And I said, I see that there is a lampstand all of gold, with its bowl on top of it and its seven lamps upon it, with seven pipes for each of the lamps on top of it; ³And *there are* two olive trees beside it, one to the right of the bowl and one to the left. ⁴And I answered and spoke to the angel who spoke with me, saying, What are these, sir? ⁵And the angel who spoke with me answered and said to me, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, sir. ⁶And he answered and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says Jehovah of hosts. ⁷Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you will become* a plain, and he will bring forth the topstone with shouts of Grace, grace to it! ⁸Moreover the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, ⁹The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish *it*; and you will know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me to you. ¹⁰For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; they are the eyes of Jehovah running to and fro on the whole earth.

Rev. 1:10-12—I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to

Philadelphia and to Laodicea. ¹²And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

- B. To experience the golden lampstands as the testimony of Jesus, the corporate expression of Jesus (Acts 9:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12), we must be filled with the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7) by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus continually (1 Cor. 12:3, 13; Rom. 10:12-13; Lam. 3:55-56) to bear the brands of Jesus (Gal. 6:17) as brothers and fellow partakers in the tribulation, kingdom, and endurance in Jesus (Rev. 1:9-10).

Acts 9:4-5—And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? ⁵And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He *said*, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

1 Cor. 12:12—For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

Acts 16:7—And when they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, yet the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

1 Cor. 12:3—Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus *is* accursed; and no one can say, Jesus *is* Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:13—For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

Rom. 10:12-13—For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord *is* Lord of all *and* rich to all who call upon Him; ¹³For “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Lam. 3:55-56—I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, From the lowest pit. ⁵⁶You have heard my voice; do not hide Your ear at my breathing, at my cry.

Gal. 6:17—Henceforth let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of Jesus.

Rev. 1:9-10—I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰I was in spirit on the Lord’s Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

- C. The beating of the gold to form a stand signifies the believers’ participation in Christ’s sufferings; everything that goes on in our environment is for the producing of the beaten lampstand—Exo. 25:31; Col. 1:24:

Exo. 25:31—And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand *with* its base and its shaft shall be made of beaten work; its cups, its calyxes, and its blossom buds shall be of *one piece with* it.

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

1. If we set our mind on knowing God—submitting to the inward working of the Spirit and to the outward environment—every circumstance will become

an opportunity for us to know Him—Hosea 6:1-3; Phil. 3:10a; Eph. 6:20; cf. Gen. 41:42.

Hosea 6:1-3—Come and let us return to Jehovah; For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us, And He has stricken *us*, but He will bind us up. ²He will enliven us after two days; On the third day He will raise us up, And we will live in His presence. ³Therefore let us know, let us pursue knowing Jehovah: His going forth is as sure as the dawn, And He will come to us as the rain, As the late rain which waters the earth.

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

Eph. 6:20—For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

cf. Gen. 41:42—And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck.

2. If a man does not know God in his lifetime, he has wasted his whole life; may the Lord make us willing to accept His dealings in our circumstances so that we may know Him more—2 Cor. 4:16-18; 12:7-9; cf. Isa. 7:14-15; 2 Cor. 5:14-15. **2 Cor. 4:16-18**—Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Cor. 12:7-9—And because of the transcendence of the revelations, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up. ⁸Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

cf. Isa. 7:14-15—Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵He will eat curds and honey until he knows how to refuse evil and choose good.

cf. 2 Cor. 5:14-15—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

3. The crux of the matter is whether or not one encounters the Lord as the great light in the midst of difficulties and trials; suffering can make us understand what we otherwise could not understand—1:8-9; cf. Eph. 1:17; Luke 1:78-79. **2 Cor. 1:8-9**—For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell *us* in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond *our* power, so that we despaired even of living. ⁹Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

cf. Eph. 1:17—That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

cf. Luke 1:78-79—Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high, ⁷⁹To shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

- D. The shining of the golden lampstands is so that people may see the vision of the glorious Christ as the Son of Man walking in their midst; by knowing the Lord in the midst of the churches as the One who is living forever and ever, we can be assured of His presence in our spirit all the time; He lives always to intercede for us, He appears now before the face of God for us, and He will never fail us nor forsake us—Rev. 1:12-18; 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:22; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; Num. 6:22-27; Deut. 31:6.

Rev. 1:12-18—And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle. ¹⁴And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; ¹⁵And His feet were like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace; and His voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face *shone* as the sun shines in its power. ¹⁷And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead; and He placed His right hand on me, saying, Do not fear; I am the First and the Last ¹⁸And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Rev. 2:1—To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Heb. 7:25—Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Heb. 9:24—For Christ did not enter into a holy place made by hands, a figure of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God for us;

Num. 6:22-27—Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ²³Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the children of Israel; you shall say to them, ²⁴Jehovah bless you and keep you; ²⁵Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. ²⁷So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel, that I Myself may bless them.

Deut. 31:6—Be strong and take courage; do not fear, neither be terrified of them, for it is Jehovah your God who goes with you; He will not fail you nor forsake you.

- E. The shining of the seven lamps of the golden lampstands, the Lord Jesus walking in their midst with His seven eyes like a flame of fire, His feet like shining bronze, and the shining of His face as the sun indicate that we need more and more of the Lord's shining day by day in our daily life and church life

for more and more of His shepherding—saving, restoring, reviving, and deifying—Rev. 1:14b-15a, 16b; 4:5; 5:6; Luke 1:78-79; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; Mal. 4:2; Prov. 4:18; Psa. 22, title; 80:1-3, 7, 15-19.

Rev. 1:14-15—And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; ¹⁵And His feet were like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace; and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

Rev. 1:16—And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face *shone* as the sun shines in its power.

Rev. 4:5—And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

Rev. 5:6—And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Luke 1:78-79—Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high, ⁷⁹To shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

2 Cor. 4:6-7—Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ⁷But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

Mal. 4:2—But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.

Prov. 4:18—But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

Psa. 80:1-3—O Shepherd of Israel, give ear, / You who lead Joseph like a flock; / You who are enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth. ²Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh / Stir up Your might, / And come to save us. ³O God, restore us; / And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Psa. 80:7—O God of hosts, restore us; / And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Psa. 80:15-19—Even the stock which Your right hand has planted / And the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. ¹⁶It is burned with fire; it is cut down; / They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. ¹⁷Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, / Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself; ¹⁸Then we will not turn back from You. / Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. ¹⁹O Jehovah God of hosts, restore us; / Cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

- F. Enlightening rests with the mercy of God; whenever God comes and bestows His mercy, the light of His countenance is our light, His appearing is our vision, and His presence is our gain—Rom. 9:15; Acts 9:3-4; Isa. 50:10-11; Num. 6:25-26:

Rom. 9:15—For to Moses He says, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.”

Acts 9:3-4—And as he went, he drew near to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?

Isa. 50:10-11—Who among you fears Jehovah; Who hears the voice of His servant; Who walks in darkness And has no light? Let him trust in the name of Jehovah, And rely on his God. ¹¹Indeed, all of you who kindle a fire, Who surround yourselves with firebrands, Walk into the light of your fire And into the firebrands which you have lit. You will have this from My hand: You will lie down in torment.

Num. 6:25-26—Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

1. In order to be enlightened, we must want and accept the Lord’s shining, setting our heart to be single in seeking the Lord alone with all our desire—Psa. 139:23-24; Phil. 2:12-16; 2 Chron. 12:14; 16:12; 34:1-3; Psa. 27:8; 73:25; Luke 11:33-36.

Psa. 139:23-24—Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxious thoughts; ²⁴And see if there is some harmful way in me, And lead me on the eternal way.

Phil. 2:12-16—So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for *His* good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without murmurings and reasonings ¹⁵That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world, ¹⁶Holding forth the word of life, so that I may have a boast in the day of Christ that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.

2 Chron. 12:14—And he did what was evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek Jehovah.

2 Chron. 16:12—And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet; his disease was very severe, yet even in his disease he pursued not Jehovah but the physicians.

2 Chron. 34:1-3—Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ²And he did what was right in the eyes of Jehovah and walked in the ways of David his father and did not turn to the right or to the left. ³And in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek after the God of David his father. And in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places and the Asherahs and the idols and the molten images.

Psa. 27:8—*When You say, Seek My face, To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.*

Psa. 73:25—Whom do I have in heaven *but You*? And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth.

Luke 11:33-36—No one, after lighting a lamp, puts *it* in the cellar or under the bushel, but on the lampstand, in order that those who enter in may see the light. ³⁴The lamp of the body is your eye. When your eye is single, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, your body also is dark. ³⁵Watch out therefore that the light which is in you is not darkness. ³⁶If therefore your whole body is full of light and does not have any dark part, the whole will be full of light as when the lamp with its rays illuminates you.

2. In order to be enlightened, we must open ourselves to the Lord, turn our heart to Him, and place ourselves before Him without any reservation or holding back; those who close themselves to the Lord are experts in judging and criticizing others—2 Cor. 3:16; Prov. 20:27; Matt. 7:1-5; Luke 6:36-37, 41-42. **2 Cor. 3:16**—But whenever *their heart* turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Prov. 20:27—The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.

Matt. 7:1-5—Do not judge, that you be not judged. ²For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you. ³And why do you look at the splinter which is in your brother's eye, but the beam in your eye you do not consider? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, Let me remove the splinter from your eye, and behold, the beam is in your eye? ⁵Hypocrite, first remove the beam from your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye.

Luke 6:36-37—Be full of compassion, even as your Father also is full of compassion. ³⁷And do not judge, and you shall by no means be judged; and do not condemn, and you shall by no means be condemned; release, and you will be released;

Luke 6:41-42—And why do you look at the splinter which is in your brother's eye, but the beam which is in your own eye you do not consider? ⁴²How can you say to your brother, Brother, let me remove the splinter which is in your eye, you yourself not seeing the beam which is in your eye? Hypocrite, first remove the beam from your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the splinter which is in your brother's eye.

3. In order to be enlightened, we must put a stop to ourselves; this means to put a stop to our views, our ways of looking at things, our feelings, our ideas, and our opinions; when a person who is completely stopped comes before the Lord, he can be exceedingly single and simple in receiving the word of the Lord—10:38-42; John 11:21-28; Isa. 40:31; Matt. 5:3; Luke 18:15-17; Isa. 66:1-2. **Luke 10:38-42**—Now as they went, He entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her home. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word. ⁴⁰But Martha was being drawn about with much serving, and she came up to *Him* and said, Lord, does it not matter to You that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to do her part with me. ⁴¹But the Lord answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you

are anxious and troubled about many things; ⁴²But there is need of one thing, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

John 11:21-28—Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You. ²³Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. ²⁴Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection in the last day. ²⁵Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live; ²⁶And everyone who lives and believes into Me shall by no means die forever. Do you believe this? ²⁷She said to Him, Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, He who comes into the world. ²⁸And when she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here and is calling you.

Isa. 40:31—Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew *their* strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles; They will run and will not become weary; They will walk and will not faint.

Matt. 5:3—Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Luke 18:15-17—And they were bringing to Him also their babies that He might touch them. But when the disciples saw *this* they rebuked them. ¹⁶But Jesus called them to *Him*, saying, Allow the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁷Truly I say to you, Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child shall by no means enter into it.

Isa. 66:1-2—Thus says Jehovah, Heaven is My throne, And the earth the footstool for My feet. Where then is the house that you will build for Me, And where is the place of My rest? ²For all these things My hand has made, And *so* all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. But to this kind of man will I look, to *him who is* poor And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.

4. In order to be enlightened, we must not dispute with the light of the Spirit who speaks within us, and we should not dispute with the ministers of the Spirit who speak without—Acts 22:10; S. S. 5:4-6; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 11:2-3; Num. 16:1-7, 31-39; 17:1-8; cf. Exo. 33:11-14.

Acts 22:10—And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, Rise up and go into Damascus, and there it will be told to you concerning all the things which have been appointed to you to do.

S. S. 5:4-6—My beloved put his hand into the opening *of the door*; And my inner parts yearned for him. ⁵I rose up to open to my beloved; And my hands dripped with myrrh, My fingers with liquid myrrh, Upon the handles of the bolt. ⁶I opened to my beloved, But my beloved had withdrawn; he was gone. My soul failed when he spoke; I sought him, but found him not; I called him—he answered me not.

2 Cor. 10:3-5—For though we walk in flesh, we do not war according to flesh; ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds, ⁵As we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.

2 Cor. 11:2-3—For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present *you as* a pure virgin to Christ. ³But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

Num. 16:1-7—Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben, took *men* ²And rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred fifty leaders of the assembly, who were summoned to the meeting, well-known men. ³And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, You take too much upon yourselves, for all the assembly are holy, every one of them, and Jehovah is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of Jehovah? ⁴And when Moses heard *this*, he fell on his face. ⁵And he spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, In the morning Jehovah will make known who is His and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose He will bring near to Himself. ⁶Do this: Take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company, ⁷And put fire in them, and put incense on them before Jehovah tomorrow; and the man whom Jehovah chooses, he *shall be* holy. It is you who take too much upon yourselves, O sons of Levi!

Num. 16:31-39—And as soon as he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them was split open. ³²So the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, along with their households and everyone who belonged to Korah and all *their* possessions. ³³So they and all that belonged to them descended alive into Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the congregation. ³⁴And all Israel who were around them fled at their outcry, for they said, The earth may swallow us up too! ³⁵And fire came forth from Jehovah and consumed the two hundred fifty men who presented the incense. ³⁶Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁷Tell Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to take the censers up out of the burning and scatter the fire about; for they are holy. ³⁸The censers of those who have sinned against their own lives, let them be made into beaten plates for a covering of the altar, for they presented them before Jehovah and they became holy. So they shall be a sign to the children of Israel. ³⁹And Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers which those who were burned had offered; and they beat them out as a covering of the altar,

Num. 17:1-8—Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ²Speak to the children of Israel, and take from them rods, one for each father's house, twelve rods from all their leaders according to their fathers' houses; you shall write everyone's name upon his rod. ³And you shall write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi, for there shall be one rod for the head *of each* of their fathers' houses. ⁴And you shall place them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. ⁵And the rod of the man whom I choose shall bud, and I will put a stop to the murmurings of the children of Israel against Me, which they murmur against you. ⁶So Moses spoke to the children of Israel. And every one of their leaders gave him a rod, one rod for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods, with the rod of Aaron among their rods. ⁷And Moses placed the rods before Jehovah in the Tent of the Testimony. ⁸And on the next day Moses went into the Tent of the Testimony, and there was the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi: it had budded; it even put forth buds and produced blossoms and bore ripe almonds.

cf. **Exo. 33:11-14**—And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent. ¹²And Moses said to Jehovah, See, You say to me, Bring up this people; but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, I know you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight. ¹³Now therefore if I have found favor in Your sight, please let me know now Your ways, that I may know You, so that I may continue to find favor in Your sight. Consider also that this nation is Your people. ¹⁴And He said, My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest.

5. In order to be enlightened, we must continuously live in the light—Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:7; Heb. 9:14; 10:22; Matt. 5:3, 8, 14; Psa. 119:105; Rev. 1:20; Psa. 36:8-9.

Isa. 2:5—House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah.

1 John 1:7—But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

Heb. 9:14—How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb. 10:22—Let us come forward to *the Holy of Holies* with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Matt. 5:3—Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Matt. 5:8—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Matt. 5:14—You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city situated upon a mountain to be hidden.

Psa. 119:105—Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Rev. 1:20—The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Psa. 36:8-9—They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures. ⁹For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

III. The testimony of Jesus is the great multitude serving God in the temple, the whole Body of God's redeemed, who have been raptured to the heavens to enjoy God's care and the Lamb's shepherding with all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies and in Christ that can be enjoyed today—Rev. 7:9-17; Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:14; Gen. 12:2; cf. Rev. 21:3-4; 22:3-5; Isa. 49:10:

Rev. 7:9-17—After these things I saw, and behold, *there was* a great multitude which no one could number, out of every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne and

to the Lamb. ¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, ¹²Saying, Amen. The blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanks and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen. ¹³And one of the elders answered, saying to me, These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where did they come from? ¹⁴And I said to him, My lord, you know. And he said to me, These are those who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Because of this they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits upon the throne will tabernacle over them. ¹⁶They will not hunger anymore, neither will they thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat upon them, nor any heat; ¹⁷For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Eph. 1:3—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,

Gal. 3:14—In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Gen. 12:2—And I will make of you a great nation, And I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

cf. Rev. 21:3-4—And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will be no more, nor will there be sorrow or crying or pain anymore; for the former things have passed away.

cf. Rev. 22:3-5—And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him; ⁴And they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

cf. Isa. 49:10—They will not hunger or thirst; Neither the scorching heat nor the sun will strike them; For He who has compassion on them will lead them And will guide them beside the springs of water;

A. The great multitude consists of those who have been purchased with the blood of the Lamb from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue to be the constituents of the church—Rev. 7:9a; 5:9; Rom. 11:25; Acts 15:14, 19; 1 Cor. 6:19-20.

Rev. 7:9—After these things I saw, and behold, *there was* a great multitude which no one could number, out of every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches in their hands.

Rev. 5:9—And they sing a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain and have purchased for God by Your blood *men* out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

Rom. 11:25—For I do not want you, brothers, to be ignorant of this mystery (lest you be wise in yourselves), that hardness has come upon Israel in part, until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in;

Acts 15:14—Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles to take out from *them* a people for His name.

Acts 15:19—Therefore I judge that we do not harass those from the Gentiles who are turning to God,

1 Cor. 6:19-20—Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.

B. “These are those who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”—Rev. 7:14:

1. The great tribulation in verse 14 refers to the tribulations, sufferings, persecutions, and afflictions experienced by God’s redeemed people throughout the ages—John 16:33.

Rev. 7:14—And I said to him, My lord, you know. And he said to me, These are those who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

John 16:33—These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

2. The blood of the Lamb answers before God all the accusations of the devil against us and gives us the victory over him (Rev. 12:11); because of the redeeming Christ as the opened fountain of blood for all our sin and impurity (Zech. 13:1; John 19:34), we can plunge beneath that blood, lose all our guilty stains (*Hymns*, #1006, stanza 1), and “rise to walk in God’s own light / Above the world and sin, / With heart renewed and garments white / And Christ enthroned within” (*Hymns*, #1010, stanza 3).

Rev. 12:11—And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

Zech. 13:1—In that day there will be an opened fountain for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.

John 19:34—But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

3. To wash our robes is to keep our conduct clean through the washing of the blood of the Lamb; this gives us the right to enjoy the tree of life and to enter into the city of life as the realm of God’s eternal blessings—1 John 1:7; Rev. 22:14.

1 John 1:7—But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

Rev. 22:14—Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

- C. Those of the great multitude are standing before the throne and before the Lamb with palm branches in their hands—7:9b:

Rev. 7:9—After these things I saw, and behold, *there was* a great multitude which no one could number, out of every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches in their hands.

1. Palm branches signify our victory over tribulation, which we have undergone for the Lord's sake; palm trees are also a sign of satisfaction gained through being watered—v. 14; cf. John 12:13; Exo. 15:27.

Rev. 7:14—And I said to him, My lord, you know. And he said to me, These are those who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

cf. John 12:13—Took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!

cf. Exo. 15:27—And they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters.

2. In the Triune God as the temple of God, we will serve Him day and night to enjoy Him as the eternal Feast of Tabernacles and to flourish in life like the palm tree—Rev. 7:15a; 3:12; Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:15; Psa. 92:12-13; John 7:2, 37-39; Rom. 1:9; Col. 2:19.

Rev. 7:15—Because of this they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits upon the throne will tabernacle over them.

Rev. 3:12—He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Lev. 23:40—And on the first day you shall take for yourselves the product of stately trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God for seven days.

Neh. 8:15—And that they publish and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, Go out to the mountain and bring olive branches and wild olive branches and myrtle branches and palm branches and branches of *other* leafy trees to make booths, as it is written.

Psa. 92:12-13—The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree; He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³Planted in the house of Jehovah, They will flourish in the courts of our God.

John 7:2—Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was near.

John 7:37-39—Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

³⁹But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Rom. 1:9—For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

3. Our service in time today is a preparation for our service in eternity; God's only goal in time is to dispense Himself into us day by day; when God comes into us and comes out of us, that is service—Matt. 25:19-23; John 7:37-39.

Matt. 25:19-23—Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And he who had received the five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, Master, you delivered to me five talents; behold, I have gained another five talents. ²¹His master said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master. ²²And he *who had received* the two talents also came and said, Master, you delivered to me two talents; behold, I have gained another two talents. ²³His master said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

John 7:37-39—Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

- D. We will not hunger or thirst anymore—Rev. 7:16a:

Rev. 7:16—They will not hunger anymore, neither will they thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat upon them, nor any heat;

1. To hunger and thirst is to have a hope that is not yet satisfied; Christ promises that everyone who believes into Him will be satisfied and receive Him as their satisfying life—John 6:35.

John 6:35—Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.

2. To contact God the Spirit in our spirit is to drink of the living water, and to drink of the living water is to render real worship to God—4:13-14, 23-24.

John 4:13-14—Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again, ¹⁴But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

John 4:23-24—But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

- E. The beating sun and the scorching heat will not strike us—Rev. 7:16b:
Rev. 7:16—They will not hunger anymore, neither will they thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat upon them, nor any heat;
1. The Lamb-God sitting upon the throne will tabernacle over us, overshadowing us with Himself—v. 15b; 2 Cor. 12:9.
Rev. 7:15—Because of this they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits upon the throne will tabernacle over them.
2 Cor. 12:9—And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.
 2. There is one kind of life that is under God's overshadowing—it is a life that is hidden in God—Psa. 36:7-9; Eph. 6:17; Psa. 91:1; 17:8; 57:1; Ruth 2:12.
Psa. 36:7-9—How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Thus the sons of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. ⁸They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures. ⁹For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.
Eph. 6:17—And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God,
Psa. 91:1—He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
Psa. 17:8—Guard me like the pupil of *Your* eye; In the shadow of Your wings hide me
Psa. 57:1—Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me; For my soul takes refuge in You; Indeed in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge, Until the destruction passes by.
Ruth 2:12—May Jehovah recompense your work, and may you have a full reward from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.
 3. Christ as Jehovah and also as man is the King who is supplying, caring for, and covering God's people; He is the King for ruling and a man who is like a refuge from the wind and a covering from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, and like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land—Isa. 32:1-2.
Isa. 32:1-2—Indeed a King will reign according to righteousness, And the rulers will rule according to justice. ²And a man will be like a refuge from the wind And a covering from the tempest, Like streams of water in a dry place, Like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land.
- F. The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd us and guide us to springs of waters of life—Rev. 7:17a:
Rev. 7:17—For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

1. Shepherding includes feeding; under the shepherding of Christ, “I will lack nothing”—Psa. 23:1.

Psa. 23:1—Jehovah is my Shepherd; I will lack nothing.

2. We can never improve ourselves, and we need a shepherd to feed us all the time; He feeds the lambs with His experience as the Lamb of God, who is on the throne of God in and for the house of God—vv. 2-6; Rev. 22:1.

Psa. 23:2-6—He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside waters of rest. ³He restores my soul; He guides me on the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴Even though I walk Through the valley of the shadow of death, I do not fear evil, For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, They comfort me. ⁵You spread a table before me In the presence of my adversaries; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. ⁶Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me All the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah For the length of *my* days.

Rev. 22:1—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

- G. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes—7:17b:

Rev. 7:17—For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

1. Tears are unavoidable in this age, but our tears are put into God's bottle and recorded in His book—Heb. 5:7; Acts 20:19, 31; Psa. 56:8; cf. Mal. 3:16.

Heb. 5:7—This One, in the days of His flesh, having offered up both petitions and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him out of death and having been heard because of *His* piety,

Acts 20:19—Serving the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears and trials which came upon me by the plots of the Jews;

Acts 20:31—Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.

Psa. 56:8—You have counted my wanderings. Put my tears into Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?

cf. Mal. 3:16—Then those who feared Jehovah spoke to one another, each with his neighbor. And Jehovah gave heed and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who feared Jehovah and considered His name.

2. Because the Lamb supplies us with waters of life for our satisfaction, the water of tears is wiped away—Jer. 9:1; 2:13; cf. 15:16; Lam. 3:21-25, 55-56.

Jer. 9:1—Oh that my head were waters, And my eye a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!

Jer. 2:13—For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew out for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, Which hold no water.

cf. Jer. 15:16—Your words were found and I ate them, And Your word became to me
The gladness and joy of my heart, For I am called by Your name, O Jehovah, God of
hosts.

cf. Lam. 3:21-25—This I recall to my heart; Therefore I have hope. ²²*It is Jehovah's*
lovingkindness that we are not consumed, For His compassions do not fail; ²³They
are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ²⁴Jehovah is my portion, says my
soul; Therefore I hope in Him. ²⁵Jehovah is good to those who wait on Him, To the
soul that seeks Him.

cf. Lam. 3:55-56—I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, From the lowest pit. ⁵⁶You
have heard my voice; do not hide Your ear at my breathing, at my cry.

3. Thank God that the days of sorrow and the things of sorrow will not last; the
world is passing away, and we are blessed to drink of the flowing Triune God
until we become the totality of eternal life, the New Jerusalem—John 4:14b.
John 4:14—But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means
thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of
water springing up into eternal life.

Message Two

Christ Having the Keys of Death and Hades

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:17-18; 10:7; 12:11; 15:1, 8; Acts 2:24; Phil. 3:10-11

Rev. 1:17-18—And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead; and He placed His right hand on me, saying, Do not fear; I am the First and the Last ¹⁸And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Rev. 10:7—But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to trumpet, then the mystery of God is finished, as He has announced the good news to His own slaves the prophets.

Rev. 12:11—And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

Rev. 15:1—And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels having seven plagues, the last *plagues*; for in them the fury of God was finished.

Rev. 15:8—And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one could enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

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

Phil. 3:10-11—To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

I. “I am the First and the Last and the living One”—Rev. 1:17b-18a:

- A. Christ’s being the First and the Last implies that He will accomplish what He has begun.
- B. The Lord Jesus is not only the First but also the Beginning, and not only the Last but also the End—21:6; 22:13:

Rev. 21:6—And He said to me, They have come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give to him who thirsts from the spring of the water of life freely.

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

- 1. *The First* indicates that none is before Him, and *the Last* that none is after Him.
- 2. *The Beginning* indicates that He is the origination of all things, and *the End* that He is the consummation of all things.
- 3. The indication here is not only that there is nothing before or after the Lord Jesus but also that there is no origination or consummation without Him.
- C. Christ is not only the First and the Last but also the Beginning and the End; this assures us that having started the church life, He will surely accomplish it—cf. 2 Tim. 4:5:

cf. 2 Tim. 4:5—But you, be sober in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelist, fully accomplish your ministry.

- 1. The Lord Jesus will never leave His work unfinished—Rev. 10:7; 15:1, 8.

Rev. 10:7—But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to trumpet, then the mystery of God is finished, as He has announced the good news to His own slaves the prophets.

Rev. 15:1—And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels having seven plagues, the last *plagues*; for in them the fury of God was finished.

Rev. 15:8—And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one could enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

2. All the local churches must believe that the Lord Jesus is the Beginning and the End.
3. He will accomplish what He has begun in His recovery.
- D. The Christ who walks in the midst of the churches, who is the Head of the churches and to whom the churches belong, is the living One; hence, the churches also, as the expression of the Body, should be living, fresh, and strong—2:1.
Rev. 2:1—To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

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

- A. The Lord suffered death and lived again—2:8.
Rev. 2:8—And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the First and the Last, who became dead and lived *again*:
- B. Christ entered into death, but death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24), because He is the resurrection (John 11:25).
Acts 2:24—Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.
John 11:25—Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
- C. Resurrection is the lengthening of the Lord’s days; He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection:
 1. Jesus Christ today is the living One, the One who is in resurrection.
 2. For Christ to dispense life, He must be the living One.
- D. The importance of Christ’s being the living One is that He is living forever and is living in us:
 1. He wants us to leave every kind of death and rise up to be the living church.
 2. The more living we are, the more we are the testimony of the living Jesus—Rev. 12:11.
Rev. 12:11—And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

III. “In which also He [Christ] went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison”— 1 Pet. 3:19:

- A. *The spirits* here refers not to the disembodied spirits of dead human beings held in Hades but to the angels (angels are spirits—Heb. 1:14) who fell through dis-

obedience at Noah's time and are imprisoned in pits of gloom, awaiting the judgment of the great day—2 Pet. 2:4-5; Jude 6.

Heb. 1:14—Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for service for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

2 Pet. 2:4-5—For if God did not spare the angels who sinned but delivered *them* to gloomy pits, having cast them down to Tartarus, they being kept for judgment; ⁵And did not spare the ancient world but guarded Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

Jude 6—And angels who did not keep their own principality but abandoned their own dwelling place, He has kept in eternal bonds under gloom for the judgment of the great day;

- B. After His death in the flesh, Christ in His living Spirit as His divinity went to the abyss to these rebellious angels to proclaim God's victory, accomplished through His incarnation in Christ and Christ's death in the flesh, over Satan's scheme to derange the divine plan.
- C. *Prison* (1 Pet. 3:19) refers to Tartarus, the deep and gloomy pits, where the fallen angels are kept.

1 Pet. 3:19—In which also He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison,

IV. **"I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss"—Rev. 9:1-2; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3:**

Rev. 9:1-2—And the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss. ²And he opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke went up out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

Rev. 11:7—And when they have completed their testimony, the beast who comes up out of the abyss will make war with them and will overcome them and kill them.

Rev. 17:8—The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss and go into perdition. And those who dwell on the earth, *those* whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life, will marvel when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will be present.

Rev. 20:1—And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

Rev. 20:3—And cast him into the abyss and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, that he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be loosed for a little while.

- A. The star in Revelation 9:1 refers to Satan, who will be cast down from heaven to earth:

Rev. 9:1—And the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss.

1. The angels are likened to stars—Job 38:7; Rev. 12:4.

Job 38:7—When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Rev. 12:4—And his tail drags away the third part of the stars of heaven, and he cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, so that when she brings forth he might devour her child.

2. Satan, as the archangel, was the Daystar—Isa. 14:12.

Isa. 14:12—How you have fallen from heaven, O Daystar, son of the dawn! How you have been hewn down to earth, You who made nations fall prostrate!

- B. “Who will descend into the abyss?” that is, to bring Christ up from the dead”—Rom. 10:7:

1. In Greek the word rendered as “abyss” is *abyssos*.
2. This word is used in Luke 8:31 in reference to the dwelling place of the demons—vv. 27, 33, 35, 38.

Luke 8:31—And they entreated Him not to order them to depart into the abyss.

Luke 8:27—And when He went out onto the land, a certain man out of the city, who had demons, met *Him*, and for a considerable time he had not put on clothes and did not remain in a house but among the tombs.

Luke 8:33—And the demons came out from the man and entered into the hogs, and the herd rushed down the steep slope into the lake and was drowned.

Luke 8:35—And *the people* went out to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had come out, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and sane, and they became frightened.

Luke 8:38—And the man from whom the demons had come out begged to be with Him, but He sent him away, saying,

3. It also occurs in Revelation 9:1-2 and 11 to denote the place out of which the “locusts,” whose king is Apollyon, will come.

Rev. 9:1-2—And the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss. ²And he opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke went up out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

Rev. 9:11—They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon; and in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

4. In Revelation 11:7 and 17:8 it signifies the place out of which the beast, which is the Antichrist, will ascend.

Rev. 11:7—And when they have completed their testimony, the beast who comes up out of the abyss will make war with them and will overcome them and kill them.

Rev. 17:8—The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss and go into perdition. And those who dwell on the earth, *those* whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life, will marvel when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will be present.

5. In Revelation 20:1 and 3 it specifies the place into which Satan will be cast and imprisoned during the millennium.

Rev. 20:1—And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

Rev. 20:3—And cast him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be loosed for a little while.

6. In Romans 10:7 *abyss* points to the place Christ visited after His death and before His resurrection, which place, according to Acts 2:24 and 27, is Hades, for Acts 2:24 and 27 reveal that Christ went into Hades after He died and rose from that place in His resurrection.

Rom. 10:7—Or, “Who will descend into the abyss?” that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.

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

Acts 2:27—Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will You permit Your Holy One to see corruption.

7. According to biblical usage, the word *abyss* always refers to the region of death and of Satan’s power of darkness into which Christ after His death descended as into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9), which He conquered, and from which He ascended in His resurrection.

Eph. 4:9—(Now this, “He ascended,” what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

V. In Revelation 1:18b the Lord Jesus says, “I have the keys of death and of Hades”:

- A. Due to the fall and the sin of man, death has come in and is now operating on earth to collect all sinful people and to bring them to Hades, the place where the dead are kept.

- B. In the church life, however, we are no longer subject to death and Hades—Phil. 3:10-11.

Phil. 3:10-11—To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

- C. Christ abolished death on the cross, and He overcame Hades in His resurrection:

1. Although death tried its best to hold Christ, it was powerless to do so—Acts 2:24.

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

2. Christ is both God and resurrection (John 1:1; 11:25), possessing the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16).

John 1:1—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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

Heb. 7:16—Who has been appointed not according to the law of a fleshy commandment but according to the power of an indestructible life.

3. Because He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him.
 4. Christ delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; instead, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it.
 5. With Christ, therefore, death has no sting, and Hades has no power.
- D. Because Christ is the One in the church who is the Holder of the keys of death and Hades, death and Hades should not have any power over us.
- E. In the church life the keys of death and Hades are in the Lord's hand.
- F. It is impossible for us to deal with death:
1. We simply do not have the ability to handle it.
 2. Whenever death enters, many will be overcome by it.
- G. If we give the Lord Jesus the ground, the opportunity, and the free way to move and act among us, both death and Hades will be under His control—Matt. 16:18; Rev. 20:14:

Matt. 16:18—And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Rev. 20:14—And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

1. When the Lord Jesus does not have the ground in the church, death immediately becomes prevailing, and Hades becomes powerful to hold the dead ones.
2. It is crucial for us to see that Christ has the keys, the authority, of death and Hades—John 5:27; 17:2; Rev. 12:10.

John 5:27—And He gave Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man.

John 17:2—Even as You have given Him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

Rev. 12:10—And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

3. Death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control.
- H. We should praise the Lord that Christ has the keys of death and of Hades—1:18; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 19:5-6.

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

Heb. 13:15—Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name.

1 Pet. 1:7—So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Rev. 19:5-6—And a voice came out from the throne, saying, Praise our God, all His slaves and those who fear Him, the small and the great. ⁶And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Message Three

Christ as the Son of Man Walking in the Midst of the Golden Lampstands

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:9—2:1

Rev. 1:9—2:1—I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send [it] to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea. ¹²And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle. ¹⁴And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; ¹⁵And His feet were like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace; and His voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face [shone] as the sun shines in its power. ¹⁷And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead; and He placed His right hand on me, saying, Do not fear; I am the First and the Last ¹⁸And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades. ¹⁹Write therefore the things which you have seen and the things which are and the things which are about to take place after these things. ²⁰The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

¹To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

I. In order to see the vision of Christ as the Son of Man walking in the midst of the golden lampstands, we must be the Lord's overcoming messengers, those who are in our spirit on the ground of the church as fellow partakers in the tribulation, kingdom, and endurance in Jesus—Rev. 1:9-13, 20:

Rev. 1:9-13—I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea. ¹²And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle.

Rev. 1:20—The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- A. The practice of the church life in the early days was the practice of having one church for one city, one city with only one church; in no city was there more than one church—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11.

Acts 8:1—And Saul approved of his killing. And there occurred in that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 13:1—Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Rev. 1:11—Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

- B. There are four characteristics of our meeting on the genuine ground of oneness, the place God has chosen—cf. Deut. 12:5:

cf. Deut. 12:5—But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.

1. First, the people of God should always be one; there should be no divisions among them—Psa. 133; John 17:11, 21-23; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3.

John 17:11—And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:21-23—That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
²²And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one; ²³I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

1 Cor. 1:10—Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

Eph. 4:3—Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

2. Second, the unique name into which God's people should gather is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the reality of which name is the Spirit; to be designated by any other name is to be denominational, divided; this is spiritual fornication—Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 1:12-13; 12:3b.

Matt. 18:20—For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.

1 Cor. 1:12-13—Now I mean this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. ¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?

1 Cor. 12:3—Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus *is* accursed; and no one can say, Jesus *is* Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

3. Third, in the New Testament God's habitation, His dwelling place, is particularly located in our spirit, that is, in our mingled spirit, our human spirit regenerated and indwelt by the divine Spirit; in our meeting for the worship of God, we must exercise our spirit and do everything in the spirit—John 3:6b; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 2:22; John 4:24; Rev. 1:10; 1 Cor. 14:15. **John 3:6**—That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Rom. 8:16—The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Eph. 2:22—In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

John 4:24—God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Rev. 1:10—I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

1 Cor. 14:15—What then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray also with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing also with the mind.

4. Fourth, in our worship of God we must have the genuine application of the cross of Christ, signified by the altar (Deut. 12:5-6, 27), by rejecting the flesh, the self, and the natural life and worshipping God with Christ and Christ alone (Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20).

Deut. 12:5-6—But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go. ⁶And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;

Deut. 12:27—And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of Jehovah your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of Jehovah your God, and you shall eat the flesh.

Matt. 16:24—Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Gal. 2:20—I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

C. We are fellow partakers in the tribulation in Jesus:

1. *In Jesus* means that we are suffering and being persecuted as we follow Jesus the Nazarene by the indwelling Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of a man with abundant strength for suffering—Acts 16:6-7.

Acts 16:6-7—And they passed through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷And when they had

come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, yet the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

2. As we are suffering today, the Lord Jesus is suffering in us and with us—9:4-5; Heb. 13:13.

Acts 9:4-5—And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? ⁵And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He *said*, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

Heb. 13:13—Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

3. We enter into the kingdom through many tribulations—Acts 14:22.

Acts 14:22—Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith and *saying* that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

4. By the power of His resurrection, we are enabled to participate in His sufferings and to live a crucified life in conformity to His death—Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; S. S. 2:8-9, 14.

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

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

S. S. 2:8-9—The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills. ⁹My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Now he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, He is glancing through the lattice.

S. S. 2:14—My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

5. We should not love our soul-life even unto death and should lay down our lives on behalf of the brothers—Rev. 12:11; 1 John 3:16.

Rev. 12:11—And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

1 John 3:16—In this we know love, that He laid down His life on our behalf, and we ought to lay down our lives on behalf of the brothers.

D. We are fellow partakers in the kingdom in Jesus:

1. The kingdom is the church life, in which the faithful believers live for their growth in life and transformation in life—Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 3:7; 2 Cor. 3:18.

Matt. 16:18-19—And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth

shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

Rom. 14:17—For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 3:7—So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

2. To practice the kingdom life, we need to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.
2 Tim. 2:22—But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

3. To practice the kingdom life, we need to care for the sinning brothers in order to recover them—Matt. 18:15-22; 1 John 5:16.

Matt. 18:15-22—Moreover if your brother sins against you, go, reprove him between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not hear *you*, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I say to you that if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens. ²⁰For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst. ²¹Then Peter came and said to Him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times? ²²Jesus said to him, I do not say to you, Up to seven times, but, Up to seventy times seven.

1 John 5:16—If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

E. We are fellow partakers in the endurance in Jesus:

1. We must resist the wearing-out tactics of Satan—Dan. 7:25.
Dan. 7:25—And he will speak things against the Most High and wear out the saints of the Most High; and his intention will be to change the times and the law; and they will be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.
2. When we abide in Christ, we keep the word of His endurance and have the endurance to bear suffering and opposition—Rev. 3:10.
Rev. 3:10—Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth.

3. We can endure with the endurance of Christ that we have enjoyed and experienced—2 Thes. 3:5.

2 Thes. 3:5—And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.

II. Christ as the Son of Man is the High Priest, “clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle” (Rev. 1:13), to cherish the churches in His humanity and nourish them in His divinity:

Rev. 1:13—And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle.

- A. The Son of Man is in His humanity, the golden girdle signifies His divinity, and breasts are a sign of love:

1. Christ was girded at the loins, strengthened for the divine work (Exo. 28:4; Dan. 10:5) to produce the churches, but now He is girded about at the breasts, caring for the churches that He has produced by His love.

Exo. 28:4—And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a girding sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and for his sons that he may serve Me as a priest.

Dan. 10:5—I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz.

2. The golden girdle signifies Christ’s divinity as His divine energy, and the breasts signify that this golden energy is exercised and motivated by and with His love to nourish the churches.

- B. Christ takes care of the churches in His humanity as the Son of Man to cherish them—Rev. 1:13a:

Rev. 1:13—And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle.

1. He dresses the lamps of the lampstands to make them proper, cherishing us so that we may be happy, pleasant, and comfortable—Exo. 30:7; cf. Psalms 42:5, 11:

Exo. 30:7—And Aaron shall burn on it fragrant incense; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it.

cf. Psalm 42:5—Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him *For* the salvation of His countenance.

cf. Psalm 42:11—Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, The salvation of my countenance and my God.

- a. The Lord’s presence provides an atmosphere of tenderness and warmth to cherish our being, giving us rest, comfort, healing, cleansing, and encouragement.

- b. We can enjoy the cherishing atmosphere of the Lord's presence in the church to receive the nourishing supply of life—Eph. 5:29; cf. 1 Tim. 4:6; Eph. 4:11.

Eph. 5:29—For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,

cf. 1 Tim. 4:6—If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.

cf. Eph. 4:11—And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

- 2. He trims the wicks of the lamps of the lampstand, cutting off all the negative things that frustrate our shining—Exo. 25:38:

Exo. 25:38—And its tongs and its firepans shall be of pure gold.

- a. The charred part of the wick, the snuff, signifies things that are not according to God's purpose and need to be cut off, such as our flesh, our natural man, our self, and our old creation.
- b. He trims away all the differences among the churches (the wrongdoings, shortages, failures, and defects) so that they may be the same in essence, appearance, and expression—cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 12:18; Phil. 2:2.

cf. 1 Cor. 1:10—Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

cf. 2 Cor. 12:18—I entreated Titus and sent with *him* the brother. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not walk in the same spirit? In the same steps?

cf. Phil. 2:2—Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

- C. Christ takes care of the churches in His divinity with His divine love, signified by the golden girdle on His breasts, to nourish the churches—Rev. 1:13b:

Rev. 1:13—And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle.

- 1. He nourishes us with Himself as the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry of three stages so that we may grow and mature in the divine life to be His overcomers to accomplish His eternal economy.
- 2. As the walking Christ, He gets to know the condition of each church, and as the speaking Spirit, He trims and fills the lampstands with fresh oil, the supply of the Spirit—2:1, 7.

Rev. 2:1—To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

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

3. To participate in His move and enjoy His care, we must be in the churches.

III. The heavenly ancientness of the Lord is depicted by His head and hair being as white as white wool, as snow—1:14a; Dan. 7:9; Job 15:10; cf. S. S. 5:11.

Rev. 1:14—And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

Dan. 7:9—I watched Until thrones were set, And the Ancient of Days sat down. His clothing was like white snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool; His throne was flames of fire; Its wheels, burning fire.

Job 15:10—Both the grayheaded and the aged are among us, Older than your father.

cf. S. S. 5:11—His head is the finest gold; His locks are wavy, As black as a raven.

IV. The Lord's seven eyes are like a flame of fire for watching, observing, searching, judging by enlightening, and infusing—Rev. 1:14b; 5:6; Dan. 10:6:

Rev. 1:14—And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

Rev. 5:6—And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Dan. 10:6—His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

A. Christ's eyes are for God's move and operation on earth, since seven is the number for completion in God's move.

B. The Lord's eyes being like a flame of fire is mainly for His judgment—7:9-10; Rev. 2:18; 19:11-12.

Dan. 7:9-10—I watched Until thrones were set, And the Ancient of Days sat down. His clothing was like white snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool; His throne was flames of fire; Its wheels, burning fire. ¹⁰A stream of fire issued forth And came out from before Him. Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, And ten thousands of ten thousands stood before Him. The court of judgment sat, And the books were opened.

Rev. 2:18—And to the messenger of the church in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, He who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like shining bronze:

Rev. 19:11-12—And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹²And His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, *and* He has a name written which no one knows but Himself.

V. The Lord's feet are like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace, signifying that His perfect and bright walk qualifies Him to exercise divine judgment—1:15a; Ezek. 1:7; Dan. 10:6.

Rev. 1:15—And His feet were like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace; and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

Ezek. 1:7—And their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like the sight of burnished bronze.

Dan. 10:6—His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

VI. The Lord's voice is like the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:15b; cf. 14:2), which is a tumultuous sound, the sound of the voice of the almighty God (Ezek. 1:24; 43:2) in its seriousness and solemnity (cf. Rev. 10:3).

Rev. 1:15—And His feet were like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace; and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

cf. Rev. 14:2—And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like *the sound* of harp-singers playing on their harps.

Ezek. 1:24—And I heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, as they went; *it was* the sound of a tumult, like the sound of an army. Whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings.

Ezek. 43:2—And the glory of the God of Israel was there, coming from the way of the east, and His voice was like the sound of many waters, and the earth was illuminated with His glory.

cf. Rev. 10:3—And He cried out with a loud voice just as a lion roars. And when He cried out, the seven thunders uttered their own voices.

VII. Christ is the Holder of the bright messengers of the churches—1:16a, 20:

Rev. 1:16—And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face *shone* as the sun shines in its power.

Rev. 1:20—The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

A. The messengers are the spiritual ones in the churches, the ones who bear the responsibility of the testimony of Jesus.

B. The messengers, who are of the heavenly nature and in a heavenly position like stars, are those who have a fresh message from the Lord to His people—2:1a.

Rev. 2:1—To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

C. Because the leading ones are in His right hand, there is no need for them to shrink back; Christ truly takes the responsibility for His testimony.

VIII. Out of Christ's mouth proceeds a sharp two-edged sword, which is His discerning, judging, and slaying word for dealing with negative persons and things—1:16b; Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17.

Rev. 1:16—And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face *shone* as the sun shines in its power.

Heb. 4:12—For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Eph. 6:17—And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God,

IX. Christ's face shines as the sun shines in its power (Dan. 10:6) for judging enlightenment to bring in the kingdom (Rev. 1:16c; 10:1; Matt. 17:2; cf. Mal. 4:2; Judg. 5:31; Matt. 13:43).

Dan. 10:6—His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

Rev. 1:16—And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face *shone* as the sun shines in its power.

Rev. 10:1—And I saw another strong Angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon His head, and His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire;

Matt. 17:2—And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as the light.

cf. Mal. 4:2—But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.

cf. Judg. 5:31—May all Your enemies so perish, O Jehovah. But may those who love Him be like the sun When it rises in its might. And the land had rest forty years.

cf. Matt. 13:43—Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

X. Christ is the First and the Last, assuring us that He will never leave His work unfinished, and the living One for the churches as the expression of His Body to be living, fresh, and strong—Rev. 1:17-18a.

Rev. 1:17-18—And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead; and He placed His right hand on me, saying, Do not fear; I am the First and the Last ¹⁸And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

XI. Christ has the keys of death and of Hades—v. 18b:

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

- A. Death is a collector, and Hades is a keeper, but Christ nullified death on the cross and overcame Hades in His resurrection—2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 2:24.

2 Tim. 1:10—But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,

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

- B. As long as we give the Lord the ground, the opportunity, and the way to move and act among us by exercising to deny the self, take up the cross, and lose our soul-life, death and Hades will be under His control—Matt. 16:18, 21-26.

Matt. 16:18—And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Matt. 16:21-26—From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *God* be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You! ²³But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men. ²⁴Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it. ²⁶For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?

Message Four
The Lion-Lamb

Scripture Reading: Rev. 5:5-10

Rev. 5:5-10—And one of the elders said to me, Do not weep; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals. ⁶And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. ⁷And He came and took *the scroll* out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. ⁸And when He took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which *bowls* are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sing a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain and have purchased for God by Your blood *men* out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.

I. The book of Revelation is a picture of Jesus Christ; the twenty-two chapters of this book are a single portrait portraying and depicting Jesus—1:1-2, 5.

Rev. 1:1-2—The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show to His slaves the things that must quickly take place; and He made *it* known by signs, sending *it* by His angel to His slave John, ²Who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* all that he saw.

Rev. 1:5—And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

II. “Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome”—5:5a:

A. The lion is a symbol of Christ, portraying Him as a strong fighter against the enemy, as revealed in Genesis 49:8-9.

Gen. 49:8-9—Judah, your brothers will praise you; Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; Your father’s sons will bow down before you. ⁹Judah is a young lion; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he stretches out like a lion, And like a lioness; who will rouse him up?

B. Christ’s overcoming qualifies Him to open the scroll and its seven seals—Rev. 5:5-10.

Rev. 5:5-10—And one of the elders said to me, Do not weep; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals. ⁶And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. ⁷And He came and took *the scroll* out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. ⁸And when He took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which *bowls* are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sing a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain and have purchased for God by Your blood *men* out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.

- C. The title *Root of David* signifies that Christ is the source of David; therefore, David, His forefather, called Him “Lord”—Matt. 22:42-45.
Matt. 22:42-45—Saying, What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He? They said to Him, David’s. ⁴³He said to them, How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, ⁴⁴“The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies underneath Your feet”? ⁴⁵If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?
- D. As the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Christ overcame and defeated the rebellious Satan, the enemy of God, and as the redeeming Lamb, He took away the sin of fallen man:
1. By so doing, He removed the hindrances to the fulfillment of God’s purpose.
 2. The result is that He is worthy to open the scroll concerning God’s economy.
- III. “I saw in the midst of the throne...a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth”—Rev. 5:6; 1:4; 3:1:**
- Rev. 1:4**—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
- Rev. 3:1**—And to the messenger of the church in Sardis write: These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name that you are living, and yet you are dead.
- A. In chapter 5 is the scene in the heavens after Christ ascended there:
1. He was recommended to the apostle John as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but He appeared to John as the Lamb.
 2. As the Lion, He is the Fighter against the enemy; as the Lamb, He is the Redeemer for us.
 3. He fought to redeem us, and He won the battle over the enemy and accomplished redemption for us.
 4. To the enemy He is a Lion, and to us He is a Lamb; hence, He is the Lion-Lamb.
- B. As far as redemption is concerned, Christ sat down at the right hand of God in the heavens after His ascension (Heb. 1:3; 10:12), whereas regarding the carrying out of God’s administration, He is still standing in His ascension.
Heb. 1:3—Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
Heb. 10:12—But this One, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down forever on the right hand of God,
- C. *Having just been slain* indicates that the Lamb had just been slain and also that the scene in the heavens that is depicted in Revelation 5 took place immediately after Christ’s ascension into the heavens.
- D. The Lord has seven horns—v. 6b:
Rev. 5:6—And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain,

having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

1. Horns signify strength in fighting—Deut. 33:17.

Deut. 33:17—*Like his firstborn ox, he has majesty; And his horns are the horns of the wild ox; With them he shall drive peoples To the ends of the earth together. Those are the ten thousands of Ephraim; And those the thousands of Manasseh.*

2. Christ is the redeeming Lamb, yet He has horns for fighting.
3. He is the fighting Redeemer; His fighting is complete in God's move, as signified by the number seven.

E. Eyes are for observing and searching:

1. Christ as the redeeming Lamb has seven observing and searching eyes for executing God's judgment upon the universe to fulfill God's eternal purpose, which will consummate in the building up of the New Jerusalem.

2. In Zechariah 3:9 Christ is prophesied as the stone, the topstone (4:7) with seven eyes for God's building.

Zech. 3:9—For here is the stone that I have set before Joshua—upon one stone are seven eyes. I will engrave its engraving, declares Jehovah of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

Zech. 4:7—Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you will become a plain*, and he will bring forth the topstone with shouts of Grace, grace to it!

3. These seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth, and they run to and fro through the whole earth—v. 10.

Zech. 4:10—For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; they are the eyes of Jehovah running to and fro on the whole earth.

4. According to Greek grammar, the antecedent of *which* is *seven eyes*—Rev. 5:6.

Rev. 5:6—And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

5. The seven Spirits of God refer only to the seven eyes of the Lamb, and not to His seven horns.

IV. “The seven Spirits of God”—1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6b:

Rev. 1:4—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

Rev. 3:1—And to the messenger of the church in Sardis write: These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name that you are living, and yet you are dead.

Rev. 4:5—And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

Rev. 5:6—And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

A. Revelation 1:4 speaks of “the seven Spirits who are before His throne”:

Rev. 1:4—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

1. The seven Spirits are undoubtedly the Spirit of God because They are ranked among the Triune God in Revelation 1:4-5.

Rev. 1:4-5—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

2. As seven is the number for completion in God’s operation, so the seven Spirits must be for God’s move on the earth.
3. In essence and existence God’s Spirit is one; in the intensified function and work of God’s operation, God’s Spirit is sevenfold:

- a. This is similar to the lampstand in Zechariah 4:2.

Zech. 4:2—And he said to me, What do you see? And I said, I see that there is a lampstand all of gold, with its bowl on top of it and its seven lamps upon it, with seven pipes for each of the lamps on top of it;

- b. In its existence it is one lampstand, but in its function it is seven lamps.

4. At the time that the book of Revelation was written, the church had become degraded:

- a. The age was dark.
- b. The sevenfold intensified Spirit of God was needed for God’s move and work on the earth.

B. In Matthew 28:19 the sequence of the Triune God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; in Revelation 1:4-5 the sequence is changed:

Matt. 28:19—Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Rev. 1:4-5—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

1. The seven Spirits of God are listed in the second place instead of the third.
2. This reveals the importance of the intensified function of the sevenfold Spirit of God.
3. This point is confirmed by the repeated emphasis on the Spirit’s speaking in 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 14:13; and 22:17.

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

Rev. 2:11—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall by no means be hurt of the second death.

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

Rev. 2:29—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev. 3:6—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev. 3:13—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev. 3:22—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev. 14:13—And I heard a voice out of heaven, saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.

Rev. 22:17—And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

- C. At the opening of the other Epistles, only the Father and the Son are mentioned:
 - 1. From the Father and the Son grace and peace are given to the receivers.
 - 2. In Revelation 1:4-5 the Spirit is included; from Him grace and peace are imparted to the churches.

Rev. 1:4-5—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

- 3. This indicates the crucial need of the Spirit to counteract the degradation of the church for God's move.

- D. The seven Spirits are working in the churches, so the churches will surely go forward.

- E. Today we need to see and experience the sevenfold Spirit, the intensified Spirit, the Spirit of recovery—vv. 4-5.

Rev. 1:4-5—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

V. “They sing a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain and have purchased for God by Your blood men out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation”—5:9:

- A. The song here is new because the Lamb whom it praises had just been slain.
- B. In the whole universe no one is worthy to open the mystery of God's economy but Christ, the overcoming Lion and the redeeming Lamb:
 - 1. As the overcoming Lion, He defeated Satan for God.
 - 2. As the redeeming Lamb, He put sin away for us.

3. Christ is the only One qualified to unveil and carry out the mystery of God's economy.
4. We need to realize that Christ is worthy to open the seals of the secret of the divine economy; this aspect of the Lord's worthiness is universal and immeasurable.
5. Christ is worthy of our praises; He is worthy even of our lives.

Message Five
The Tree of Life

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:7-9; Rev. 2:4-5, 7; 22:2, 14; 2 Cor. 4:5; 5:14-15

Gen. 2:7-9—Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. ⁸And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rev. 2:4-5—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

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

Rev. 22:2—And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:14—Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

2 Cor. 4:5—For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

2 Cor. 5:14-15—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

I. Christ as life is the reality of the tree of life, which is the center of the universe; life is the goal of God's creation (Gen. 1:26-28, 31; 2:7-9) and the goal of God's complete salvation (John 19:34; Rom. 5:10; Rev. 22:1-2, 14, 19):

Gen. 1:26-28—And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. ²⁷And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

Gen. 1:31—And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Gen. 2:7-9—Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. ⁸And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

John 19:34—But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

Rom. 5:10—For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,

Rev. 22:1-2—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street. ²And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:14—Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

Rev. 22:19—And if anyone takes away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and out of the holy city, which are written in this scroll.

- A. In the Bible the tree of life always signifies Christ as the embodiment of all the riches of God for our food; God's placing man in front of the tree of life indicates that God wanted man to receive Him as man's life by eating Him organically and by assimilating Him metabolically, that God might become the very constituent of man's being—Col. 2:9; Gen. 2:9; John 1:4; 10:10; 14:6; 15:1; 6:35, 57, 63; 1 Cor. 15:45b.

Col. 2:9—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

Gen. 2:9—And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

John 1:4—In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 10:10—The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have *it* abundantly.

John 14:6—Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

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

John 6:35—Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.

John 6:57—As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63—It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

1 Cor. 15:45—So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.

- B. In Revelation 2:7 the tree of life signifies the crucified (implied in the tree as a piece of wood—1 Pet. 2:24) and resurrected (implied in the life of God—John

11:25) Christ, who today is in the church, the consummation of which is the New Jerusalem, in which the crucified and resurrected Christ will be the tree of life for the nourishment of all God's redeemed people for eternity (Rev. 22:2, 14).

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

1 Pet. 2:24—Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

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

Rev. 22:2—And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:14—Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

II. We need to see the obstacles that God's life encounters in man:

A. The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts:

1. We need to see that the only thing that matters in the Christian life is how we take care of the living Christ in us—Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 1:19-21; Eph. 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:18.

Gal. 1:16—To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

Gal. 2:20—I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Gal. 4:19—My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

Phil. 1:19-21—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Eph. 4:13—Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

2. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim; many people have difficulty in their spiritual life after they are saved

because they do not know the pathway of life, and they do not take Christ as their life.

- B. The second problem that life encounters in us is hypocrisy—Matt. 6:2, 5; 7:5; 23:13-29:

Matt. 6:2—Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.

Matt. 6:5—And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.

Matt. 7:5—Hypocrite, first remove the beam from your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye.

Matt. 23:13-29—But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you close off the kingdom of the heavens in the face of men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter. ¹⁴But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour the widows' houses, even while for a pretense you make long prayers. For this reason you shall receive greater judgment. ¹⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you go about the sea and the dry land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes *one*, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves. ¹⁶Woe to you, blind guides, who say, Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound. ¹⁷Fools and blind men, which is greater, the gold or the temple which sanctifies the gold? ¹⁸And, Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift which is upon it, he is bound. ¹⁹Blind men, which is greater, the gift or the altar which sanctifies the gift? ²⁰Therefore he who swears by the altar swears by it and by all the things upon it; ²¹And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who dwells in it; ²²And he who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. ²³Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you give a tenth of the mint and the anise and the cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faithfulness. But these you should have done and not neglected the others. ²⁴Blind guides, who strain out the gnat but swallow the camel! ²⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inwardly they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. ²⁶Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and the dish so that their outside also may become clean. ²⁷Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you resemble whitewashed graves, which outwardly appear beautiful but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. ²⁹Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build up the graves of the prophets and adorn the tombs of the righteous,

1. A person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of the indwelling Christ.
2. Our natural goodness is false spirituality and is actually a great hindrance to life; the expression of life involves the rejection of our natural disposition and preference, and simply allowing Christ to operate in us and break us.

3. If we always do things according to our disposition and natural being, the outcome will always be hypocrisy.
- C. The third problem that life encounters in us is rebellion:
 1. Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us.
 2. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion.
 3. The sin that we commit the most frequently and most severely is not outward and visible; rather, it is the sin of disobeying the sense of Christ in us; Christ is living in us, and He is constantly giving us an inward sense of life—Rom. 8:6; 1 John 2:27.
Rom. 8:6—For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

1 John 2:27—And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.
- D. The fourth problem that life encounters in us is our natural capability:
 1. Many brothers and sisters truly love the Lord, are zealous for the Lord, and are very godly; nevertheless, their greatest problem is the strength and greatness of their capabilities and abilities; consequently, Christ has no ground or way in them.
 2. We may be capable and talented, but we do not consider these things as sin or filthiness; instead of despising our natural capabilities, we treasure them; if they remain unbroken in us, they will become a problem to Christ's life.
- E. There is one solution to all these obstacles in us—we must pass through the cross and let the cross break us; if we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed—Matt. 16:24-25.
Matt. 16:24-25—Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

III. In order for us to eat Christ as the tree of life, we must give Him the first place in all things, which is to love Him with the first love, being constrained by His love to regard and take Him as everything in our life—Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:18b; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Mark 12:30; Psa. 73:25-26; 80:17-19:

Rev. 2:4-5—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

Col. 1:18—And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

2 Cor. 5:14-15—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

Mark 12:30—And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength.”

Psa. 73:25-26—Whom do I have in heaven *but You?* And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth. ²⁶My flesh and my heart fail, *But* God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.

Psa. 80:17-19—Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself; ¹⁸Then we will not turn back from You. Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. ¹⁹O Jehovah God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

- A. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to eat Him as the tree of life; eating Christ as the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life—Rev. 2:7; John 6:57, 63.

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

John 6:57—As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63—It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

- B. The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ; the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be; but to eat Christ as the tree of life, to enjoy Him as our life supply, requires us to love Him with the first love—Rev. 2:4-5.

Rev. 2:4-5—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

- C. On the one hand, strictly speaking, to eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God in Revelation 2:7 refers to the particular enjoyment of Christ as our life supply in the New Jerusalem in the coming millennial kingdom.

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

- D. On the other hand, we are enjoying the crucified and resurrected Christ as the tree of life, the food supply in our spirit, as a foretaste today in the church; every local church is a paradise of God, where Christ is the tree of life for us to enjoy.
- E. When we give the Lord the first place in everything and maintain our eating of the crucified and resurrected Christ as the tree of life throughout the day, the church, no matter what its condition may be, becomes paradise to us; thus, our feeling and our attitude toward the church depend upon our situation.

- F. “If we do not enjoy Christ as the tree of life in the church life today, surely we will not participate in the tree of life in the kingdom age. According to my experience, today the church in Anaheim is a paradise to me”—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 5, “The Vital Groups,” p. 157.
- G. The intrinsic reason for the desolation and degradation of the church is that Christ is not exalted by God’s people; they do not give Him the preeminence, the first place, in everything; whenever God’s people exalt Christ, giving Him the preeminence in every aspect of their living, there is restoration and revival—Psa. 80:17-19.

Psa. 80:17-19—Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself; ¹⁸Then we will not turn back from You. Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. ¹⁹O Jehovah God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

- H. Christ must have the first place not only in our living but also in all our messages; “we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake”—2 Cor. 4:5; cf. Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 12:2; Psa. 80:1, 17-19; 110:1-7:

2 Cor. 4:5—For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake.

cf. Heb. 1:3—Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

cf. Heb. 8:1—Now in the things which are being said the chief point *is this*: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

cf. Heb. 12:2—Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

cf. Psa. 80:1—O Shepherd of Israel, give ear, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned *between* the cherubim, shine forth.

cf. Psa. 80:17-19—Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself; ¹⁸Then we will not turn back from You. Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. ¹⁹O Jehovah God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

cf. Psa. 110:1-7—Jehovah declares to my Lord, Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies Your footstool. ²Jehovah will send forth The scepter of Your strength from Zion: Rule in the midst of Your enemies. ³Your people will offer themselves willingly In the day of Your warfare, In the splendor of *their* consecration. Your young men will be to You Like the dew from the womb of the dawn. ⁴Jehovah has sworn, And He will not change: You are a Priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek. ⁵The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His anger. ⁶He will execute judgment among the nations; He will fill *the place* with corpses; He will shatter the head Over a great land. ⁷He will drink from the brook by the way; Therefore He will lift up *His* head.

1. In our work we should continually draw people back to the center and let them see that “Christ is Lord”; we must give the Lord Jesus His place on the throne—cf. S. S. 1:1-4; Isa. 6:1, 3; John 12:41.

cf. S. S. 1:1-4—The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s. ²Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. ³Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; Your name is like ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. ⁴Draw me; we will run after you— The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

cf. Isa. 6:1—In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

cf. Isa. 6:3—And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; The whole earth is filled with His glory.

cf. John 12:41—These things said Isaiah because he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him.

2. In order to give such a message, we ourselves must be broken by God and allow Christ to have the first place in us; our message is just our person— 2 Cor. 4:10-13; John 12:24-26; cf. Luke 12:49-50.

2 Cor. 4:10-13—Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹²So then death operates in us, but life in you. ¹³And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, “I believed, therefore I spoke,” we also believe, therefore we also speak,

John 12:24-26—Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

cf. Luke 12:49-50—I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled! ⁵⁰But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!

3. The Lord’s “well done” surpasses all the praises of the world; the smiling face of heaven surpasses all the angry faces of the earth; the comfort of heaven surpasses all the tears of the earth—Matt. 25:21, 23; Jer. 1:7-9, 18-19; Dan. 4:26.

Matt. 25:21—His master said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

Matt. 25:23—His master said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

Jer. 1:7-9—But Jehovah said to me, Do not say, I am a youth; For everywhere I send you, you shall go; And everything I command you, you shall speak. ⁸Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you, declares Jehovah. ⁹Then Jehovah stretched out His hand and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said to me, Now I have put My words in your mouth.

Jer. 1:18-19—And I am now making you today into a fortified city and into an iron pillar and into bronze walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. ¹⁹And they will fight against you, but they will not prevail against you; for I am with you, declares Jehovah, to deliver you.

Dan. 4:26—And in that it was commanded that the stump of roots of the tree be left, your kingdom will be assured to you after you have come to know that the heavens do rule.

- I. In order to give Christ the first place in all things, we must have an affectionate love for Him as our King; then our tongue will be the pen of a ready writer, ready to write our love for Him and our praise to Him with our experience and enjoyment of Him according to all that He is—Psa. 45:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6.

Psa. 45:1-2—My heart overflows with a good matter; I speak what I have composed concerning the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. ²You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever.

2 Cor. 3:3—Since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone but in tablets of hearts of flesh.

2 Cor. 3:6—Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, *ministers* not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

- J. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to take Him as our centrality—our holding center—and our universality—our everything; we need to take Him as the center, content, and circumference of our personal universe—Col. 1:17b, 18b.

Col. 1:17—And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;

Col. 1:18—And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

- K. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to behold His beauty and to ask for the counsel of Jehovah in every detail of our Christian life and work—Psa. 27:4; Josh. 9:14; Phil. 4:6-7.

Psa. 27:4—One thing I have asked from Jehovah; That do I seek: To dwell in the house of Jehovah All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of Jehovah, And to inquire in His temple.

Josh. 9:14—And the men took some of their provisions, but they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah.

Phil. 4:6-7—In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷And the peace of God, which

surpasses every *man's* understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

- L. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to be dominated, governed, directed, led, and moved by our mingled spirit, caring for the rest in our spirit by being His captives and by praying, “Lord, conquer me. Make me Your captive. Never let me win. Defeat me all the time”—2 Cor. 2:13-14.

2 Cor. 2:13-14—I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia. ¹⁴But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.

- M. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to have a clear sky like awesome crystal with God’s sapphire throne above it; this means that there is nothing between us and the Lord and that we are filled with the heavenly atmosphere, condition, and situation of His ruling presence—taking Him as our King and allowing Him to rule and reign within us—Ezek. 1:22, 26.

Ezek. 1:22—And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

Ezek. 1:26—And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

- N. Only Christ the King reigning on the earth with the overcomers as His helpers in the kingship can solve the problems of today’s world (Isa. 42:1-4); Christ’s name will be remembered in all generations and praised by the nations through His overcoming and co-reigning saints (Psa. 45:16-17; Rev. 2:26).

Isa. 42:1-4—Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, My chosen One *in whom* My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him, And He will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry out, nor lift up *His voice*, Nor make His voice heard in the street. ³A bruised reed He will not break; And a dimly burning flax He will not extinguish; He will bring forth justice in truth. ⁴He will not faint, nor will He be discouraged, Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait for His instruction.

Psa. 45:16-17—In the place of Your fathers will be Your sons; You will make them princes in all the earth. ¹⁷I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations; Therefore the peoples will praise You forever and ever.

Rev. 2:26—And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;

- O. The overcomers, who are typified by Zion, are the beachhead through which the Lord will return to possess the whole earth—Psa. 48:2; Dan. 2:34-35.

Psa. 48:2—Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion, the sides of the north, The city of the great King.

Dan. 2:34-35—You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the

bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

- P. “Lift up your heads, O gates; / And be lifted up, O long enduring doors; / And the King of glory will come in. / Who is the King of glory? / Jehovah strong and mighty! / Jehovah mighty in battle!... / Who is this King of glory? / Jehovah of hosts— / He is the King of glory!”—Psa. 24:7-8, 10:

1. The gates are of the cities of the nations; the doors are of the houses of the people, and Christ is the Desire of all the nations (Hag. 2:7); all the nations, in a general way, are expecting Christ to come, but Christ will not come quickly according to our human concept (2 Pet. 3:8-9); thus, we need to lift up our heads and await and expect His coming with long endurance.

Hag. 2:7—And I will shake all the nations, and the Desire of all the nations will come; and I will fill this house with glory, says Jehovah of hosts.

2 Pet. 3:8-9—But do not let this one thing escape you, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. ⁹The Lord does not delay regarding the promise, as some count delay, but is long-suffering toward you, not intending that any perish but that all advance to repentance.

2. The King of glory is Jehovah of hosts (that is, of armies), the consummated Triune God embodied in the victorious and overcoming Christ (Luke 21:27; Matt. 25:31); Jehovah is Jesus, and Jesus is the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Triune God, who is strong in fighting and is victorious (1:21; Rev. 5:5).

Luke 21:27—And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Matt. 25:31—But when the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, at that time He will sit on the throne of His glory.

Matt. 1:21—And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for *it is* He *who* will save His people from their sins.

Rev. 5:5—And one of the elders said to me, Do not weep; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so that He may open the scroll and its seven seals.

3. He is the One who will come back in resurrection with His overcomers to possess the entire earth as His kingdom—Dan. 2:34-35; 7:13-14; Joel 3:11; Rev. 11:15; 19:13-14.

Dan. 2:34-35—You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Dan. 7:13-14—I watched in the night visions, And there with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming; And He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and languages might serve Him. His dominion is an eternal dominion, which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

Joel 3:11—Hurry and come, All you surrounding nations, And be gathered. There cause Your mighty ones to descend, O Jehovah!

Rev. 11:15—And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

Rev. 19:13-14—And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white *and* clean.

- Q. Christ as the One on the throne of God has the appearance of sardius (its red color signifying redemption) and jasper (its dark green color signifying life in its richness); thus, when we submit ourselves to Christ's headship and are under His throne, we are the beneficiaries of all that He is in His judicial redemption and His organic salvation so that we may bear the same appearance of the God of glory in His rich life—4:3; 21:10-11a; Rom. 5:10.

Rev. 4:3—And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and *there was* a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

Rev. 21:10-11—And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

Rom. 5:10—For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,

- R. Those who wash their robes in the redeeming blood of Christ have the right to enjoy the tree of life as their eternal portion in the holy city, the Paradise of God, in eternity—Rev. 22:14; 2:7.

Rev. 22:14—Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

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

Message Six

**Christ, the Eternal King,
Coming to Possess the Earth
and
the Finishing of the Mystery of God**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 10:1-7; 11:15-18

Rev. 10:1-7—And I saw another strong Angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon His head, and His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire; ²And He had in His hand a little opened scroll. And He placed His right foot on the sea and the left on the land; ³And He cried out with a loud voice just as a lion roars. And when He cried out, the seven thunders uttered their own voices. ⁴And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write, and I heard a voice out of heaven, saying, Seal the things which the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them. ⁵And the Angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up His right hand to heaven ⁶And swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there shall be delay no longer, ⁷But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to trumpet, then the mystery of God is finished, as He has announced the good news to His own slaves the prophets.

Rev. 11:15-18—And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever. ¹⁶And the twenty-four elders who sit before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshipped God, ¹⁷Saying, We thank You, Lord God the Almighty, He who is and who was, because You have taken Your great power and have reigned. ¹⁸And the nations became angry, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give the reward to Your slaves the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Your name, to the small and to the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.

I. Revelation 11:15-18 and 12:10 indicate that we may experience and enjoy Christ as the eternal King:

Rev. 11:15-18—And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever. ¹⁶And the twenty-four elders who sit before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshipped God, ¹⁷Saying, We thank You, Lord God the Almighty, He who is and who was, because You have taken Your great power and have reigned. ¹⁸And the nations became angry, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give the reward to Your slaves the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Your name, to the small and to the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.

Rev. 12:10—And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

- A. “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever”—11:15b:
1. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, not only will the great tribulation end, but also this age will close, the mystery of God will be finished (10:7), and another age, the age of the kingdom, the millennium, will begin.

Rev. 10:7—But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to trumpet, then the mystery of God is finished, as He has announced the good news to His own slaves the prophets.

2. The kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of Christ at His coming back after He executes His judgment upon the nations—Dan. 7:13-14; 2:44-45.

Dan. 7:13-14—I watched in the night visions, And there with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming; And He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and languages might serve Him. His dominion is an eternal dominion, which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

Dan. 2:44-45—And in the days of those kings the God of the heavens will raise up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and its reign will not be left to another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms; and it will stand forever. ⁴⁵Inasmuch as you saw that out of the mountain a stone was cut without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will happen afterward; and the dream is certain, and its interpretation trustworthy.

3. Here the Lord's reigning forever and ever is the Lord's reigning in the millennial kingdom and in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—Rev. 22:5.

Rev. 22:5—And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

- B. "You, O Jehovah, abide forever; / Your throne is from generation to generation"—Lam. 5:19:

1. God's eternal being and His throne are higher than His lovingkindness, compassions, and faithfulness—3:22-23.

Lam. 3:22-23—*It is Jehovah's lovingkindness that we are not consumed, For His compassions do not fail; ²³They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*

2. God's lovingkindness and compassions can fluctuate, but God's person and His government remain unchanging forever.

3. In the New Jerusalem, God will be fully unveiled in His person as the eternal King and in His government as His eternal, unshakable kingdom (Heb. 12:28; Rev. 22:3), both of which are the unshakable foundation of His dealing with His people.

Heb. 12:28—Therefore receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us have grace, through which we may serve God well-pleasingly with piety and fear;

Rev. 22:3—And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;

II. In Revelation 10:1-7 we have a clear vision of Christ coming to take possession of the earth:

Rev. 10:1-7—And I saw another strong Angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon His head, and His face was like the sun, and His feet like

pillars of fire; ²And He had in His hand a little opened scroll. And He placed His right foot on the sea and the left on the land; ³And He cried out with a loud voice just as a lion roars. And when He cried out, the seven thunders uttered their own voices. ⁴And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write, and I heard a voice out of heaven, saying, Seal the things which the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them. ⁵And the Angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up His right hand to heaven ⁶And swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there shall be delay no longer, ⁷But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to trumpet, then the mystery of God is finished, as He has announced the good news to His own slaves the prophets.

- A. In this chapter Christ is “another strong Angel” (v. 1), like the One in 7:2; 8:3; and 18:1.

Rev. 10:1—And I saw another strong Angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon His head, and His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire;

Rev. 7:2—And I saw another Angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and He cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom *authority* was given to harm the earth and the sea,

Rev. 8:3—And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Rev. 18:1—After these things I saw another Angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illumined with His glory.

- B. John saw another Angel “coming down out of heaven”—10:1a:

1. Christ is now coming down out of heaven.
2. This vision is a hint that Christ is still on His way to the earth.

- C. Christ is “clothed with a cloud”—v. 1b:

1. He is not yet “on the cloud,” as in 14:14 and Matthew 24:30; 26:64.

Rev. 14:14—And I saw, and behold, there was a white cloud, and on the cloud One like the Son of Man sitting, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

Matt. 24:30—And at that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Matt. 26:64—Jesus said to him, You have said *rightly*. Nevertheless I say to you, From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

2. To be “on the cloud” is to come openly, whereas to be “clothed with a cloud” is to come secretly.
3. Christ will be coming secretly, not openly, until He is seen by all the tribes of the earth, as mentioned in Revelation 1:7 and in Matthew 24:30.

Rev. 1:7—Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the land will mourn over Him. Yes, amen.

Matt. 24:30—And at that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

4. Even at the time of Revelation 10, Christ's coming is still secret.
 5. He will be wrapped in the cloud until chapter 14, when He will sit on the cloud and His coming will be public.
 6. By this we can see that the general teaching that Christ will come before the great tribulation is inaccurate.
- D. "The rainbow was upon His head"—10:1c:
1. Here the rainbow indicates that Christ in His judgment upon the earth and in His coming to take possession of it will keep the covenant that God made with Noah concerning the earth—Gen. 9:8-17.

Gen. 9:8-17—Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, ⁹And I Myself now establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you ¹⁰And with every living animal that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every animal of the earth with you, of all that came out of the ark, every animal of the earth. ¹¹And I establish My covenant with you, that never again will all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. ¹²And God said, This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living animal that is with you, for perpetual generations: ¹³I set My bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. ¹⁴And when I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living animal of all flesh, and never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶And the bow will be in the clouds, and I will look upon it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living animal of all flesh that is upon the earth. ¹⁷And God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

2. It indicates also that Christ is the One who will execute judgment according to the God who sits on the throne with the rainbow around it—Rev. 4:2-3.
Rev. 4:2-3—Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne *there was* One sitting; ³And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and *there was* a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.
3. The book of Revelation reveals that God will judge the earth and all the inhabitants.
4. The rainbow around His throne signifies that God is the covenanting God, the faithful God, who will keep His covenant while executing His judgment upon the earth.
5. He will not judge mankind again with a flood nor destroy all mankind, but will keep a part of mankind to be the nations of the new earth for His glory—21:24, 26.
Rev. 21:24—And the nations will walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.

Rev. 21:26—And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

- E. “His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire”—10:1d:
1. Near the time of His coming to the people on the earth openly, Christ will be like the sun, not like the morning star, which appears before the darkest time, prior to dawn, to those who love Him and wait for Him.
 2. Fire in verse 1 signifies the holiness of God (Exo. 19:18; Heb. 12:29), according to which Christ will execute His judgment upon the earth.
Exo. 19:18—Now the whole of Mount Sinai smoked because Jehovah descended upon it in fire, and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace; and the whole mountain shook greatly.

Heb. 12:29—For our God is also a consuming fire.

- F. “He placed His right foot on the sea and the left on the land”—Rev. 10:2b:
1. Christ’s placing His feet on the sea and on the land is His treading on them, and to tread on them is to take possession of them—Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:3; Psa. 8:6-8.
Deut. 11:24—Every place on which the sole of your foot treads will be yours; from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even to the farthest sea will be your territory.

Josh. 1:3—Every place on which the sole of your foot treads I have given to you, as I promised Moses.

Psa. 8:6-8—For You have caused Him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet: ⁷All sheep and oxen, As well as the beasts of the field, ⁸The birds of heaven and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

2. This indicates that Christ is coming down to take possession of the earth.
 3. Only He is worthy to open the scroll of God’s economy, and only He is qualified to possess the earth.
- G. “He cried out with a loud voice just as a lion roars”—Rev. 10:3a:
1. A lion’s roaring is likened to a king’s wrath—Prov. 19:12; 20:2.
Prov. 19:12—The king’s wrath is like the roaring of a lion, But his favor is like dew upon the grass.
Prov. 20:2—The terror of a king is like the roaring of a lion; He who provokes him to anger sins *against* his own life.

2. This indicates that Christ, as the King of the earth, is provoked to wrath.

III. “The mystery of God is finished”—Rev. 10:7b:

- A. In the dispensations from Adam to Moses and from Moses to Christ, everything was unveiled, manifested, and there was no mystery.
- B. In the dispensation of the millennial kingdom and in the new heaven and new earth, everything will be unveiled, and there will be no more mystery.
- C. In the dispensation from Christ to the millennial kingdom—the church age, the age of grace—everything is a mystery:
 1. The incarnation of Christ, as the beginning of the dispensation of mystery, is a mystery—1 Tim. 3:16:

1 Tim. 3:16—And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

- a. Through the incarnation of Christ, the infinite God was brought into a finite man.
 - b. The entire God, not God the Son only, was incarnated; hence, Christ in incarnation is the entire God manifested in the flesh.
2. Christ is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2:

Col. 2:2—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

- a. God is a mystery, and Christ, as the embodiment of God to express Him, is the mystery of God.
- b. As the mystery of God, Christ is the embodiment, definition, and explanation of God; all that God intends to do is related to Christ.
- c. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; that is, the fullness of the Triune God dwells in Christ in a bodily form—v. 9.

Col. 2:9—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

3. The church is the mystery of Christ—Eph. 3:4-6:

Eph. 3:4-6—By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ, ⁵Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit, ⁶That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel,

- a. Christ is a mystery, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ.
- b. This mystery is God's economy, which is to dispense Christ, as the embodiment of God, into God's chosen people in order to produce a Body to be the increase of God's embodiment in Christ, that God may have a corporate expression.
- c. Christ and the church as one spirit are the great mystery—5:32.

Eph. 5:32—This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

4. The kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13:11), the gospel (Eph. 6:19), the indwelling Christ (Col. 1:27), and the coming resurrection and transfiguration of the saints as the end of the dispensation of mystery (1 Cor. 15:51-52) are all mysteries.

Matt. 13:11—And He answered and said to them, Because to you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them it has not been given.

Eph. 6:19—And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Col. 1:27—To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,

1 Cor. 15:51-52—Behold, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.

5. At the trumpeting of the seventh trumpet, all these mysteries will be completed; therefore, the mystery of God will be finished.

Message Seven

The Spirit Speaking to the Churches, the One Who Has the Key of David, and the One Who Will Dine with the Overcomers

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:7-22

Rev. 3:7-22—And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens: ⁸I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name. ⁹Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, those who call themselves Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will cause them to come and fall prostrate before your feet and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth. ¹¹I come quickly; hold fast what you have that no one take your crown. ¹²He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name. ¹³He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ¹⁴And to the messenger of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see. ¹⁹As many as I love I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore and repent. ²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me. ²¹He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne. ²²He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

I. In Revelation 2 and 3 Christ is the Spirit who speaks to all the churches:

- A. In Revelation 2 and 3 the speaking of the unlimited, life-releasing, sevenfold intensified, pneumatic Christ to the seven churches at the beginning of each epistle respectively (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14) becomes the speaking of the sevenfold intensified, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit to all the seven churches at the end of each epistle universally (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

Rev. 2:1—To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

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

Rev. 2:12—And to the messenger of the church in Pergamos write: These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

Rev. 2:18—And to the messenger of the church in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, He who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like shining bronze:

Rev. 3:1—And to the messenger of the church in Sardis write: These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name that you are living, and yet you are dead.

Rev. 3:7—And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:

Rev. 3:14—And to the messenger of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God:

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

Rev. 2:11—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall by no means be hurt of the second death.

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

Rev. 2:29—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev. 3:6—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev. 3:13—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Rev. 3:22—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- B. Thus, the speaking Christ becomes the speaking Spirit, the Spirit who speaks to all the churches; Christ speaks to a particular local church, and the Spirit speaks to the universal Body.
- C. This not only indicates that the Spirit is the Lord and that the Lord is the Spirit, but it also emphasizes that in the darkness of the church's degradation the Spirit is vitally important, as indicated by the sevenfold intensified Spirit in 1:4.
Rev. 1:4—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
- D. The seven epistles in Revelation 2 and 3 are words spoken by the Lord Jesus, but today when we read them, the seven Spirits of God speak these words to us in our spirit for the purpose of God's economy; the Lord's word at the beginning of each epistle is to a certain local church, but when the people from all the ages read it, it becomes the Spirit's speaking to all the churches.
- E. The speaking of the Spirit always turns us to the infusing of Christ; the Spirit's speaking is Christ's infusing—cf. 2 Cor. 3:16-18:
cf. 2 Cor. 3:16-18—But whenever *their heart* turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
¹⁷And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord,

are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

1. Whenever we listen to the speaking of the seven Spirits of God to the churches, we are immediately under a precious, sweet, and dear transfusing, an infusing that changes us, transforms us, makes us the proper material, and builds us into God's building.
2. Whatever must go to the lake of fire is burned away by the seven lamps (Rev. 4:5), and now we are under the seven eyes (5:6), being infused with all that Christ is in order that we may become a part of the New Jerusalem.

Rev. 4:5—And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

Rev. 5:6—And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

- F. Even though the believers in the churches are in a position to hear the Spirit's speaking and thus can easily have ears to hear, not all of them will closely follow His speaking; hence, there is the call for the overcomers.
- G. Those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the churches should hear, and those who hear will be overcomers:

1. The Lord always wants to open our ears to hear His voice so that we may see things according to His economy—Job 33:14-16; Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6.

Job 33:14-16—For God speaks in one way, Indeed in two ways, without any perceiving it— ¹⁵In a dream, a night vision, When deep sleep falls upon men In the slumberings upon *their* beds— ¹⁶Then He opens the ears of men And seals up their instruction,

Isa. 50:4-5—The Lord Jehovah has given me The tongue of the instructed, That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens *me* morning by morning; He awakens my ear To hear as an instructed one. ⁵The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn back.

Exo. 21:6—Then his master shall bring him to God and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

2. The heavy ears need to be circumcised—Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51.

Jer. 6:10—To whom shall I speak and testify, That they may hear? Indeed, their ear is uncircumcised, And they are unable to listen. See, the word of Jehovah has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.

Acts 7:51—You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you always oppose the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, you also *do*.

3. The sinners' ears need to be cleansed with the redeeming blood and anointed with the Spirit—Lev. 14:14, 17, 28.

Lev. 14:14—And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* on the lobe of the right ear of the one who is to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.

Lev. 14:17—And from the rest of the oil that is in the palm of his *hand* the priest shall put *some* on the lobe of the right ear of the one who is to be cleansed and *some* on the thumb of his right hand and *some* on the big toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering.

Lev. 14:28—And the priest shall put some of the oil that is in the palm of his *hand* on the lobe of the right ear of the one who is to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering.

4. To serve the Lord as priests, we must have our ears cleansed with the redeeming blood—Exo. 29:20; Lev. 8:23-24.

Exo. 29:20—Then you shall slaughter the ram and take some of its blood and put *it* on the lobe of Aaron's *right* ear and on the lobe of the right ear of his sons and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle *the rest* of the blood on and around the altar.

Lev. 8:23-24—And Moses slaughtered *it* and took some of its blood and put *it* on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. ²⁴And he brought Aaron's sons near, and Moses put some of the blood on the lobe of their right ear and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot; and Moses sprinkled *the rest* of the blood on and around the altar.

5. As the Spirit is speaking to the churches, we all need an opened, circumcised, cleansed, and anointed ear to hear the Spirit's speaking.
- H. The Spirit's speaking is regarding the seven kinds of churches in church history: the initial church (Ephesus), the suffering church (Smyrna), the worldly church (Pergamos), the apostate church (Thyatira), the reformed church (Sardis), the recovered church (Philadelphia), and the degraded recovered church (Laodicea):
1. The last four kinds of churches will all remain until the Lord comes back.
 2. Undoubtedly, only the recovered church can fulfill God's eternal purpose, and only she is what the Lord is after; we must take the Lord's choice.
 3. Laodicea is a distorted Philadelphia, having lukewarmness and spiritual pride—Rev. 3:14-17:

Rev. 3:14-17—And to the messenger of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

- a. Laodicea means to know everything but in reality to be fervent about nothing; in name it has everything, but it cannot sacrifice its life for anything; it remembers its former glory but forgets its present condition before God.

- b. If we want to continue in the way of Philadelphia, we must remember to humble ourselves before God—cf. vv. 7-22; Isa. 57:15; 66:1-2.

cf. Rev. 3:7-22—And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens: ⁸I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name. ⁹Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, those who call themselves Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will cause them to come and fall prostrate before your feet and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth. ¹¹I come quickly; hold fast what you have that no one take your crown. ¹²He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name. ¹³He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ¹⁴And to the messenger of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see. ¹⁹As many as I love I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore and repent. ²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me. ²¹He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne. ²²He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

cf. Isa. 57:15—For thus says the high and exalted One, Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I will dwell in the high and holy place, And with the contrite and lowly of spirit, To revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

cf. Isa. 66:1-2—Thus says Jehovah, Heaven is My throne, And the earth the footstool for My feet. Where then is the house that you will build for Me, And where is the place of My rest? ²For all these things My hand has made, And *so* all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. But to this kind of man will I look, to *him who is* poor And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.

II. In the recovered church (Philadelphia), Christ is seen as the One upon whose shoulder the key of (the treasury of) the house of God (typified by

the house of David for the building up of the kingdom of God) is set—22:22; Rev. 3:7:

Isa. 22:22—And I will set the key of the house of David upon his shoulder—When he opens, no one will shut; When he shuts, no one will open.

Rev. 3:7—And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:

- A. To the recovered church, Christ is the One who has the key of David, the key of the kingdom, with authority to open and to shut; the Lord has given the recovered church in the one accord an opened door that no one can shut—v. 8; cf. Psa. 133.

Rev. 3:8—I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

cf. Psa. 133:1-3—Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell in unity!
²It is like the fine oil upon the head That ran down upon the beard, Upon Aaron's beard, That ran down upon the hem of his garments; ³Like the dew of Hermon That came down upon the mountains of Zion. For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: Life forever.

- B. The key of David opens the door for us to be transformed into a white stone and built into the house of God as a pillar with the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the new name of the Lord—Rev. 2:17; 3:12:

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

Rev. 3:12—He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

1. For us to be built into God, become a constituent of the New Jerusalem, and become a part of the new Christ is humanly impossible, but the law of the Spirit of life within us contains an element that deals with impossibility—Rom. 8:2; Rev. 3:7-13; cf. Gen. 28:12-19; John 1:51.

Rom. 8:2—For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rev. 3:7-13—And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens: ⁸I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name. ⁹Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, those who call themselves Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will cause them to come and fall prostrate before your feet and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I

also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth. ¹¹I come quickly; hold fast what you have that no one take your crown. ¹²He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name. ¹³He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

cf. Gen. 28:12-19—And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³And there was Jehovah, standing above it; and He said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your seed. ¹⁴And your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵And, behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will cause you to return to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you. ¹⁶And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know *it*. ¹⁷And he was afraid and said, How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. ¹⁸And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he had put under his head, and he set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹And he called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz previously.

cf. John 1:51—And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

2. Christ has the key to control the door of God's treasury, in which are the riches of God in Christ for our enjoyment; we have experienced both His opening and His shutting up of these riches to us—Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:17; 1 John 1:7, 9:

Eph. 4:30—And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.

1 Thes. 5:17—Unceasingly pray,

1 John 1:7—But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:9—If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- a. In order to enjoy His riches as the treasure, we need to remain in the touch with the Lord, staying in contact with the Lord according to the sense of life, to be poor in spirit and pure in heart—2 Cor. 2:10; Rom. 8:6; 10:12-13; Col. 3:16; Matt. 5:3, 8.

2 Cor. 2:10—But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ;

Rom. 8:6—For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 10:12-13—For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord *is Lord* of all *and* rich to all who call upon Him; ¹³For “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Col. 3:16—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

Matt. 5:3—Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Matt. 5:8—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

- b. In order to enjoy His riches as the treasure, we need to learn to exercise the keys of denying the self, taking up the cross, and losing the soul-life; all of us are “Shebnas,” who should be removed and replaced by Christ for Him to be everything in us and to us and do everything through us and for us—Isa. 22:15-19; Matt. 16:24-25.

Isa. 22:15-19—Thus says the Lord Jehovah of hosts: Get up, go to this steward, To Shebna, who is over the *king’s* house, *and say*, ¹⁶What are you doing here, and whom do you have here That you have hewn a tomb for yourself here, As he who has hewn a tomb on the heights, As he who has cut out a resting place for himself in the rock? ¹⁷Jehovah soon throws you far away, O mighty one, And He grasps you firmly; ¹⁸He will wind you up tightly; Like a ball *He will toss* you into a wide land. There you will die; and there the chariots of your glory *Will become* the disgrace of the house of your master. ¹⁹And I will drive you from your position, And from your standing He will pull you down.

Matt. 16:24-25—Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

III. In the degraded recovered church, Christ is seen as the One who will dine with the overcomers and give the overcomers to sit with Him on His throne, as He overcame and sat with His Father on His throne—Rev. 3:20-21:

Rev. 3:20-21—Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me. ²¹He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

- A. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me”—v. 20:
1. The door is not the door of the hearts of individuals but the door of the church; the Lord as the Head of the church is standing outside the degraded church, knocking at her door.
 2. The door is the door of the church, but the door is opened by individual believers; the church in Laodicea has knowledge but does not have the Lord’s presence.
 3. In the eyes of the Lord the degraded recovered church is (1) wretched because she is proud of being rich in the vain knowledge of doctrine but in reality is

sorely poor in the experience of the riches of Christ; (2) miserable because she is naked, blind, and full of shame and darkness; (3) poor because she is poor in the experience of Christ and in the spiritual reality of God's economy; (4) blind because she lacks true spiritual insight in the genuine spiritual things; and (5) naked because she does not live by Christ or live Christ as her subjective righteousness, as the second garment in her daily walk—vv. 15-17; cf. Psa. 45:1, 9-14.

Rev. 3:15-17—I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

cf. Psa. 45:1—My heart overflows with a good matter; I speak what I have composed concerning the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

cf. Psa. 45:9-14—The daughters of kings are among Your most prized; The queen stands at Your right hand in the gold of Ophir. ¹⁰Hear, O daughter, and see; and incline your ear; And forget your people and your father's house; ¹¹Thus the King will desire your beauty. Because He is your Lord, Worship Him. ¹²And the daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift; The rich among the people will entreat your favor. ¹³The king's daughter is all glorious within *the royal abode*; Her garment is a woven work inwrought with gold. ¹⁴She will be led to the King in embroidered *clothing*; The virgins behind her, her companions, Will be brought to You.

4. The Lord is dealing with the whole church, but the acceptance of the Lord's dealing must be a personal and subjective matter.
5. To dine with the Lord is not merely to eat one item of food but to partake of the riches of a meal, a feast; this may imply the fulfillment of the type of the children of Israel eating the rich produce of the good land of Canaan—Josh. 5:10-12.

Josh. 5:10-12—And the children of Israel camped in Gilgal; and they held the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹And on the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹²And the manna ceased on that day, when they ate of the produce of the land; and there was no longer manna for the children of Israel, but they ate of the yield of the land of Canaan that year.

6. Through our enjoyment of Christ as the tree of life, the hidden manna, and the feast, we will be mingled with Him in our constitution as one entity in order to express Him as the New Jerusalem—Rev. 2:7, 17; 3:20.

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

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

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

B. “He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne”—v. 21:

1. To sit with the Lord on His throne will be a prize to the overcomer, that he may participate in the Lord’s authority and be a co-king with Him in ruling over the whole earth in the coming millennial kingdom—Luke 19:11-27; Matt. 25:21, 23.

Luke 19:11-27—And as they were listening to these things, He spoke further a parable, because He was near Jerusalem and they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. ¹²He said therefore, A certain man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³And he called ten of his own slaves and gave them ten minas, and he said to them, Do business until I come. ¹⁴But his citizens hated him and sent an envoy after him, saying, We do not want this man to reign over us. ¹⁵And when he came back, having received the kingdom, he commanded that those slaves to whom he had given the money should be called to him so that he might know what they had gained by doing business. ¹⁶And the first appeared, saying, Master, your mina has gained ten minas. ¹⁷And he said to him, Well *done*, good slave. Because you have become faithful in the least, have authority over ten cities. ¹⁸And the second came, saying, Your mina, master, has made five minas. ¹⁹And he said to this one as well, And you, be over five cities. ²⁰And the other came, saying, Master, behold your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; ²¹For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man: you withdraw what you did not deposit, and you reap what you did not sow. ²²He said to him, Out of your mouth I will judge you, wicked slave. You knew that I am a harsh man, withdrawing what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. ²³Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and when I came, I would have collected it with interest? ²⁴And to those standing by he said, Take the mina away from him, and give *it* to the one who has the ten minas. ²⁵And they said to him, Master, he has ten minas. ²⁶I tell you that to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, but from him who does not have, even that which he has shall be taken away. ²⁷However, these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring *them* here and slay them before me.

Matt. 25:21—His master said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

Matt. 25:23—His master said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

2. God’s intention is to work Himself into man and to work on man in order that man can be on the throne; His desire is to make us people of the throne—Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 22:5; cf. Isa. 14:12-14.

Rev. 2:26-27—And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷And he will shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father;

Rev. 3:21—He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

Rev. 22:5—And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

cf. Isa. 14:12-14—How you have fallen from heaven, O Daystar, son of the dawn! How you have been hewn down to earth, You who made nations fall prostrate! ¹³But you, you said in your heart: I will ascend to heaven; Above the stars of God I will exalt my throne. And I will sit upon the mount of assembly In the uttermost parts of the north. ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.

3. Through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, the Lord Jesus was brought to the throne; a real man whose name is Jesus is on the throne (Ezek. 1:26); now today the Lord of heaven and earth, the Lord of the universe, is a man; this is why we declare, “Jesus is Lord,” and this is why we call, “O Lord Jesus.”

Ezek. 1:26—And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

4. The Lord Jesus led the way to the throne; He was the Pioneer, the Forerunner (Heb. 6:20; 2:6-9), cutting the path to the throne; He has cut the path and taken the lead so that we may follow (vv. 10-12).

Heb. 6:20—Where the Forerunner, Jesus, has entered for us, having become forever a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Heb. 2:6-9—But one has solemnly testified somewhere, saying, “What is man, that You bring him to mind? Or the son of man, that You care for him? ⁷You have made Him a little inferior to the angels; You have crowned Him with glory and honor and have set Him over the works of Your hands; ⁸You have subjected all things under His feet.” For in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing unsubjected to Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him, ⁹But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything.

Heb. 2:10-12—For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹²Saying, “I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You.”

5. Now we are marching to the throne, for God intends to bring us into glory and to set us on the throne; God desires to manifest Himself through man, and He desires to reign, to administrate, through man; God’s intention is to cast Satan down and to redeem many of those taken captive by Satan and bring them to His throne.

6. We have been called to be sons of God, and we are destined to be kings, but we need God to work in us and on us to qualify us for kingship—Rom. 5:17, 21; cf. Ezek. 1:22, 26; Matt. 8:9.

Rom. 5:17—For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Rom. 5:21—In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

cf. Ezek. 1:22—And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

cf. Ezek. 1:26—And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

cf. Matt. 8:9—For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does *it*.

Message Eight

The Man-child, the War in Heaven, and the Overcoming Saints

Scripture Reading: Rev. 12:5, 7-11

Rev. 12:5—And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Rev. 12:7-11—And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon. And the dragon warred and his angels. ⁸And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any longer in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. ¹⁰And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night. ¹¹And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

I. “She brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne”— Rev. 12:5:

A. *Brought forth* here signifies resurrection, as in Acts 13:33-34:

Acts 13:33-34—That God has fully fulfilled this *promise* to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, “You are My Son; this day have I begotten You.” ³⁴And as to His having raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to corruption, He spoke in this way, “I will give you the holy things of David, the faithful things.”

1. The man-child is composed of the overcoming saints who have died and been resurrected.
2. This is proved by the words *unto death* in Revelation 12:11.

Rev. 12:11—And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

B. In the Bible, woman signifies the weaker one and man the stronger one—1 Pet. 3:7:

1 Pet. 3:7—Husbands, in like manner dwell together with *them* according to knowledge, as with the weaker, female vessel, assigning honor to *them* as also to fellow heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

1. The man-child in Revelation 12 signifies the stronger part of God’s people.
2. That the man-child is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod indicates that the man-child consists of the overcomers, as mentioned in 2:26-27.

Rev. 2:26-27—And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷And he will shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father;

C. To be caught up is to be raptured:

1. The rapture of the man-child differs from that of the majority of the believers, which is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
1 Thes. 4:17—Then we who are living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord.
2. There, the majority of the believers are raptured to the air, and at the last trumpet (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4:16), which is the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15).
1 Cor. 15:52—In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.
1 Thes. 4:16—Because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
Rev. 11:15—And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
3. Here, the man-child is raptured to the throne of God, and before the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, which is the time of the great tribulation of three and a half years (forty-two months, 12:14; 13:5; 11:2), beginning from the sixth seal, before the fifth trumpet (9:1).
Rev. 12:14—And to the woman there were given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the face of the serpent.
Rev. 13:5—And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and authority was given to him to act for forty-two months.
Rev. 11:2—And the court which is outside the temple cast out and do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.
Rev. 9:1—And the fifth angel trumpeted, and I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss.

II. “There was war in heaven”—12:7a:

- A. Immediately after the man-child is raptured to heaven, Michael and his angels begin to war against Satan:
 1. This indicates that the man-child, the stronger part of God’s people, is always engaged in fighting God’s enemy, Satan.
 2. They have been fighting Satan continually on earth.
 3. Heaven is waiting for them to arrive that a war may be waged to cast Satan out of heaven.
 4. The Bible reveals the names of two angels—Michael and Gabriel.
 5. Gabriel is a reporter bringing news to God’s people (Dan. 8:16; 9:21-22; Luke 1:19, 26), whereas Michael is a fighter contending for God’s people (Dan. 10:13, 21; 11:1; 12:1; Jude 9).

Dan. 8:16—And I heard the voice of a man between *the banks of* the Ulai; and He called out and said, Gabriel, cause this man to understand the vision.

Dan. 9:21-22—Even while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, reached me in *my* utter exhaustion about the time of the evening oblation. ²²And he informed *me* and talked with me and said, Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.

Luke 1:19—And the angel answered and said to him, I am Gabriel, who stands before God, and I was sent to speak to you and to announce the good news of these things to you.

Luke 1:26—And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

Dan. 10:13—But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for twenty-one days; but now Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I remained there *alone* with the kings of Persia.

Dan. 10:21—However I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who holds strongly with me against these ones except Michael your prince.

Dan. 11:1—And I, in the first year of Darius the Mede, stood up to support and strengthen him.

Dan. 12:1—And at that time Michael, the great prince who stands for the children of your people, will arise; and there will be a time of distress, such as never occurred since there came to be a nation until that time; and at that time your people, every one found written in the book, will be delivered.

Jude 9—But Michael the archangel, when he contended with the devil and disputed concerning the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a reviling judgment against *him* but said, The Lord rebuke you.

- B. “The dragon warred and his angels” (Rev. 12:7b); these angels must be the fallen angels, who follow Satan to rebel against God (Matt. 25:41).

Rev. 12:7—And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon. And the dragon warred and his angels.

Matt. 25:41—Then He will say also to those on the left, Go away from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

- C. Satan, the enemy of God, was judged by the Lord Jesus on the cross—John 12:31; 16:11:

John 12:31—Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

John 16:11—And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

1. After that, the overcoming believers are needed for the carrying out of that judgment, for the executing of that sentence.

2. The war waged by the overcoming believers against Satan is actually the executing of the Lord's judgment upon him.
3. Eventually, through their fighting, he is cast out of heaven—Rev. 12:7-9.
Rev. 12:7-9—And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon. And the dragon warred and his angels. ⁸And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any longer in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.

III. “Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him [the devil] because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death”—vv. 10-11:

A. They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb:

1. Satan may accuse us, but we can answer that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin—1 John 1:7.
1 John 1:7—But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.
2. Any apparent condemnation that does not stop after we have confessed and applied the blood is not God's enlightenment but Satan's accusation—v. 9.
1 John 1:9—If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
3. We must not only reject the accusations which are without cause, but we must also reject all the accusations which have cause.
4. When we commit sin, we do not glorify God, but when we do not trust the precious blood, we dishonor Him all the more—Matt. 26:28; cf. Heb. 10:29.
Matt. 26:28—For this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

cf. Heb. 10:29—By how much do you think he will be thought worthy of worse punishment who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has considered the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

5. We must always apply the blood, telling the devil that although we are not perfect, we are under the precious blood—1 Pet. 1:18-19; Acts 20:28.
1 Pet. 1:18-19—Knowing that *it was* not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, *that* you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, ¹⁹But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, *the blood of Christ*;
- Acts 20:28**—Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

B. They overcame him because of the word of their testimony:

1. “Testimony” means to tell others what there is in Christ, and the word of testimony is something which must be spoken forth.
2. The overcomers must frequently proclaim the victory of Christ, testifying that the devil has been judged by the Lord—1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14.

1 John 3:8—He who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Heb. 2:14—Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

3. Satan does not fear when we try to reason with him, but he does fear when we proclaim the spiritual facts of Christ’s victory—cf. 2 Chron. 20:20-22:

cf. 2 Chron. 20:20-22—And they rose up early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa. And as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood up and said, Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in Jehovah your God, and you will be established; believe in His prophets, and you will succeed. ²¹And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed *them* to sing to Jehovah and give thanks in holy array as they went out before the army and say, Give thanks to Jehovah, for His lovingkindness *endures* forever. ²²And when they began to shout in song and to praise, Jehovah set ambushes for the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who were coming out against Judah; and they were struck.

- a. That the name of Jesus is above every name is a spiritual fact which we must declare in faith, not only to men but also to Satan—Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Cor. 12:3b.

Phil. 2:9-11—Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

1 Cor. 12:3—Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus *is* accursed; and no one can say, Jesus *is* Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

- b. We must proclaim to Satan and his demons that Jesus is Lord, that the Lord is victorious, and that Satan has been crushed under His feet—Gen. 3:15; John 14:30b; Rom. 16:20.

Gen. 3:15—And I will put enmity Between you and the woman And between your seed and her seed; He will bruise you on the head, But you will bruise him on the heel.

John 14:30—I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing;

Rom. 16:20—Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

- C. They loved not their soul-life even unto death:

1. Due to Adam's fall, Satan joined himself to man's soul-life—man's self; to overcome him we must not love our soul-life; rather, we must hate it and deny it—Matt. 16:23-24; Luke 14:26; 9:23:

Matt. 16:23-24—But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men. ²⁴Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Luke 14:26—If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, even his own soul-life, he cannot be My disciple.

Luke 9:23—And He said to *them* all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

- a. Satan wants us to act in our own strength and move in ourselves with the power of our soul, our natural ability.
- b. Natural ability is the ability which we originally had and which has never been dealt with by the operation of the cross.
- c. The failure of the church is due to man's bringing in his natural ability.
- d. The purpose of the cross is to deal with our natural strength and ability so that we will not dare to move by ourselves, as seen in the cases of Moses and Peter—Acts 7:23-30; Luke 22:32-34; 1 Pet. 5:5-6.

Acts 7:23-30—But when he was approaching forty years of age, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. ²⁴And when he saw one of *them* being wronged, he defended *him*, and he avenged him who was being oppressed by striking the Egyptian dead. ²⁵And he supposed that his brothers understood that God through his hand was giving salvation to them; but they did not understand. ²⁶And on the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting and tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, Men, you are brothers. Why are you wronging one another? ²⁷But the one who was wronging his neighbor pushed him away, saying, "Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?" ²⁸Do you want to do away with me the same way you did away with the Egyptian yesterday?" ²⁹And Moses fled at this word and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he begot two sons. ³⁰And when forty years had been fulfilled, an Angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai in the flame of a thornbush fire.

Luke 22:32-34—But I have made petition concerning you that your faith would not fail; and you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers. ³³And he said to Him, Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death. ³⁴But He said, I tell you, Peter, a rooster will not crow today until you deny three times that you know Me.

1 Pet. 5:5-6—In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. ⁶Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,

- e. We should have the attitude that we will not live by our self in any way; we will not value our own ability or have any self-confidence—1 Cor. 2:2-4; Phil. 3:3; cf. Isa. 11:2b.

1 Cor. 2:2-4—For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified. ³And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling; ⁴And my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

Phil. 3:3—For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

cf. Isa. 11:2—And the Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah.

2. We must be self-sacrificing persons, a drink offering, allowing Christ as the heavenly wine to fill us and cause us to become wine to God—Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6; Judg. 9:13:

Phil. 2:17—But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.

2 Tim. 4:6—For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Judg. 9:13—But the vine said to them, Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?

- a. The drink offering typifies Christ as the One poured out as the real wine before God for His satisfaction—Exo. 29:40-41.

Exo. 29:40-41—And with the one lamb a tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering. ⁴¹And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; you shall offer it with the meal offering and its drink offering as in the morning, for a satisfying fragrance, an offering by fire to Jehovah.

- b. The apostle Paul became a drink offering that was poured out upon the sacrifice and service of the saints' faith—Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6.

Phil. 2:17—But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.

2 Tim. 4:6—For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand.

- c. The drink offering typifies not only Christ Himself, but also Christ who saturates us with Himself as the heavenly wine until He and we become one to be poured out for God's enjoyment and satisfaction and for God's building—Matt. 9:17; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6.

Matt. 9:17—Neither do they put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.

Phil. 2:17—But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.

2 Tim. 4:6—For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Message Nine

The Lamb Whom the Overcoming Firstfruits Follow

Scripture Reading: Rev. 14:1-5; Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6; Matt. 24:45-51

Rev. 14:1-5—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like *the sound* of harp-singers playing on their harps. ³And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth. ⁴These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men *as* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵And in their mouth no lie was found; they are without blemish.

Gen. 5:22-24—And Enoch walked with God after he had begotten Methuselah three hundred years, and he begot *more* sons and daughters. ²³And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. ²⁴And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Heb. 11:5-6—By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God. ⁶But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Matt. 24:45-51—Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays, ⁴⁹And begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken, ⁵⁰The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him* and at an hour which he does not know, ⁵¹And will cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

I. Revelation 14:1-5 reveals Christ as the Lamb whom the overcoming firstfruits follow:

Rev. 14:1-5—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like *the sound* of harp-singers playing on their harps. ³And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth. ⁴These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men *as* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵And in their mouth no lie was found; they are without blemish.

- A. The firstfruits are the living overcomers, who will be the first ripe ones in God's field; hence, they will be reaped before the harvest as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb:

1. The firstfruits will be caught up to the heavenly Mount Zion, to the place of God's dwelling in the third heaven, in order to be in the presence of God and Christ.
2. The meaning of rapture is to be taken into the Lord's presence; in order to be taken into the Lord's presence, we must be in His presence today—Luke 21:36; 2 Cor. 2:10; Hosea 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:8; Acts 26:16.

Luke 21:36—But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.

2 Cor. 2:10—But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ;

Hosea 6:2—He will enliven us after two days; On the third day He will raise us up, And we will live in His presence.

2 Tim. 4:8—Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

Acts 26:16—But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this *purpose*, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;

3. The rapture is for defeating the enemy and satisfying God; the Lord needs the man-child to fight against His enemy, but He needs the firstfruits even more for His satisfaction and enjoyment—Rev. 12:5; 14:1, 4b.

Rev. 12:5—And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Rev. 14:1—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Rev. 14:4—These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men *as* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

- B. The Bible reveals two aspects of the rapture: the rapture of the overcomers before the great tribulation and the rapture of the majority of the believers at the end of the great tribulation—Matt. 24:40-41; Luke 21:36; Rev. 3:10; 1 Thes. 4:15-17; Rev. 12:5; 14:1.

Matt. 24:40-41—At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left.
⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left.

Luke 21:36—But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.

Rev. 3:10—Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth.

1 Thes. 4:15-17—For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are left remaining unto the coming of the Lord, shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep; ¹⁶Because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord.

Rev. 12:5—And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Rev. 14:1—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

- C. In Leviticus 23:10 we see a type of the rapture—the type of the crop ripening in the field—Matt. 13:24; Rev. 14:14-16:

Lev. 23:10—Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you come into the land which I am giving you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest;

Matt. 13:24—Another parable He set before them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens has become like a man sowing good seed in his field.

Rev. 14:14-16—And I saw, and behold, *there was* a white cloud, and on the cloud One like the Son of Man sitting, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, Send forth Your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come because the harvest of the earth is ripe. ¹⁶And He who sat on the cloud thrust His sickle upon the earth, and the earth was reaped.

1. The reaping of God's crop is what we call the rapture; this reaping indicates that the believers will be taken away from the earth—Matt. 13:30, 39b.

Matt. 13:30—Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Collect first the tares and bind them into bundles to burn them up, but the wheat gather into my barn.

Matt. 13:39—And the enemy who sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is the consummation of the age; and the reapers are angels.

2. Part of the crop—the firstfruits—ripens earlier and is reaped earlier; the rest of the crop—the harvest—ripens later and is reaped later.

3. According to Revelation 14, there are two kinds of rapture—the rapture of the firstfruits and the rapture of the harvest—vv. 4b, 14-16.

Rev. 14:4—These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men *as* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

Rev. 14:14-16—And I saw, and behold, *there was* a white cloud, and on the cloud One like the Son of Man sitting, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, Send forth Your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has

come because the harvest of the earth is ripe. ¹⁶And He who sat on the cloud thrust His sickle upon the earth, and the earth was reaped.

- D. The firstfruits are raptured to the house of God in Zion as the fresh enjoyment to God; this is for God's satisfaction—Exo. 23:19a; Lev. 23:10; cf. John 20:17a.

Exo. 23:19—The first of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of Jehovah your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

Lev. 23:10—Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you come into the land which I am giving you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest;

cf. John 20:17—Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.

- E. The firstfruits have the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads; this is the designation of their being one with the Lamb and with the Father and of their belonging to Them—Rev. 14:1b.

Rev. 14:1—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

- F. The firstfruits are the earliest among God's crop to reach maturity—Heb. 5:14—6:1; 1 Cor. 2:6; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15:

Heb. 5:14—6:1—But solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.

¹Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

1 Cor. 2:6—But we do speak wisdom among those who are full-grown, yet a wisdom not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are being brought to nought;

Eph. 4:13—Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Phil. 3:15—Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you.

1. To be transformed is to be changed in our natural life; to be matured is to be filled with the divine life that changes us—Rom. 12:2; Eph. 3:19b.

Rom. 12:2—And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Eph. 3:19—And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

2. For God's expression there is the need of maturity; only a mature life can bear God's image and exercise His dominion—Gen. 1:26; Rom. 5:10, 17, 21.

Gen. 1:26—And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Rom. 5:10—For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,

Rom. 5:17—For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Rom. 5:21—In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

II. In order for us to follow the Lamb and go on to maturity to become the firstfruits, we must walk with God by faith to escape death and obtain the testimony of being well pleasing to God:

- A. The way to escape death and obtain the testimony of being well pleasing to God is to walk with God—Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6:

Gen. 5:22-24—And Enoch walked with God after he had begotten Methuselah three hundred years, and he begot *more* sons and daughters. ²³And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. ²⁴And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Heb. 11:5-6—By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God. ⁶But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

1. To walk with God is not to override God, not to be presumptuous, not to do things according to our own concept and desire, not to do things according to the current of the age, and not to do anything without God—cf. Psa. 19:12-13; Josh. 9:14b; Luke 24:15.

cf. Psa. 19:12-13—Who can discern *his* errors? Clear me of my secret faults. ¹³Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Do not let them have dominion over me; Then I will be blameless and cleared Of great transgression.

cf. Josh. 9:14—And the men took some of their provisions, but they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah.

cf. Luke 24:15—And while they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

2. To walk with God is to take Him as our center and everything, to live and do things according to God and with God, according to His revelation and leading, and to do everything with Him—Rom. 8:4, 13-14; Gal. 2:2a; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

Rom. 8:4—That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Rom. 8:13-14—For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Gal. 2:2—And I went up according to revelation, and I laid before them the gospel which I proclaim among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of repute, lest perhaps I should be running, or had run, in vain.

2 Cor. 5:14-15—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

3. To walk with God means that we do not live by what we are or can do but by the immortal life, which is Christ Himself—vv. 4, 9.

2 Cor. 5:4—For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

2 Cor. 5:9—Therefore also we are determined, whether at home or abroad, to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him.

4. To walk with God is to have habitual fellowship with God, to be in constant touch with the Lord, and to be under His constant infusion—1 John 1:3; Phil. 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:16, 18.

1 John 1:3—That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Phil. 4:6—In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

2 Cor. 3:16—But whenever *their heart* turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

5. To walk with God is to continually exercise our spirit to enjoy the Blessed Trinity—Jude 14, 19-21.

Jude 14—And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied also of these, saying, Behold, the Lord came with myriads of His saints

Jude 19-21—These are those who make divisions, soulish, having no spirit. ²⁰But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹Keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

6. To walk with God implies the denying of our self and everything that is of our self so that we may be one with Him; it implies that we have given ourselves to Him, that we will give in to Him and let Him take the lead—Matt. 16:24-25; 2 Cor. 2:13-14.

Matt. 16:24-25—Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

2 Cor. 2:13-14—I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia. ¹⁴But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.

B. To walk with God is to walk by faith—5:7; Heb. 11:5-6:

2 Cor. 5:7—(For we walk by faith, not by appearance)—

Heb. 11:5-6—By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God. ⁶But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

1. Faith means that we believe that God is—vv. 1-2, 6; 2 Cor. 4:13, 18:

Heb. 11:1-2—Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²For in this the elders have obtained a good testimony.

Heb. 11:6—But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

2 Cor. 4:13—And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, “I believed, therefore I spoke,” we also believe, therefore we also speak,

2 Cor. 4:18—Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

a. Without faith it is impossible to please God, to make God happy—Heb. 11:6a.

Heb. 11:6—But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

b. To believe that God is, is to believe that He is everything to us and that we are nothing—John 8:58; Eccl. 1:2.

John 8:58—Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham came into being, I am.

Eccl. 1:2—Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

c. To believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5.

Gen. 5:24—And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Heb. 11:5—By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.

- d. To believe that God is, is to deny our self; in the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing—Luke 9:23.

Luke 9:23—And He said to *them* all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

- e. I should not be anything; I should not exist; only He should exist—it is no longer I, but Christ—Gal. 2:20.

Gal. 2:20—I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- f. At his conversion the Lord told Saul of Tarsus, “I am Jesus”—Acts 9:5:

Acts 9:5—And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He *said*, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

- (1) The Lord was saying, “I am the great I Am; I am the One who is; you must believe that I am and that you are not.”

- (2) Eventually, Saul was over, and Paul came up—13:9.

Acts 13:9—But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

- g. This is faith—“O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here”—J. N. Darby.

- 2. Faith means that we believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him—Heb. 11:6; Gen. 15:1; Phil. 3:8, 14:

Heb. 11:6—But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Gen. 15:1—After these things the word of Jehovah came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield *and* your exceedingly great reward.

Phil. 3:8—But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count *them* as refuse that I may gain Christ

Phil. 3:14—I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called *me* upward.

- a. Enoch’s reward was the highest degree of life—escape from death—Heb. 11:5a; 2 Cor. 5:4; Rom. 8:6, 10-11; 5:17.

Heb. 11:5—By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.

2 Cor. 5:4—For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Rom. 8:6—For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:10-11—But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

Rom. 5:17—For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

- b. The Lord is a rewarder, and we need to be His seekers—Psa. 27:4, 8; 42:1-2; 43:4; 73:25; 119:2, 10.

Psa. 27:4—One thing I have asked from Jehovah; That do I seek: To dwell in the house of Jehovah All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of Jehovah, And to inquire in His temple.

Psa. 27:8—*When You say, Seek My face, To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.*

Psa. 42:1-2—As the hart pants After the streams of water, So my soul pants For You, O God. ²My soul thirsts for God, For the living God. When will I come and appear Before God?

Psa. 43:4—And I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And I will praise You with the harp, O God, my God.

Psa. 73:25—Whom do I have in heaven *but You?* And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth.

Psa. 119:2—Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with all *their* heart.

Psa. 119:10—With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

- C. Enoch, as the first person to be raptured, is the representative of all the overcomers who will be raptured while they are living—Matt. 24:37-51; Rev. 14:1; Luke 21:34-36:

Matt. 24:37-51—For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark, ³⁹And they did not know *that judgment was coming* until the flood came and took all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. ⁴²Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes. ⁴³But know this, that if the householder had known in which watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴For this reason you also be

ready, because at an hour when you do not expect *it*, the Son of Man is coming. ⁴⁵Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays, ⁴⁹And begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken, ⁵⁰The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him* and at an hour which he does not know, ⁵¹And will cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

Rev. 14:1—And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Luke 21:34-36—But take heed to yourselves lest perhaps your hearts be weighed down with debauchery and drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare. ³⁵For it will come in upon all those dwelling on the face of all the earth. ³⁶But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.

1. Our being raptured depends on our being mature in the divine life by our walking with God—Heb. 6:1a.

Heb. 6:1—Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

2. Enoch continually walked upward with God day and night for three centuries, becoming closer to God and more one with God each day until “he was not, for God took him”—Gen. 5:24; cf. S. S. 8:5a.

Gen. 5:24—And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

cf. S. S. 8:5—Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, Leaning on her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree: There your mother was in labor with you; There she was in labor *and* brought you forth.

III. In order for us to follow the Lamb and go on to maturity to become the firstfruits, we must be faithful in service in the Lord’s commission to give God as food to the members of His household so that we may win Christ as our reward in the coming kingdom—Matt. 24:45-51:

Matt. 24:45-51—Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays, ⁴⁹And begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken, ⁵⁰The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him* and at an hour which he does not know, ⁵¹And will cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

- A. God has a household and a household administration, an economy, to dispense Himself as food to the members of His household for His expression—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15; Eph. 2:19.

1 Tim. 1:4—Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

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

Eph. 2:19—So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

- B. God has set faithful and prudent slaves over His household as household administrators, stewards, channels of supply, to give His people food at the proper time—Matt. 24:45; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2; 1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:10; Phil. 1:25. **Matt. 24:45**—Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time?

1 Cor. 9:17—If I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a stewardship.

Eph. 3:2—If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

1 Cor. 4:1—A man should account us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

1 Pet. 4:10—Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

Phil. 1:25—And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,

- C. *Give them food* refers to ministering the word of God and Christ as the life supply to the believers in the church; Christ as the life-giving Spirit is our food, embodied and realized in the word of life—John 6:57, 63, 68; Acts 5:20:

John 6:57—As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63—It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

John 6:68—Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life,

Acts 5:20—Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.

1. In order to enjoy the Lord as our spiritual food so that we can feed others, we must pray over and muse on His word, tasting and enjoying it through careful considering—Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15; Ezek. 3:1-4.

Eph. 6:17-18—And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, ¹⁸By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every

time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Psa. 119:15—I will muse upon Your precepts And regard Your ways.

Ezek. 3:1-4—Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. ²So I opened my mouth, and He gave me that scroll to eat. ³And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I am giving you. And I ate *it*, and it was like honey in my mouth in *its* sweetness. ⁴Then He said to me, Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

2. We must devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word—Acts 6:4; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8; John 7:37-39; cf. Heb. 7:25; 8:2.

Acts 6:4—But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.

2 Cor. 3:6—Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, *ministers* not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 3:8—How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?

John 7:37-39—Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

cf. Heb. 7:25—Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

cf. Heb. 8:2—A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

- D. To say in our heart that our Master delays is to love the present evil age and not to love the Lord's appearing—Matt. 24:48; 2 Tim. 4:8, 10; cf. Acts 26:16:

Matt. 24:48—But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays,

2 Tim. 4:8—Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

2 Tim. 4:10—For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.

cf. Acts 26:16—But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this *purpose*, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;

1. We must beware of covetousness, not storing up treasure for ourselves but being rich toward God—Luke 12:15-20; 2 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 3:8.

Luke 12:15-20—And He said to them, Watch and guard yourself from all covetousness, for no one's life is in the abundance of his possessions. ¹⁶And He told

them a parable, saying, The land of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. ¹⁷And he reasoned in himself, saying, What shall I do, for I have no *place* where I may gather my crops? ¹⁸And he said, I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and I will gather there all my wheat and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; rest, eat, drink, be merry. ²⁰But God said to him, Foolish one, this night they are requiring your soul from you; and the things which you have prepared, whose will they be?

2 Cor. 6:10—As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

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

2. “Remember Lot’s wife” is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers—Luke 17:31-32; cf. Rom. 1:21, 25.

Luke 17:31-32—In that day, he who will be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind. ³²Remember Lot’s wife.

cf. Rom. 1:21—Because though they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God or thank *Him*, but *rather* became vain in their reasonings, and their heart, lacking understanding, was darkened.

cf. Rom. 1:25—Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

3. We must be watchful and beseeching so that the day of the Lord’s coming would not come upon us suddenly as a snare—Luke 21:34-36; cf. Matt. 2:3.

Luke 21:34-36—But take heed to yourselves lest perhaps your hearts be weighed down with debauchery and drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare. ³⁵For it will come in upon all those dwelling on the face of all the earth. ³⁶But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.

cf. Matt. 2:3—And when Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.

- E. To beat our fellow slaves is to mistreat our fellow believers—24:49a; 18:3-7; Acts 9:4:

Matt. 24:49—And begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken,

Matt. 18:3-7—And said, Truly I say to you, Unless you turn and become like little children, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens. ⁴He therefore who will humble himself like this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens. ⁵And whoever receives one such little child because of My name, receives Me; ⁶And whoever stumbles one of these little ones who believe into Me, it is *more* profitable for him that a great millstone be hung around his neck and he be drowned in the open sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! For it is necessary for stumbling blocks to come, but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes.

Acts 9:4—And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?

1. We must not judge and condemn our fellow believers but be kind to them, tenderhearted, forgiving them, even as God in Christ forgave us—Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:31-32.

Luke 6:37—And do not judge, and you shall by no means be judged; and do not condemn, and you shall by no means be condemned; release, and you will be released;

Eph. 4:31-32—Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamor and evil speaking be removed from you, with all malice. ³²And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ also forgave you.

2. We must not revile or criticize our brothers but consider them more excellent than ourselves—1 Cor. 6:10; Phil. 2:2-3, 29:

1 Cor. 6:10—Nor thieves nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor the rapacious will inherit the kingdom of God.

Phil. 2:2-3—Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing, ³*Doing* nothing by way of selfish ambition nor by way of vainglory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves;

Phil. 2:29—Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor,

- a. To revile a brother is to criticize or demean him harshly with abusive language—cf. Luke 17:2.

cf. Luke 17:2—It is more profitable for him if a millstone is put around his neck and he is hurled into the sea than to stumble one of these little ones.

- b. Those who take in reviling words bear the same responsibility as those who speak reviling words; such words damage the Body.

- c. God will never entrust authority to those who by nature like to criticize others.

3. We must not lord it over our fellow believers but serve them as a slave to feed them with the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit—1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 20:25-28:

1 Pet. 5:3—Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

Matt. 20:25-28—But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. ²⁶It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

- a. For one to lord it over the saints means that he replaces the Lord in their lives by making decisions for them or by telling them where to move, thus, insulting the headship and lordship of Christ.

b. If we tell others where they should go without encouraging them to pray, seek the Lord's leading, and have the proper fellowship in the Body, this is a great insult to the Lord!

- F. To eat and drink with the drunken is to keep company with worldly people, who are drunk with worldly things—24:49b; cf. Eph. 5:18:

Matt. 24:49—And begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken,

cf. Eph. 5:18—And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

1. Because of their divine nature and holy standing, the believers should not be yoked together with the unbelievers; this should be applied to all intimate relationships between believers and unbelievers, not only to marriage and business—2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:33; cf. Prov. 13:20.

2 Cor. 6:14—Do not become dissimilarly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

1 Cor. 15:33—Do not be deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.

cf. Prov. 13:20—He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be troubled.

2. We must flee youthful lusts and pursue the all-inclusive Christ with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.

2 Tim. 2:22—But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Message Ten

Christ—the Establisher of the Kingdom and the Word of God—King of Kings and Lord of Lords

Scripture Reading: Rev. 20:1-6; 19:11-16, 19-21

Rev. 20:1-6—And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years ³And cast him into the abyss and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, that he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be loosed for a little while. ⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and *of those* who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not live *again* until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Rev. 19:11-16—And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹²And His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, *and* He has a name written which no one knows but Himself. ¹³And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white *and* clean. ¹⁵And out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He will shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Rev. 19:19-21—And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war with Him who sits on the horse and with His army. ²⁰And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet, who in his presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone. ²¹And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeds out of the mouth of Him who sits on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

I. Christ is the Establisher of the kingdom—Rev. 20:1-6:

Rev. 20:1-6—And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years ³And cast him into the abyss and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, that he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be loosed for a little while. ⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and *of those* who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not live *again* until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

- A. After fighting His enemies, Christ will establish the kingdom of God on the earth, the millennial kingdom, and reign with His overcoming believers for a thousand years—v. 2.
Rev. 20:2—And he laid hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years
- B. The whole earth must be cleared up as a preparation for God's kingdom to come.
- C. Only one thing remains, and that is Satan, the source of all the problems.
- D. The first item mentioned in Revelation 20, a chapter concerning the millennium, is the binding of Satan:
 - 1. Although the Lord judged Satan on the cross, that judgment has not yet been fully executed.
 - 2. When the Lord returns, He will fully execute the judgment that He accomplished on the cross upon Satan.
 - 3. Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss, being powerless to act or damage anyone; then the earth will become Christ's kingdom.
- E. According to the prophecies of the Bible, the millennium is in two sections: the upper, heavenly, section and the lower, earthly, section:
 - 1. The upper section of the millennium is called the kingdom of the Father (Matt. 13:43), and the lower section is called the kingdom of the Son of Man (v. 41).
Matt. 13:43—Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Matt. 13:41—The Son of Man will send His angels, and they will collect out of His kingdom all the stumbling blocks and those who practice lawlessness,
 - 2. The kingdom of the Messiah, or the Messianic kingdom, is another name for the lower section of the millennium.
- F. Revelation 20:4-6 reveals that Christ as the Establisher of the kingdom will reign with the overcoming saints:

Rev. 20:4-6—And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and *of those* who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not live *again* until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

 - 1. Because the overcomers bring in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Lord will reign for a thousand years, and the overcomers will also reign with Christ for a thousand years.
 - 2. Revelation 20:4 says, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them":
 - a. The word *they* refers to the overcomers.

- b. They are now sitting upon thrones, and authority to judge has been given to them:
 - (1) To have the authority to judge means to have the kingdom—cf. Dan. 7:10, 18, 22.
cf. Dan. 7:10—A stream of fire issued forth And came out from before Him. Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, And ten thousands of ten thousands stood before Him. The court of judgment sat, And the books were opened.

cf. Dan. 7:18—But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, indeed, forever and ever.

cf. Dan. 7:22—Until the Ancient of Days came; and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.
 - (2) Verse 4 in Revelation 20 indicates that the overcomers have received and are enjoying the kingdom.
Rev. 20:4—And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and *of those* who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
- G. The overcomers become qualified to reign with Christ by the humanity of Jesus being worked into them—2:26.
Rev. 2:26—And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;
- H. The overcomers who will reign with Christ in the millennium will enjoy the best resurrection:
 - 1. Revelation 20:6 speaks of “the first resurrection.”
Rev. 20:6—Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.
 - 2. The first resurrection is also the “out-resurrection,” that is, the extraordinary resurrection for which the apostle Paul sought—Phil. 3:11.
Phil. 3:11—If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.
- I. Revelation 20:6a says, “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection”; this must be the highest blessing—to inherit the kingdom manifested on earth and even to be the kings within it.
- J. “They will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years” (v. 6b); the overcomers will be priests to contact God and co-kings with Christ to reign over the nations in the millennium (2:26-27; 12:5).

Rev. 2:26-27—And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷And he will shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father;

Rev. 12:5—And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

II. In Revelation 19:11-16 and 19-21 Christ is revealed as the Word of God—King of kings and Lord of lords:

Rev. 19:11-16—And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹²And His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, *and* He has a name written which no one knows but Himself. ¹³And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white *and* clean. ¹⁵And out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He will shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Rev. 19:19-21—And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war with Him who sits on the horse and with His army.²⁰And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet, who in his presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone. ²¹And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeds out of the mouth of Him who sits on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

- A. After His wedding feast (v. 7) Christ will come as a fighting General with His bride, the overcoming believers, who are His army, to fight Antichrist; man will even wage war directly against the Lord of lords and the King of kings:

Rev. 19:7—Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

1. Antichrist, the false prophet, and the ten kings and their armies will make war against the Lamb.
 2. This war will be a fighting of the earth against the heavens, of man against God.
 3. Christ's enemies will become all the more evil, even declaring war against Him.
 4. It is indeed astounding that man could actually declare war on God.
 5. Christ, the Bridegroom, will come with His bride to fight against them.
- B. "Behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war"—v. 11:
1. *Faithful and True* will be a title of Christ.
 2. Christ is faithful both to God and to those who believe in Him.
 3. In His faithfulness He defeats and destroys those who oppose God and persecute the believers.
 4. He is also true in carrying out God's economy and in caring for those who believe in Him.

- C. Christ is God's faithful and true Witness who sits on a white horse, judges in righteousness, and makes war:
 - 1. Christ will come back to fight against Satan's power of unrighteousness, which today operates in the world as the mystery of lawlessness and which will issue in Antichrist, the man of lawlessness—2 Thes. 2:3, 7-8.
2 Thes. 2:3—Let no one deceive you in any way, because *it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,*
2 Thes. 2:7-8—For *it is the mystery of lawlessness that is now operating, but only until the one now restraining goes out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),*
 - 2. The entire world is under the satanic power of unrighteousness.
 - 3. In righteousness Christ will return to make war against the unrighteousness practiced by Antichrist and all his partners.
 - 4. Christ will not only judge in righteousness but also fight in righteousness; He judges by fighting.
 - D. "His name is called the Word of God"—Rev. 19:13b:
 - 1. This indicates that the Lord Himself is the Word of God.
 - 2. That the Lord's name is called the Word of God means that He is the expression, the testimony, and the speaking of God.
 - 3. The Word of God is the definition, the explanation, and the expression of God.
 - 4. In order to know God, we need to read, study, behold, contemplate, and gaze on Christ as the Word of God.
 - E. In Revelation 19, as the Word of God, Christ speaks for God by executing God's judgment upon the rebellious people:
 - 1. Even as the Lord fights, He speaks for God and expresses God.
 - 2. God is not a God of confusion; He is righteous and sovereign; He is also a God of order, and as such, He cannot tolerate disorder and rebellion.
 - 3. As Christ fights against the enemy, He will speak that God is sovereign, righteous, and orderly.
 - 4. He will declare that God is the God over everyone and that He does not tolerate rebellion against His authority.
 - 5. The Warrior is the Word; His fighting is the speaking of God's Word.
 - 6. The Lord's fighting in the war at Armageddon will be a powerful speaking:
 - a. It will tell Satan, Antichrist, the false prophet, and the entire universe that God is sovereign and that no one can rebel against Him.
 - b. The God of order will sweep away all rebellion.
- III. After Christ takes possession of the earth, He will reign over the earth as the King in the kingdom, ruling over the nations with His overcoming believers—20:4, 6; 2:26-27:**

Rev. 20:4—And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and *of those* who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev. 20:6—Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Rev. 2:26-27—And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷And he will shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father;

- A. As the coming King, He will be the Head and the center in the upcoming kingdom of God in the millennium.
- B. This will be the fulfillment of Isaiah 32:1, Jeremiah 23:5, and Zechariah 14:9, 17.
Isa. 32:1—Indeed a King will reign according to righteousness, And the rulers will rule according to justice.

Jer. 23:5—Indeed, days are coming, Declares Jehovah, When I will raise up to David a righteous Shoot; And He will reign as King and act prudently And will execute justice and righteousness in the land.

Zech. 14:9—And Jehovah will be King over all the earth; and in that day Jehovah will be the one *God* and His name the one *name*.

Zech. 14:17—And whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them there will be no rain.

- C. Christ has redeemed the earth and all its peoples (Col. 1:20) to the sphere and components of the kingdom, He has sold all to buy the kingdom (Matt. 13:44), and He has rescued the earth with all its peoples from the usurpation of Satan (Rev. 20:2-3).

Col. 1:20—And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.

Matt. 13:44—The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

Rev. 20:2-3—And he laid hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years ³And cast him into the abyss and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, that he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be loosed for a little while.

- D. He will have the full right to be the King of the restored earth and the restored nations.
- E. In His upcoming reign God's authority and glory will be fully manifested (Matt. 6:13), and the whole earth with its peoples will be brought into righteousness, peace, joy, and the full blessing of God's creation (Isa. 32:1, 16-18; 35:1-2, 5-7).
Matt. 6:13—And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Isa. 32:1—Indeed a King will reign according to righteousness, And the rulers will rule according to justice.

Isa. 32:16-18—Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness will remain in the fruitful field; ¹⁷And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the result of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. ¹⁸And my people will live in a peaceful habitation And in secure dwellings and carefree resting places.

Isa. 35:1-2—The wilderness and the desert will be glad; And the desert will exult and blossom Like the rose. ²It will blossom and blossom, And even exult with exultation and a ringing shout. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The splendor of Carmel and Sharon; They will see the glory of Jehovah, The splendor of our God.

Isa. 35:5-7—Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped; ⁶Then the lame will leap like a hart, And the tongue of the dumb will give a ringing shout; For water will break forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert. ⁷And the desert mirage will become a pool, And the thirsty ground, springs of water; In the habitation of jackals, their resting place, There will be grass with reeds and rushes.

Message Eleven

The Lamb-God Being on the Throne within the City

Scripture Reading: Rev. 4:2-3; 22:1-5; 21:23; Ezek. 1:22, 26-28

Rev. 4:2-3—Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne *there was* One sitting; ³And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and *there was* a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

Rev. 22:1-5—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street. ²And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him; ⁴And they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Rev. 21:23—And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Ezek. 1:22—And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

Ezek. 1:26-28—And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it. ²⁷Then I saw *something* like the sight of electrum, like the appearance of fire encased all around, from the appearance of His loins and upward; and from the appearance of His loins and downward, I saw *something* like the appearance of fire. And there was brightness all around Him. ²⁸Like the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud on a day of rain, such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw *it*, I fell on my face and I heard the voice of someone speaking.

I. The Lamb-God is on the throne within the city—Rev. 4:2-3; 22:1-5; 21:23:

Rev. 4:2-3—Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne *there was* One sitting; ³And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and *there was* a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

Rev. 22:1-5—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street. ²And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him; ⁴And they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Rev. 21:23—And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

- A. *The throne of God and of the Lamb* shows that there is one throne for both God and the Lamb, indicating that God and the Lamb are one—the Lamb-God, the redeeming God, God the Redeemer—22:1; 4:2-3.

Rev. 22:1—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev. 4:2-3—Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne *there was* One sitting; ³And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and *there was* a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

- B. In eternity the very God who sits on the throne is our redeeming God, from whose throne proceeds the river of water of life for our supply and satisfaction.
C. This depicts how the Triune God—God, the Lamb, and the Spirit, who is symbolized by the water of life—dispenses Himself into His redeemed under His headship (implied in the authority of the throne) for eternity.

II. The throne is the center of our Christian life:

- A. In our daily life, in our family life, in our marriage life, in our business life, and in our church life, the center must be God's throne; everything should be subjected to His headship.
B. Every morning after rising up, we need to say, "Lord, thank You for a new day for me to take You as my Lord. I subject myself under Your headship for the whole day. Lord, set up Your throne in my life. Set up Your throne in the center of my being. Lord, bring my whole day with my daily life under Your throne"; if we would offer such a prayer to the Triune God every morning, from that moment we would have the living water flowing within us.
C. In our experience, whenever we subject ourselves to the Triune God, taking Him as our Head, we enjoy a flow within us; the river flows with the God who purposed, with the Lamb who redeemed, and with the Spirit who is now the all-inclusive, processed, life-giving Spirit.
D. Under His headship we enjoy the flow of life with the supply of life and the way of life; in the flow of life we serve Him, we see Him, and we reign with Him—22:2-5.

Rev. 22:2-5—And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him; ⁴And they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

III. Ezekiel 1 reveals that the highest point in our spiritual experience is having a clear sky with God's throne above it; to reach this point means that in everything we allow God to have the preeminence and are completely submissive to His authority and administration—vv. 22, 26:

Ezek. 1:22—And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

Ezek. 1:26—And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

- A. The spiritual sky over the heads of the living creatures is crystal clear, like a great expanse of awesome crystal; furthermore, this sky is expanding and is as stable, unchanging, as crystal—v. 22.

Ezek. 1:22—And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

- B. In such a situation, there is nothing between us and God and nothing between us and one another; we have a thorough and clear fellowship with the Lord and with one another.

- C. This requires the maintaining of a pure conscience without any offense toward God and men; the story of our sky is the story of our conscience—Acts 24:16.

Acts 24:16—Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

- D. The throne is Christ's ruling presence:

1. The Lord's presence is always with His throne; the Lord's throne is both in the third heaven and in our spirit—Rev. 4:2-3; Heb. 4:16; cf. 2 Tim. 4:22:

Rev. 4:2-3—Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne *there was* One sitting; ³And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and *there was* a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

Heb. 4:16—Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

cf. 2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

- a. The very Christ who is sitting on the throne in heaven (Rom. 8:34) is also now in us (v. 10), that is, in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22), where the habitation of God is.

Rom. 8:34—Who is he who condemns? *It is* Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Rom. 8:10—But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

- b. At Bethel, the house of God, the habitation of God, which is the gate of heaven, Christ is the ladder that joins earth to heaven and brings heaven to earth—Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51.

Gen. 28:12-17—And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³And there was Jehovah, standing above it; and He said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your seed. ¹⁴And your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to

the north and to the south, and in you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed. ¹⁵And, behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will cause you to return to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you. ¹⁶And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know *it*. ¹⁷And he was afraid and said, How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

John 1:51—And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

- c. Since today our spirit is the place of God's habitation, it is now the gate of heaven, where Christ is the ladder that joins us, the people on earth, to heaven, and brings heaven to us.
 - d. Hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we enter through the gate of heaven and touch the throne of grace in heaven through Christ as the heavenly ladder.
2. The throne above the crystal clear expanse indicates that whenever we have a clear sky in our Christian life and in our church life, we will be under the ruling of the throne; the authority in the church is the throne above the clear sky.
 3. The throne is not only for God to reign over us but also for God to accomplish His eternal purpose; if we have the throne in our spiritual life, God will not only rule over us but will also fulfill His purpose in us, with us, and through us—Rom. 5:17, 21; cf. Matt. 28:18-20.

Rom. 5:17—For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Rom. 5:21—In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

cf. Matt. 28:18-20—And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.

4. The throne has the appearance of a sapphire stone; a sapphire stone, which is blue in color, signifies the heavenly situation, condition, and atmosphere of Christ's ruling presence—Exo. 24:10.

Exo. 24:10—And they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there was *something* like a paved work of sapphire, even like heaven itself for clearness.

IV. Ezekiel 1 reveals that the One on the throne looks like a man, yet with Him there is the appearance of the glory of Jehovah, indicating that the One sitting on the throne is both God and man; this is Jesus Christ, the God-man, the mingling of God and man—vv. 26, 28:

Ezek. 1:26—And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

Ezek. 1:28—Like the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud on a day of rain, such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw *it*, I fell on my face and I heard the voice of someone speaking.

- A. Jesus Christ was the complete God, and He was incarnated to be a man; having the nature of man, He lived, died, resurrected, and ascended as a man, and now as the One on the throne, He is still the Son of Man—John 1:1, 14; 6:62; Acts 7:56, 59-60.

John 1:1—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14—And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 6:62—Then what if you saw the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?

Acts 7:56—And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

Acts 7:59-60—And they stoned Stephen as he called upon *the Lord* and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! ⁶⁰And kneeling down, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

- B. Hence, since the ascension of the Lord Jesus there has been a man on the throne; in the millennium and in the new heaven and new earth for eternity, there will still be a man on the throne—Matt. 19:28; Rev. 22:1, 3.

Matt. 19:28—And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you that you who have followed Me, in the restoration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Rev. 22:1—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev. 22:3—And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;

- C. God's mysterious intention in His relationship with man is to mingle Himself with man and thereby to become the same as man and make man the same as He is in life, in nature, and in expression but not in the Godhead; man was created in the image of God to express God and to rule for God—Gen. 1:26-28; cf. Isa. 14:12-14:

Gen. 1:26-28—And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. ²⁷And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish

of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

cf. Isa. 14:12-14—How you have fallen from heaven, O Daystar, son of the dawn! How you have been hewn down to earth, You who made nations fall prostrate! ¹³But you, you said in your heart: I will ascend to heaven; Above the stars of God I will exalt my throne. And I will sit upon the mount of assembly In the uttermost parts of the north. ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.

1. The One on the throne and the four living creatures both have the appearance of a man, indicating that the four living creatures on earth are the expression of the One on the throne; this expression is the manifestation of God in humanity—Ezek. 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.

Ezek. 1:5—And from the midst of it *there came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man.

1 Tim. 3:15-16—But if I delay, *I write* that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth. ¹⁶And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

2. God in heaven desires to gain man on earth for His expression by working Himself into man; furthermore, God's intention is to work on man in order that man will be on the throne—Eph. 3:16-21; Rev. 3:21; 5:10; 20:4; 22:5; Matt. 19:28.

Eph. 3:16-21—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, ¹⁷That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are ¹⁹And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. ²⁰But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, ²¹To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

Rev. 3:21—He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

Rev. 5:10—And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.

Rev. 20:4—And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and *of those* who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev. 22:5—And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Matt. 19:28—And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you that you who have followed Me, in the restoration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

3. As the Pioneer, the Forerunner, the Lord Jesus cut the way to enter into glory and sit on the throne, and we, His many brothers, are now following Him—Heb. 2:6-12; Rev. 3:21; 22:5.

Heb. 2:6-12—But one has solemnly testified somewhere, saying, “What is man, that You bring him to mind? Or the son of man, that You care for him? ⁷You have made Him a little inferior to the angels; You have crowned Him with glory and honor and have set Him over the works of Your hands; ⁸You have subjected all things under His feet.” For in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing unsubject to Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him, ⁹But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything. ¹⁰For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹²Saying, “I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You.”

Rev. 3:21—He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

Rev. 22:5—And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

V. Ezekiel 1 says that the appearance of the man on the throne has two aspects: from His loins upward He has the appearance of electrum, and from His loins downward, the appearance of fire—v. 27:

Ezek. 1:27—Then I saw *something* like the sight of electrum, like the appearance of fire encased all around, from the appearance of His loins and upward; and from the appearance of His loins and downward, I saw *something* like the appearance of fire. And there was brightness all around Him.

- A. The electrum is a glowing metal, a mixture of gold and silver; gold signifies the nature of God, and silver signifies redemption; thus, the electrum, composed of the elements of gold and silver, signifies the Lamb-God, the redeeming God—v. 4.

Ezek. 1:4—And I looked, and there came a storm wind from the north, a great cloud and a fire flashing incessantly; and there was a brightness around it, and from the midst of it there was *something* like the sight of electrum, from the midst of the fire.

- B. The upper part of a man, from his loins to his head, is the part of feeling, of sensation, signifying his nature and disposition; according to His nature and disposition the Lord Jesus on the throne has the appearance of electrum, signifying the redeeming God.

- C. The lower part of a man's body is for moving; the appearance of fire from the loins downward signifies the Lord's appearance in His move with God's burning and sanctifying power.
- D. When the Lord comes to us, He comes as fire to enlighten, search, and burn; then through the fire He becomes the glowing electrum to us, and we are filled with the radiant expression of the redeeming God.
- E. After all the negative things have been burned out of us by the Lord as the consuming fire (Heb. 12:29), what will remain in us is the electrum, the redeeming God.

Heb. 12:29—For our God is also a consuming fire.

VI. Ezekiel 1 says that there is a rainbow as the brightness around the man who is sitting on the throne, signifying the splendor and glory around the Lord on the throne—v. 28; Rev. 4:3:

Ezek. 1:28—Like the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud on a day of rain, such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw *it*, I fell on my face and I heard the voice of someone speaking.

Rev. 4:3—And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and *there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.*

- A. At Noah's time the rainbow in the cloud was a sign of God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant with man and every living creature, signifying that He would never again destroy mankind with a flood—Gen. 9:13.

Gen. 9:13—I set My bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

- B. A rainbow can be considered as being produced from three basic colors—red, yellow, and blue: red, the color of fire, refers to God's holiness; yellow, the color of electrum, signifies God's glory; and blue, the color of the sapphire throne, signifies God's righteousness—Psa. 89:14:

Psa. 89:14—Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before Your face.

1. God's righteousness, holiness, and glory are three divine attributes that keep sinners away from God—Gen. 3:24.

Gen. 3:24—So He drove the man out, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

2. However, Christ came, died on the cross to satisfy the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, and was resurrected, and He is now our righteousness, holiness, and glory—1 Cor. 1:30.

1 Cor. 1:30—But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

3. Because we, the believers, are now in Christ, in the sight of God we bear the appearance of Christ as righteousness, holiness, and glory; this is the

appearance of a rainbow as a testimony of God's faithfulness in sparing us and saving us, the fallen ones, from His judgment on sinners.

4. In the New Jerusalem, a city whose foundations have the appearance of a rainbow (Rev. 21:19-20), we, the aggregate of the saved ones, will be a rainbow reflecting the brightness of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory and testifying forever that God is righteous and faithful.

Rev. 21:19-20—The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; ²⁰The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

5. As portrayed in Ezekiel 1, the Christian life and the church life will consummate in such a rainbow; at that point God's eternal plan will have been accomplished.

Message Twelve

**Christ Coming with Reward and Punishment,
a Lamp Shining in a Dark Place,
and Christ Appearing Privately to His Overcomers
as the Morning Star**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 22:12, 16; 2 Pet. 1:19

Rev. 22:12—Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to each one as his work is.

Rev. 22:16—I Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.

2 Pet. 1:19—And we have the prophetic word *made* more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

I. “Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to each one as his work is”—Rev. 22:12:

- A. The Lord repeats His warning, “I come quickly” (3:11; 22:7), so that we will consider His reward, to be rendered at His coming back.

Rev. 3:11—I come quickly; hold fast what you have that no one take your crown.

Rev. 22:7—And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this scroll.

- B. At the Lord’s coming, this reward will be rendered to each one of the believers, after their rapture, at the judgment seat of Christ—2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; Rom. 14:10; Matt. 16:27.

2 Cor. 5:10—For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad.

1 Cor. 4:5—So then do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then there will be praise to each from God.

Rom. 14:10—But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God,

Matt. 16:27—For the Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each man according to his doings.

- C. The Greek word translated “reward” in Revelation 22:12 means “wages.”

Rev. 22:12—Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to each one as his work is.

- D. When the Lord Jesus comes again to possess the kingdom, He will reward or punish all those who belong to Him:

1. Some will receive His punishment because the Lord’s word “My reward is with Me” implies that there is not only reward but also punishment.
2. In keeping with this, in Revelation 22:7 the Lord declared, “I come quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this scroll.”

3. He who keeps the words of the prophecy of Revelation is blessed because he will be rewarded.
4. The reward we receive on that day has much to do with our attitude today:
 - a. First Corinthians 3:8 says that we will be rewarded according to our labor.
1 Cor. 3:8—Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
 - b. In Matthew 16:27 the Lord Jesus said that at His coming back He will reward us according to our doings.
Matt. 16:27—For the Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each man according to his doings.
- E. Eternal salvation has nothing to do with our works, but the kingdom reward will be altogether according to our works that we have done by the Lord's life after being saved.
- F. Every saved one will be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad; those who practice good will receive a reward, and those who practice evil will receive punishment—2 Cor. 5:10.
2 Cor. 5:10—For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad.
- G. We will stand before the judgment seat and give the Lord an account concerning all our past living, walk, and conduct; it is because of this that even the apostle Paul says that he dared not examine himself, but He who examined him was the Lord—1 Cor. 4:3-4.
1 Cor. 4:3-4—But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you or by man's day; rather I do not even examine myself. ⁴For I am conscious of nothing against myself; but I am not justified in this, but He who examines me is the Lord.
- H. The way we serve and work for the Lord after we are saved is a great matter.
 - I. Paul says, "If anyone's work which he has built upon the foundation remains, he will receive a reward"—3:14.
 - J. When the Lord comes back, there will be a judgment; in that judgment He will determine whether we will receive a reward or punishment.
 - K. The reward will be decided by the judgment seat of Christ: "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad"—2 Cor. 5:10.
- II. "We have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts"—2 Pet. 1:19:**
 - A. Peter likens the word of prophecy in the Scripture to a lamp shining in a dark place:
 1. This indicates that this age is a dark place in the dark night (Rom. 13:12), and all the people of this world are moving and acting in darkness.

Rom. 13:12—The night is far advanced, and the day has drawn near. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the weapons of light.

2. The prophetic word of the Scripture, as the shining lamp to the believers, conveys spiritual light that shines in their darkness (not merely knowledge in letters for their mental apprehension), guiding them to enter into a bright day, even to pass through the dark night until the day of the Lord's appearing dawns.
 3. Before the Lord as the sunlight appears, we need this word as light to shine over our footsteps.
- B. *The day dawns* (2 Pet. 1:19) is a metaphor illustrating a coming time that will be full of light, as a bright day dawning, with the morning star rising, before its dawning, in the hearts of the believers, who are illuminated and enlightened by giving heed to the shining word of prophecy in the Scripture:

2 Pet. 1:19—And we have the prophetic word *made* more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

1. In the time of apostasy the believers do well to give heed in this matter, that the prophetic word, as a lamp, may shine through the darkness of apostasy until such a day dawns upon them.
2. This will cause and encourage them to earnestly seek the Lord's presence and be watchful so that they will not miss the Lord in the secret part of His coming (parousia), when He will come as a thief.
3. This metaphor must allude to the coming age, the age of the kingdom, as a day that will dawn at the appearing (the coming) of the Lord (v. 16) as the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), whose light will shine to break through the gloom of the dark night of this age.

2 Pet. 1:16—For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty.

Mal. 4:2—But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.

4. Preceding this, in the darkest hour of the night the Lord will appear as the morning star (Rev. 2:28; 22:16) to those who are watchful and looking for His dear appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).

Rev. 2:28—And to him I will give the morning star.

Rev. 22:16—I Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.

2 Tim. 4:8—Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

5. They have been enlightened by the shining of the prophetic word, which is able to lead them to the dawning day.

6. If we give heed to the word in the Bible, which shines as a lamp in a dark place, we will have His rising in our hearts to shine in the darkness of apostasy where we are today, before His actual appearing as the morning star.

III. “I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star”—Rev. 22:16b:

- A. Christ, who is signified by the heavenly luminaries, the lights, is the bright morning star—v. 16b.
Rev. 22:16—I Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.
- B. At His coming back Christ will be the rising sun to His people generally (Mal. 4:2) but the morning star to His watchful lovers particularly.
Mal. 4:2—But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.
- C. The latter will be a reward to the overcomers: “I will give the morning star”—Rev. 2:28.
- D. Christ as the Root and Offspring of David is related to Israel and the kingdom, whereas His being the bright morning star is related to the church and the rapture.
- E. The morning star appears before the darkest hour, prior to the dawn.
- F. The great tribulation will be this darkest time, after which the day of the kingdom will dawn; this indicates that Christ will appear as the bright morning star in the darkest time, prior to the close of this age.
- G. In the kingdom the Lord will appear publicly to His people as the sun, but before the great tribulation He will appear privately to His overcomers as the morning star to rapture them.
- H. The bright morning star will appear only to the watchful ones.
- I. The slumbering believers will not see the morning star; they will see Christ only as the sun in a general way.
- J. The watchful ones will have the priority to taste the freshness of His presence at His coming back after a long absence.
- K. The entire Bible concludes with the desire for the Lord’s coming expressed as a prayer.
- L. John’s prayer in Revelation 22:20 is the last prayer in the Bible.
Rev. 22:20—He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
- M. “He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”—v. 20.