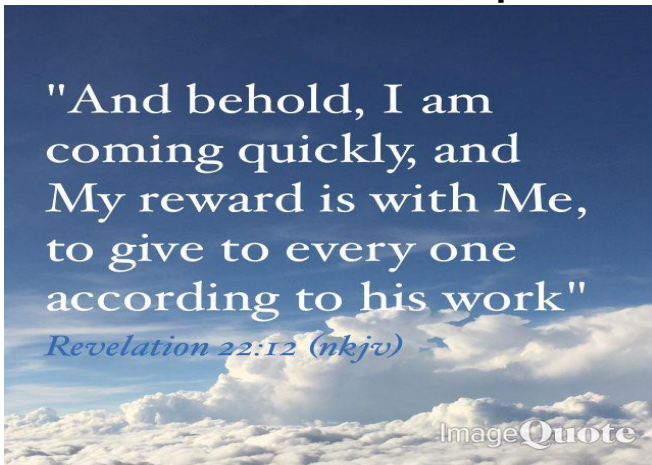
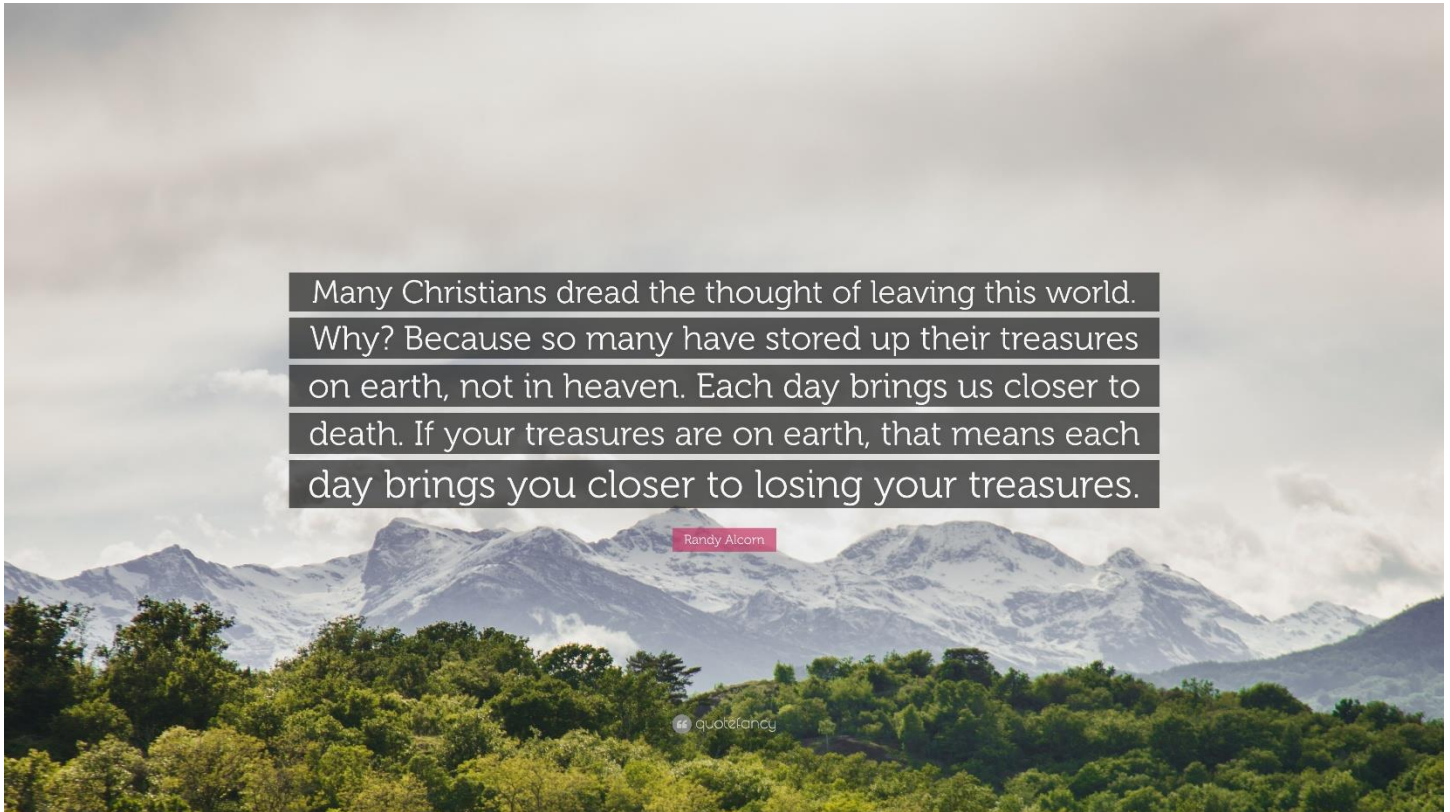


Heaven is for Real: Crowns II Timothy 4:1-8 FBC Canton Sunday am October 12, 2025

Introduction: Heaven is the place where rewards are given to believers.



God wants you to receive these rewards as part of the joy of Heaven.



It is not selfish to life for these rewards, it is gracious. Because all you have came from him, and in heaven you will know that clearly.

- I. There are 5 Crowns described in the scripture:**
 - a. Each Crown is for faithfulness, not perfection.**

- i. **The Imperishable Crown for winning your race. I Corinthians 9:24-25**
- ii. **The Crown of Rejoicing for others' salvations. I Thessalonians 2:19**
- iii. **The Crown of Righteousness for longing for his appearing. II Timothy 4:8**
- iv. **The Crown of Glory for shepherding your flock. I Peter 5:4**
- v. **The Crown of Life for enduring trials and temptations. James 1:12**
- b. **Crowns are rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I Corinthians 3:9-15**
- II. **Heaven is a place where rewards for the overcomer are given. Revelation 2 and 3**

The 1st extraordinary promise: The tree of life

The 2nd extraordinary promise: You will not be hurt by the second death

The 3rd extraordinary promise: Hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name

The 4th extraordinary promise: Power over the nations, a rod of iron, and the morning star

The 5th extraordinary promise: White garments and the Book of Life

The 6th extraordinary promise: A pillar in the temple of My God

The 7th extraordinary promise: Sit with Me on My Throne

III. Entrance into Heaven is not the same as inheritance in Heaven.

- a. **Entrance is by God's gracious promises, it cannot be lost. Ephesians 2:8-9**

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. ³⁴ Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

b. Inheritance is secured by Faithwalk, and can be forfeited. Revelation 3:10-13

- i. ¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ *Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.* ¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name. ¹³ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches

Conclusion: When you receive the crowns, you will cast them down because the giver is greater than the gift. Revelation 4:9-11

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

What are the five heavenly crowns that believers can receive in heaven?

There are five heavenly crowns mentioned in the New Testament that will be awarded to believers. They are the imperishable crown, the crown of rejoicing, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory, and the crown of life. The Greek word translated "crown" is *stephanos* (the source for the name Stephen the martyr) and means "a badge of royalty, a prize in the public games or a symbol of honor generally." Used during the ancient Greek games, it referred to a wreath or garland of leaves placed on a victor's head as a reward for winning an athletic contest. As such, this word is used figuratively in

the New Testament of the rewards of heaven God promises those who are faithful. Paul's passage in [1 Corinthians 9:24-25](#) best defines for us how these crowns are awarded.

1) The Imperishable Crown – ([1 Corinthians 9:24-25](#)) "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate [disciplined] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown" (NKJV). All things on this earth are subject to decay and will perish. Jesus urges us to not store our treasures on earth "where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal" ([Matthew 6:19](#)). This is analogous to what Paul was saying about that wreath of leaves that was soon to turn brittle and fall apart. But not so the heavenly crown; faithful endurance wins a heavenly reward which is "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" ([1 Peter 1:4](#)).

2) The Crown of Rejoicing – ([1 Thessalonians 2:19](#)) "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" The apostle Paul tells us in [Philippians 4:4](#) to "rejoice always in the Lord" for all the bountiful blessings our gracious God has showered upon us. As Christians we have more in this life to rejoice about than anyone else. Luke tells us there is rejoicing even now in heaven ([Luke 15:7](#)). The crown of rejoicing will be our reward where "God will wipe away every tear . . . there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" ([Revelation 21:4](#)).

3) The Crown of Righteousness – ([2 Timothy 4:8](#)) "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." We inherit this crown through the righteousness of Christ which is what gives us a right to it, and without which it cannot be obtained. Because it is obtained and possessed in a righteous way, and not by force and deceit as earthly crowns sometimes are, it is an everlasting crown, promised to all who love the Lord and eagerly wait for His return. Through our enduring discouragements, persecutions, sufferings, or even death, we know assuredly our reward is with Christ in eternity ([Philippians 3:20](#)). This crown is not for those who depend upon their own sense of righteousness or of their own works. Such an attitude breeds only arrogance and pride, not a longing, a fervent desire to be with the Lord.

4) The Crown of Glory – ([1 Peter 5:4](#)) "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." Though Peter is addressing the elders, we must also remember that the crown will be awarded to all those who long for or love His appearing. This word "glory" is an interesting word referring to the very nature of God and His actions. It entails His great splendor and brightness. Recall Stephen who, while being stoned to death, was able to look into the heavens and see the glory of God ([Acts 7:55-56](#)). This word also means that the praise and honor we bestow to God alone is due Him because of who He is ([Isaiah 42:8](#), [48:11](#); [Galatians 1:5](#)). It also recognizes that believers are incredibly blessed to enter into the kingdom, into the very likeness of Christ Himself. For as Paul so eloquently put it, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" ([Romans 8:18 NKJV](#)).

5) The Crown of Life – ([Revelation 2:10](#)) "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." This crown is for all believers, but is especially dear to those who endure sufferings, who bravely confront persecution for Jesus, even to the point of death. In Scripture the word "life" is often used to show a relationship that is right with God. It was Jesus who said, "I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly" ([John 10:10](#)). Just as things such as air, food, and water are vital for our physical lives, Jesus provides us what is required for our spiritual lives. He is the One who provides "living water." He is the "bread of life" ([John 4:10, 6:35](#)). We know that our earthly lives will end. But we have the amazing promise that comes only to those who come to God through Jesus: "And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life" ([1 John 2:25](#)).

James tells us that this crown of life is for all those who love God ([James 1:12](#)). The question then is how do we demonstrate our love for God? The apostle John answers this for us: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" ([1 John 5:3](#)). As His children we must keep His commandments, obeying Him, always remaining faithful. So, as we endure the inevitable trials, pains, heartaches, and tribulations—as long as we live—may we ever move forward, always "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" ([Hebrews 12:2](#)) and receive the crown of life that awaits us.

Chuck Smith

Verse by Verse Study on 1 Corinthians 3-4 (C2000)

Let's turn now to I Corinthians, chapter 3.

Beginning with the fourteenth verse of chapter 2, Paul here separates men into three classifications. Starting in chapter 2 with the natural man, the unregenerate man, the man who knows not Jesus Christ. And concerning him, he said, "He cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned." So the natural man in darkness, not able to see, not able to know the things of God.

In realizing this, in praying for those who are not saved, it is important to realize that Satan, as Paul said, the god of this world has blinded their eyes that they cannot see the truth. So they cannot receive, neither can they know, because Satan has blinded them to the truth of God. And as Paul said to Timothy, "That we might take them from the captivity of the enemy who is holding them captive against their wills" ([II Timothy 2:26](#)).

So the direction of our prayers for the natural man would be that God would open their eyes to the truth, that God would deliver them from that power of Satan by which they are held, that blindness

that Satan has brought over their minds concerning God, and that Satan's work be bound in order that they might be freed and become a free moral agent capable, then, of receiving Jesus Christ.

It is a misnomer to declare that the natural man is a free moral agent. He is furthest from free moral agency. He is bound and he is blinded by the power of darkness. And so the thrust of the prayers are to deliver him from this power of darkness to make him a free moral agent, in order that he might believe.

Now in contrast to the natural man, you have the spiritual man. And Paul says, "But he that is spiritual understands or discerns all things though he is not understood by men. For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him, but we have the mind of Christ" ([1 Corinthians 2:15-16](#)).

So the spiritual man is a man whose mind is now controlled by the Spirit. Man, a threefold being: body, soul, spirit. If the body is uppermost, then your mind is controlled by the body needs and is occupied by your body needs and you have what Paul calls in [Romans 8](#), "the mind of the flesh" or "the carnal mind which is enmity against God, neither can it know Him."

When a person is born again by the Spirit of God he becomes spirit, soul and body. And when the spirit is uppermost, then you have the mind of the Spirit, the mind that is under the control of the Spirit, as Paul said here, "We have the mind of Christ." Now as we get into chapter 3, Paul introduces us to a third classification.

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual ([1Cr 3:1](#)),

Now he's talking to those in Corinth, those in the church in Corinth, those who are presumably born again. And yet, they are not spiritual, for he says, "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual,

but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ ([1Cr 3:1](#)).

Now the issue arises, and people often question, is it possible to be a carnal Christian? A carnal Christian is one who has received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, but does not yet have victory over the flesh and thus, still walks, many times, under the control of the flesh. He does believe, he has received Jesus as his Savior, but not as his Lord, for the flesh is still ruling over him. And he needs deliverance from that power of the flesh that has a hold on his life. So Paul describes this as the conditions of those in Corinth.

He cannot talk to them as spiritual, for they are still carnal, but he does call them babes in Christ. And so he acknowledges that they are in Christ, but unfortunately, they are babes. There is a natural development and growth physically even as there is and should be a natural development and growth spiritually. There is a time when being a babe in Christ is a beautiful, glorious thing. I love to see natural babes in Christ.

To me it's beautiful when a person has just come to the realization that Jesus is Lord and their sins are washed away. And that enthusiasm, that love, that excitement that they have for the things of the Spirit, it's just something that's glorious to behold. And they're just fun to be around because the things of the Lord are just so exciting to them at that point, babes in Christ. But there is also a necessity of growing up into a fully matured relationship.

There are many marks of the babe in Christ, and Paul gives to us some of the marks. First of all, they need to be fed with milk because they are not able to endure the meat of the Word of God. So their first relationship is extremely experience-oriented. And thus, as they relate their experiences, they are usually relating them to the feelings that they have of excitement, of joy, of thrill as they come into the spiritual dimension, and for the first time begin to really discern or understand the things of the Spirit.

But as we grow and as we develop spiritually, it is God's desire that we come into a full maturity, as Paul the apostle declared to the Ephesians that they might come into that perfect man. And the word perfect is fully matured, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the image of Christ. And so it is God's will that we grow up spiritually into the image of Jesus Christ as we become fully matured.

Now, when a baby is a baby and is supposed to be a baby, it is a beautiful, lovely sight. I don't know of anything that can tug at the heart of a person more than a baby. And the first words of a baby are always so exciting. The first time that your little children say, "da da," and they know what they are saying is a thrilling experience. I'll never forget. We were living in Tucson behind the church. And it was a Sunday evening. And we just had one big room that we partitioned off with curtains and Jan's crib was in the room there with us. And I think Kay was already out in church and I was going into the closet to grab my coat and Jan was over in her crib, and she said, "da da." And I yelled, I turned, I screamed, and I said "What did you say? What was that?" But of course she wouldn't repeat it. But she had the cutest, most knowing smile on her face like, "I said it," and from that time on she started calling me Da Da. But I could hardly wait to get a hold of Kay and tell her that our baby said, "da da," just as plain as could be. And it was always such a thrill in the morning to wake up and to look over to the crib. And when she'd wake up she'd say, "da da," and I loved it.

But now if I should go over to her house and I find her lying there in bed and giving me that beautiful smile and saying, "da da," it wouldn't thrill at this point. It would pain. Because you see, naturally she should have developed and matured, which, of course, she has. And it is thrilling to sit down with her and just to share with her, because she has such keen insights on so many things. But our communication now is on a much higher plane. And it should be, because in the process of time there should be the maturation, the development.

Now, when a person first is born again by the Spirit of God and they are spiritual babes, babes in Christ, it's just always beautiful to behold, that fresh work of the Spirit of God in their lives. But, if after fifteen years, twenty years, they're still in the crib state, they haven't matured, they haven't developed in their spiritual growth or maturity, then it is painful and it is tragic to behold. It is important that we grow up.

Now Paul said they were carnal, and because of that they weren't able to take the meat of the Word of God. They were interested only still in milk.

Another mark of their carnality,

was the envying, and the strife, and the divisions ([1Cr 3:3](#)),

That existed among them. Envy, strife, divisions, marks of carnality, and Paul said as long as these exist,

are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are you not carnal? ([1Cr 3:3-4](#))

This party spirit or denominational spirit is a mark of carnality, to refuse to recognize the whole body of Christ. To break down the denominational barriers and be able to love another man even though he is a Baptist, or even though he is a Nazarene, or even though he is a Presbyterian. To be able to accept him as a brother in Jesus Christ is so important. That I not see these differences. And it is tragic to me that so many people, rather than identifying themselves with Jesus Christ, identify themselves with a particular church that they attend. "Are you a Christian?" "Oh, I'm a Baptist." "Are you a Christian?" "Well, I'm a Presbyterian." "Are you a Christian?" "Oh, I'm a Catholic." I think that's tragic. Rather than being able to identify with Jesus Christ. "Are you a Christian?" "You bet your life." "What church do you belong to?" "His church." "When did you join?" "I was born into it by the Spirit of God." To see the whole body of Christ.

The fierce dividing of the body into these quadrants is a mark of carnality. "Some say, 'I'm of Paul,' some say, 'I'm of Apollos.'" Paul said,

Who is Paul? who is Apollos? they are only servants by whom ye believe, even as the Lord gave to every man ([1Cr 3:5](#)).

They are only the instruments that God used to bring you to a faith.

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but it is God who gives the increase ([1Cr 3:6-7](#)).

So Paul said, "Who am I? Who is Apollos? We are only instruments that God used. You shouldn't identify with us. You should identify with the Lord. It is God who gave life. All I did was plant seed, all

Apollos did was water seed. All we were is instruments that God used to bring to you salvation. But it is God who gave to you your life and thus, you should identify with Him."

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one ([1Cr 3:8](#)):

Apollos and I are one. Why are you trying to create a division? We are one.

and every man will receive his own reward according to that labor ([1Cr 3:8](#)).

So Paul will receive his reward for planting. Apollos will receive his reward for watering. And that is the beautiful thing about serving the Lord, He does reward us for that work that we do, not for the results of the work, because the results belong to Him.

So I'm on a salary, I'm not commissioned at all. I'm not paid with a commission. I'm only salaried by the Lord to teach His Word; whatever comes of it is His and it's for His glory.

I cannot produce fruit in your life. All I can do is teach you the Word of God, water really. And maybe someone else has planted the seed, but here we are watering, cultivating, in some cases planting, great. But it's the work of God that counts. It's God who brings life and gives life to the Word, and thus, I just receive the reward for that which I have done, and I receive the reward whether or not anything comes of it, because I've been faithful to do what God called me to do.

And that's the thing that we need to really realize: that God rewards us for the work that He's called us to do, not for the results of that work. Sometimes we feel so discouraged, because, "I've witnessed to so many people, then none ever believe, you know. I haven't been able to lead one person to Jesus Christ and I've talked to so many." Hey, it doesn't matter. As far as your reward is concerned, God only asked you to talk to them.

God didn't commission us to argue people into a faith in Jesus Christ, to get into disputes with people over the inerrancy of the Bible or whatever. I find it rather pathetic that we so often are placed in the position of defending the Word of God. God didn't call you to defend His Word. God called you to use His Word.

If you were in a duel and you pulled your sword out of the sheath, you wouldn't say, "Now, you be careful, this sword is the sharpest sword in the world, you know. It can cut the hair on my arm, you know, and it's the singing sword," or whatever. "And it's the finest steel," and everything else. You're not going to defend your sword, you're going to use it. Don't defend the Word of God, just use it. The Lord will do the work.

Paul, speaking of Apollos and himself, said,

We are laborers together with God ([1Cr 3:9](#)):

"You see, I planted, Apollos watered, but we are, both of us, working together with God." And that, to me, is always a glorious concept, to realize that I am a worker with God, co-laboring with God in His harvest field. You are God's husbandry, plantings, the vines. Jesus said, "I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman, every branch in Me that bringeth forth fruit..." "

So really,

you are God's husbandry ([1Cr 3:9](#)),

He is cultivating your life in order that you might bring forth fruit for His glory. And then he goes on to say,

you are God's building ([1Cr 3:9](#)).

You are the work of God. You're not the work of Chuck Smith or of Pastor Romaine or of any other pastor here. You are the work of God. It is God that has worked in your life through His Word. And so he who plants is nothing, he who waters is nothing, but it is God who gives life and brings increase. And so,

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereon ([1Cr 3:10](#)).

"I planted; you are God's building." So he takes it from the farm to construction, from the field to a building now. "I planted. Apollos watered. I laid the foundation. Apollos came and build upon that foundation. For you are the building of God." But he warns, "Let every man take heed how he builds thereon."

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ ([1Cr 3:11](#)).

Now the church is the building of God that has been built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. And no other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid.

It is a sad error of the Catholic Church to declare that Peter is the foundation upon which the church was built. Taking Matthew's gospel, chapter 16, where at Caesarea Philippi Jesus said, "Who do men say that I am?" And they began to say the current concepts that people had about Jesus.

Finally, Jesus said, "Who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Or, "You're the Messiah. You're the Son of the living God." And Jesus said, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto you, that you are Petros [you're a little stone], and upon this petra [the rock] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" ([Matthew 16:16-18](#)).

So the rock upon which the church was built, the Catholics say, was Peter. He is the foundation. Not so. Jesus said, "You are Petros [a little stone], upon this petra I will build my church." What is the petra, the rock upon which the church was built? The confession of Peter that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. That's the foundation upon which the church was built, as Paul here declares, "No other foundation can any man lay than that which has already been laid, which is Jesus Christ."

He is the foundation of the church. He is the one upon whom the church is built. But, we must be careful even how we build on that foundation.

Now if any man build upon this foundation of gold, and silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay, and stubble; every man's work shall be manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire ([1Cr 3:12-15](#)).

Christ, the foundation upon which the church is being built. Paul acknowledges that there are some who are building with wood, hay, and stubble. Others are building with gold, silver, and precious stones. But there is a day that is coming in which the building is to be tested. It's to be tested by fire, and when that day of testing comes, then it will be manifested, the materials that were used in the building.

Now, I do believe that many of the great religious systems today have been built with wood, hay, and stubble. I believe that we are living in an age when somehow we have lost true faith in God and in the ability of Jesus Christ to do what He said He was going to do. For He said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church." But somehow we've come to the idea that He cannot build His church without our help and our genius.

And so we're going to help the Lord build His church. And we're going to have fundraising campaigns, and we're going to develop tremendous programs whereby we're going to help the Lord build His church, because surely He wants to build His church, but He can't do it without our genius and our helping Him.

And so we go to Madison Avenue and we study their techniques. We study how to write a psychologically enticing letter that will encourage the person to immediately sit down and respond to our appeal. "And I'll trace my hand upon a napkin, and when you get it you put it on your forehead and pray. And if you send me one hundred dollars, you can get whatever you need." That oughta be good for a hundred bucks from these poor simple little people who can't think for themselves. Gimmicks.

Oh, how I long for the day of purity within the church again. That kind of purity when Ananias and Sapphira came in with a pretense and they got snuffed by the power of the Spirit of God. That kind of purity that when the tabernacle was set up and they began the worship, when the two sons of Aaron took false fire and went in to offer it before the Lord, the fire from the altar consumed them.

There's a lot of false fire today being offered before the Lord: wood, hay, stubble. One day it is all to be tested by the fire, and much of the work that has been done in the name of Jesus Christ is going to be consumed and perish. Be careful how you build on the foundation. Make sure that you are using gold, silver, precious stones. We're the building of God. The church is the building of God. Christ the foundation, but be careful how you build. The day will come when it will be tested, our works, what sort they are.

You remember Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, chapter 6, "Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of man." In other words, take heed that you're not doing things in such a way as to receive the recognition and the reward from man. For He said unto you, "You have your reward." So when you pray, don't make a big public demonstration of it. Don't be always telling others about it so that they know what a prayer warrior you are. For Jesus said, "You have your reward." When you give, don't do it in such a public demonstration that everybody knows what you gave, for you have your reward. When you fast, don't put on the appearance of sackcloth and ashes and long mournful faces so that everybody knows how spiritual you are because you fast.

But do these things rather to your Father, before your Father, in secret before Him, and you'll receive your reward from Him. But Jesus is saying that in the acknowledgment that you receive from man in doing things in a public display, that will be the only reward that you'll get from them, that which comes from man. So our works will be judged, what sort they are as the motives of our hearts will be judged when we stand before God.

Now, a lot of beautiful, marvelous things that are done, we will be shocked when we realize the motive behind those things. You know, I've done some things that just really, totally failed. I mean, it was just a total flop. But yet, the motive of my heart was right. So it isn't really so much what I've done, but what was the motive behind what I did.

David Guzik

Study Guide for 1 Corinthians 3

CARNAL CHRISTIANS AND GODLY MINISTERS

A. Carnality in the Corinthian church.

1. (1 Corinthians 3:1) Paul confronts their condition.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

a. **And I, brethren:** These people are part of the family of God (he calls them **brethren**), and that is the problem. Though they have the Holy Spirit (unlike the *natural man* of 1 Corinthians 2:14), they are not behaving like **spiritual people**, but like **carnal** - that is, fleshly - people, like immature Christians (**babes in Christ**).

i. There is a significant debate as to if there can be such a thing as a **carnal** Christian. Some say it is a contradiction in terms; that Paul really says that these **carnal** ones are not Christians at all. Yet he clearly calls them **brethren**, and says they are **babes in Christ**. How could these terms be used of someone who is not a Christian?

ii. These Christians, to some extent, are *thinking* and *acting* according to the flesh, not the Spirit. Of course, the flesh does not dominate *every* aspect of their life, or they would then have no evidence of being born again. But Paul is addressing issues where they clearly are thinking and acting in a **carnal** - that is, in a fleshly - manner.

iii. "The carnal Christian is a child of God, born again and on his way to heaven, but he is traveling third class." (Redpath) [Romans 7](#) is a portrait of the carnal Christian; indwelt by the Spirit, but mastered by the flesh.

b. **Could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal:** There is a difference between being *fleshy* (*sarkinos*, used in 2 Corinthians 3:3) and being *fleshly* (the Greek word *sarkikos*, used here in this passage).

i. *Fleshy* is simply "made of flesh"; it can speak of the weakness that is common to every fallen human.

ii. *Fleshly*, when used of a person means, "characterized by the flesh." It speaks of the one who can and should do differently but does not. Paul says that the Corinthians were *sarkikos*.

c. **Spiritual... carnal:** Paul speaks about three categories of men. There is the *natural man* (1 Corinthians 2:14), who is patterned after Adam and rejects the things of the Spirit; there is the *spiritual* man (1 Corinthians 2:15), who knows the things of God; and there is the **carnal** man who knows the things of God, yet in some significant ways is still characterized by the flesh. Which one are you?

2. (1 Corinthians 3:2) How Paul treated carnal believers.

I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able.

a. **I fed you with milk**: Paul kept his teaching on the basics, even though they had an inflated view of their spirituality. They believed they were ready for the “deeper things,” but were not living any deeper in the basic things he already preached to them.

b. **With milk and not with solid food**: The difference between **milk** and **solid food** is one of degrees, not kind. Every doctrine that can be taught in seminary can be taught to children, though not in the same words.

i. There are not two gospels, one for the learned and one for the unlearned; there is no part of the gospel that we are authorized to keep back from the people.

c. **You were not able to receive it**: It wasn't that God prevented them from receiving the **solid food** Paul gave. The real problem was the Corinthian attraction to spiritual “junk food,” based on man's wisdom and eloquence. They were so “filled” with this junk food that they were **not able to receive** the spiritual **solid food** Paul wanted to give them.

i. Some “spiritual junk food Christians” are greatly blessed when they get a spiritual meal of **solid food**, but others, when presented with **solid food** are **not able to receive it**, because their spiritual “taste buds” are so conditioned to junk food, that is all they have a taste for.

3. (1 Corinthians 3:3-4) Evidence of their carnality.

For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal?

a. **For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal**: The Corinthian Christians thought of themselves as spiritual, but their divisions show that they are in fact fleshly.

i. The problems they had in human relationships showed there was something wrong in their relationship with God. It was evidence of carnality, of a fleshly way of thinking and living.

ii. **Divisions**, **envy** and **strife** among Christians are not the only signs of fleshiness, but they are the ones most evident among the Corinthians.

b. **Are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?** Paul did not say that they **were mere men** (that is, not saved), only that they were **behaving like mere men**. Christians have a higher call than living like the rest of humanity.

i. “Spiritual people are to walk in the Spirit. If they do otherwise, they are “worldly” and are called upon to desist. *Remaining worldly* is not one of the options.” (Fee)

c. **When one says, “I am of Paul,” ... are you not carnal?** We might think Paul would be more kind to his own “fan club.” Instead of letting their praise stroke his flesh, Paul denounced even his own partisans.

B. How to regard leaders in the church.

1. (1 Corinthians 3:5-7) The foolishness of exalting church leaders.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

a. **Who then is Paul?** Paul and Apollos are not the ones you believed on for salvation; they only brought Jesus to you. They are **through whom you believed**, not on whom you believed.

i. “So what was the use of fighting which of two nothings was the greater?” (Maclaren)

b. **I planted, Apollos watered**: Christian workers have different jobs and see different results, but God is the one who gets the work done. Only **God... gives the increase**.

i. When a farmer plants a seed, and waters it, he really does not make it grow. The miracle of life does that. All the farmer can do is provide the right environment for growth, and trust in the miracle of life. We do the same thing in ministering Jesus to other people.

ii. Some people are frustrated because they want to water when God has called them to plant, or they want to plant when God has called them to water. Others are frustrated because they want to make the increase happen, when only God can do that. Real fruitfulness in ministry happens when we are peacefully content with what God has called us to do.

c. **I planted, Apollos watered**: **Planted** and **watered** are in the ancient Greek aorist tense, marking definite acts in the past. **Gives the increase** is in the imperfect tense, marking the continued work of God.

2. (1 Corinthians 3:8-9) Christian workers work together, but are rewarded according to their own labor.

Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.

a. **He who plants and he who waters are one**: In combating the Corinthian desire to divide among leaders, Paul reminds them they are all on the same team.

i. How silly to say, “Planting is what is really important. Those waterers are really missing the boat.” Or to think, “Watering is where it’s at. Those planters better get their priorities straight.” The fact is planters and waterers are both necessary, both need each other, and both are working towards the same goal.

b. **Each one will receive his own reward**: All work together, but each is rewarded individually. Reward is not given according to gifts, talents, or even success, but according to their **own labor**.

i. God knows how to reward properly. On earth, many ministers either receive too much or too little reward.

ii. “The faithful, laborious minister or missionary who labours in obscurity and without apparent fruit, will meet a reward far beyond that of those who, with less self-denial and effort, are made the instruments of great results.” (Hodge)

iii. Young preachers used to ask G. Campbell Morgan the secret to his preaching success. He would answer: “I always say to them the same thing: work; hard work; and again, work!”

c. **We are God’s fellow workers**: God gives us the amazing opportunity to work with Him. We cannot work without Him, and He will not work without us (generally speaking). God wants **you** as His working partner.

i. When you consider all the ways God **could** have done His work, it is even more amazing to know He wants our participation.

d. **You are God’s field, you are God’s building**: The work Paul did with God was to work “on” God’s people. They were his “field” (using the picture of a farmer planting and watering), and they were his “building” (using the picture of a builder).

3. **(1 Corinthians 3:10-15) The church as a building.**

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation **with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on **it** endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.**

a. **According to the grace of God**: In describing Paul’s work among the Corinthians, he begins with a declaration of **grace**. He knew that his status as a worker in God’s field, or on God’s building, was based on **God’s undeserved favor**, not on his own deserving or merit.

i. It is an exalted thing to be a **fellow worker** with God. But God doesn’t choose exalted people to do His work. It isn’t anything in them that makes them worthy to be His worker, it is **according to the grace of God**.

b. **I have laid the foundation**: When Paul founded the church in Corinth ([Acts 18](#)), he set the only foundation that can be laid - the person and work of **Jesus Christ**. Yet he knew that others would come after him and build on the foundation he set.

i. So, **let each one take heed how he builds on it**. There is only one foundation for the church. If it isn't founded on Jesus Christ, it isn't a church at all. So one can't build on any other foundation; but one can build **unworthily** on the one foundation.

c. **Each one's work will become clear**: God will test the building work of all His **fellow workers**, so **each one's work will become clear**. Some build with precious things like **gold, silver, precious stones**; others build with unworthy materials like **wood, hay, and straw**.

i. By using the figures of **gold, silver, and precious stones**, Paul seems to have in mind the building materials used in the construction of the temple ([1 Chronicles 22:14](#), [22:16](#), and [29:2](#)). The "building" is what God builds in His people with the help of His **fellow workers**.

ii. **Precious stones** doesn't mean jewels, but fine stone materials like marble and granite. Mixing the wisdom of men with the wisdom of God in the work of building the church is like using alternate layers of straw and marble in building. Straw may be fine, it may have a place (in the barn), but it is an inadequate building material. In the same way, human wisdom and fleshly attractions may have a place in life, but not in the building of the church.

d. **The fire will test each one's work**: When God tests our work, it will be **revealed** what kind of work it was. Just as fire will destroy **wood, hay, and straw**, but not **gold, silver, and precious stones**; so the work of some will be revealed as **nothing** on that Day.

i. Notice that the **amount** of the work isn't going to be evaluated (though it does have some relevance). Paul says the work will be tested to see **what sort it is**. If one did a lot of the wrong **sort** of work, it will be as if he did nothing. His work will be burned and will vanish in eternity. Moody wisely said that converts ought to be **weighed** as well as **counted**.

ii. Paul also referred to this great testing in [2 Corinthians 5:10](#): *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad*. When our work is tested before the Lord, we will be rewarded according to what remains.

iii. It is a sobering thought: many, many people who believe they are serving God, but are doing it in an unworthy manner or with unworthy "materials" will come to find in eternity that they have, in reality, done **nothing** for the Lord. Some will be saved, but with a life that was wasted, and receive no crown to give to Jesus, for His glory (as in [Revelation 4:10-11](#)). **He himself will be saved, yet so as through the fire** shows that some will be saved, but barely saved, and saved with everything gone.

e. **If anyone's work**: The fire does not purify the **worker**, it tests their **workmanship**. Roman Catholics use this passage to teach purgatory, the idea that when we die, we go to a place where we are purified by fire before we go to heaven. The idea of purgatory has nothing to do

with this passage, and nothing to do with any other passage in the Bible. Purgatory is strictly a human invention, and denies the finished work of Jesus for the believer.

i. This passage has first application to Christian leaders, because this is Paul's topic in context, but the application extends to all servants of God.

The Kingdom, Power & Glory - The Seven Churches of Revelation

Author

[Nancy Missler](#)

So far in our series, we have learned that the way we live our lives here and now will have eternal and unchangeable consequences in the coming kingdom. In other words, what we do *after* we have been born again dramatically affects our roles, our positions, and our places in the future reign of Christ.

All believers will be with Christ in the coming Millennium, but only the overcomers—the ones who constantly recognize their choices and choose to turn around and follow Christ—will inherit levels of responsibility in that kingdom.

Last month, we stressed the importance that God puts on becoming “overcomers.” It’s imperative that we learn how to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. Otherwise, we ourselves will be overcome by the same.

Overcomers are those Christians who, by being partakers *of* Christ’s eternal Life, are able to conquer, prevail and subdue the temptations of the world, the desires of the flesh and the wiles of the devil. Again, these believers are not perfect or religious, they have just learned how to make “faith choices” to follow God’s will and not their own. They have learned to love with God’s Love, depend upon His wisdom and implement His power to accomplish His will.

Just to show you how critical this subject is to God, let’s review the seven letters to the seven churches of Revelation (in chapters 2 and 3) and see what promises He makes to the overcomer. Again, all these promises are Millennial in scope. Remember, these letters are addressed not only to churches in general, but to each of us individually! It is to these overcomers that the “blessings” of the future kingdom are assured.¹

Overcomers in the Churches of Revelation

If you haven’t already, take a moment to re-read Revelation 2:1 through Revelation 3:22, which talks about the “seven letters to the seven churches.” This passage of Scripture was given to John by Jesus not only about *seven existing churches at that time*, but also about *all churches* in general and about *each of us individually*. In other words, these letters are written to all churches of all ages and all individuals in every age.

The “rewards of inheritance” that are promised to each of these churches, and to the individuals in them who overcome, apply to all of us. Consequently, we need to listen carefully to what Jesus is saying because each of the “rewards” He gives correspond to the exact measure of faithfulness the believer manifested in his life.

It’s important to also note that seven times in these letters to the seven churches, Jesus says (through John), “*I know your works.*” In other words, Jesus is emphasizing “works” in these letters. In fact, in Revelation 2:26 He says, “He that over-cometh and keepeth *MY works* to the very end, I will give power (authority) over the nations.”

Here, again, Jesus is talking about the Millennium Kingdom and He is stressing a special kind of “work” that a believer must do. “My works.” Jesus says. He is talking about the things that are done *by the Holy Spirit* through us. He is not referring to the “works” of the flesh, but to the “works” of the Spirit.

The Seven Churches of Revelation

Let's take a moment then to look at *who* the overcomers are in each of these seven churches, and let's pay close attention to *what God promises* them in return for their faithfulness, obedience and endurance. Remember, these letters are addressed not only to churches in general, but to each of us individually!

1) Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7) - Ephesus represents the *apostolic church*, which endured great hardships, but God said He knew their "good works," their labor and their patience. These saints were strong on doctrine, but they had forgotten and forsaken the most important thing—their first love, that special intimacy with the Father. He then exhorts them to repent.

God's promise to the faithful and obedient overcomer in the church of Ephesus was that he would eat of the "tree of life" (the tree of life means being equipped with a "special wisdom and knowledge" for the future kingdom).²

This tree of Life first appears in Genesis where it says *man was created to rule and reign* with the King of Kings over all the earth. (Genesis 1:26-28) Then, it disappears on the earth for 6000 years because man was not in a position to rule and reign with Christ. But, here in Revelation, it shows up again in the Millennial Kingdom as man will, once again, be in a position to co-reign (Genesis 1:26-28).

So, the "tree of life" has something to do with our future inheritance in the Millennial Kingdom. It has to do with special wisdom and knowledge in order to co-reign with Christ. (Proverbs 3:13-18)

2) Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11) - Smyrna represents the persecuted church or the suffering church, whose elders said they were Jews, but were really not. Some were Jews in name only. God tells this church that He knows their poverty and their suffering, but He promises them if they are faithful and obedient unto death, He will give them the "crown of life." (James 1:12)

Interestingly enough, this is the only church (besides Philadelphia) that has *nothing bad said about it*.

God's promise to the faithful and obedient overcomer in the church of Smyrna was that he would not be hurt in the "second death." (The second death—where death and hell are cast into the lake of fire—comes at the end of the Millennium and involves unbelievers at the White Throne Judgment.)³ Because of his perseverance, even unto death, God promises the overcomer a victorious crown.

(Someone recently asked us a very good question, "If the overcomers in the church of Smyrna will not be hurt in the 'second death,' *what about the non-overcomers in this church?* What happens to them? And will they be hurt in the second death?" We wrestled with this question for awhile. But, we know that God's Word always has an answer for everything, if we would just wait. We did. Finally, it came. *Smyrna, remember, is the only Church that has nothing "bad" said about it, so in essence, there are no non-overcomers!* This letter is just assuring them that they all will be a part of the first resurrection and not be hurt in the second death).

3) Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17) - Pergamos represents the *church that was married to the world*. (Constantine's era) As God puts it, these are the ones that "dwell where Satan's throne is." This church had allowed the evil *doctrine of Balaam* (which means monetary gain by compromise) and the *doctrine of the Nicolaitans* (which means corruption of delegated authority) to come in.⁴ God exhorts them to repent.

God's promise to the faithful and obedient overcomer in the church of Pergamos was that he would eat of the "hidden manna" (divine physical provision for the future) and receive a "white stone," which is a victory stone for Christians whose works endure the fire. This stone will have a new name written on it that no one knows, except the one who receives it. (Revelation 2:17)

4) Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29) - *Thyatira* represents the *orthodox church* where the evil spirit of Jezebel was allowed to reign. (You might want to read about Jezebel, the patron of Baal worship, in 1 Kings 16:30-34 and 21:25 because in the end times, this spirit is said to return.) The goal of the spirit of Jezebel was to (and will be to) seduce God's faithful servants into disobedience and fornication.

As John phrases it, Thyatira hit the "depths of Satan." In verse 22 of Revelation 2, it says that God is going to cast Jezebel and her followers into the great Tribulation unless they repent. Therefore, God exhorts the faithful to "hold fast" till He comes. He says they shall also receive the "morning star" (which means they will have a special relationship with Jesus Himself.) (Revelation 22:16) They will shine like the Lord, reflecting His brightness and glory.

God's promise to the faithful and obedient overcomer in the church of Thyatira is that they will have authority over the nations and rule them with a rod of iron (speaking of the Millennial Kingdom).

We will explore the churches of Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea next month when we continue our study on God's promises to the faithful and obedient overcomers of the seven churches of Revelation.

To be continued next month: "The Seven Churches of Revelation (cont.)." This article has been excerpted in part from Chuck and Nan's new book *The Kingdom, Power and Glory*.

Notes:

1. Revelation 21:7; Colossians 1:12.
2. Proverbs 3:18; 11:30.
3. Revelation 20:14; 21:8.
4. Numbers 31:16; Joshua 13:22; 2 Peter 2:15-16; Jude 11.

The Kingdom, Power & Glory - Part 1

Author
[Nancy Missler](#)

Did you know that Daniel Webster, the famous 1800s statesman, was a born-again Christian? He was also known as a brilliant scholar who gave the most eloquent speeches ever delivered in Congress. One evening he was invited to lecture a group of congressmen. After dinner, the small talk didn't interest him, so he got up and went into another room. The Chairman of the group was concerned, followed him and tried to engage him in a meaningful conversation: "Mr. Webster," he asked, "***tell me what is the greatest thought that has ever passed through your mind?***" Webster immediately responded, "***My accountability to God***" (and he meant *after* he was saved!)

The most important thought that Daniel Webster ever had was "the importance of his accountability before the Lord," as a Christian! He went on to say: "God puts us here and will someday judge us for the way we have treated Him and our fellow beings. This thought should be written in bold type on the tablets of our hearts."¹

This is really the subject of our new expanded and updated book, *The Kingdom, Power and Glory*, and the subject that we are going to be exploring over the next several months in our newsletter—the importance of our own accountability before God, *after* we are saved.

The way it all began with us is about three years ago, Chuck and I read a book called *The Reign of the Servant Kings* by Joseph Dillow and that experience began a series of events that totally changed the way we look at our own accountability before the Lord.

After being Christians for more than 50 years, what we learned then and what we have learned since then in our research for the new book has totally revolutionized our personal walks with the Lord. *We consider the truths that we share in the book to be some of the most life-changing principles we've encountered since our new births.*

We are passionate about this material because it has made the whole Bible come alive for us. Passages of Scripture that we have known for years are now taking on a new depth of understanding; passages that have stumped us are being enlightened; and passages we never saw before as millennial are now jumping off the page.

We pray that we'll be able to adequately communicate some of what God has taught us and then you can take what you hear back to the Word of God and see if the Lord confirms the same thing to your hearts.

We are going to cover some controversial issues—issues that probably will go against some of your traditional views, as they did ours—so we encourage you, *first* to be open and teachable like Acts 17:11 tells us, but then check out everything out in God's Word.

If intense warfare is any indication of the importance of a spiritual message, then this message has to be one of the most important messages we have ever given! Because the warfare in preparing for this book—and the DVD & CD series that accompanies it—has been greater than anything we've ever faced in preparing other studies or materials.

So, get ready for a real roller-coaster ride as we begin to explore some of these things together.

One of God's purposes for calling us as Christians is "to be conformed to His image." We used to believe that to be the extent of our calling. But, we've come to understand that God's calling is far more extensive than that.

The real reason for our calling is to rule and reign as kings and priests with Christ in the coming Millennial Kingdom and after that for eternity. Genesis 1:26-28 and Revelation 5:9-10 are two Scriptures that confirm we were created for this very purpose. Thus, everything in the universe moves toward this goal.

Being conformed into His image is critically important (being a living example of Christ is what will bring other to Him), *but the real purpose for our calling* is to have positions of authority alongside of Christ in the coming Millennial Kingdom, and after that, in eternity.

But, here's the catch: Our life here on earth is the training ground, the proving ground, and the testing ground for that privilege. In other words, it's not a shoe-in! It doesn't happen automatically! It's doesn't happen with-out effort!

The Millennial Kingdom that we will be talking about is *not* heaven; it's that literal, physical kingdom on earth where Jesus Christ will reign *in person* for a thousand years. It's a place where we will recognize each other, where we will have intimacy with the King of kings, and where we will have a chance to rule and reign alongside of Christ. (Micah 4:1-2)

When we say "rule and reign" with Christ (which we will mention quite often) we simply mean we will hold positions of authority (or levels of responsibility) that Christ will entrust to us. It might be authority over a country, over a state, a city, a town, or simply a housing complex. It will all depend upon our faithfulness here in this life.

Most Christians acknowledge the Millennial Kingdom to some degree or another, *but* many have *no idea* as to *what is required* to enjoy a significant role there. We certainly didn't. There are many Scriptures that talk about the requirements for ruling and reigning. For example: 2 Timothy 2:12 and Romans 8:17 which both tell us that only "if we suffer, will we reign with Him."

Suffering in this context doesn't mean being tortured in some far off prison. ***This type of suffering comes from denying ourselves. It comes from baring ourselves from following what we think and feel, and choosing instead to follow Christ. And, it's true, when we deny our "flesh," it often is painful and we do suffer.***

These are only two of the many Scriptures that talk about God's requirements for ruling and reigning, yet many of us just skip over these passages.

Another example: We asked one young believer recently, "Does what you do here on earth as a believer influence your position in the coming kingdom?" He immediately responded, "Oh yeah, we get rewards or something like that!" That was the extent of his understanding. To be honest, that was the extent of our own understanding until a few years ago. "Oh, yeah, at the Judgment Seat of Christ we get rewards or something like that!"

Many of us don't understand that not only our rewards, but also our place of responsibility in this future kingdom will either be won or lost according to our faithfulness in *this* life.

2 Corinthians 5:10 talks about the Judgment Seat of Christ and tells us that *all* Christians will be judged there according to what they have done, either **for good or for bad**. This judgment is a judicial evaluation not only of the good we have done; but also for the bad. It's here that our position in the coming kingdom will be determined. So, this judgment seat is *not* just for rewards!

Erwin Lutzer, Pastor of Moody Church in Chicago and author of *One Minute After You Die*, said: "The assumption that rewards are nothing more than crowns is false in my opinion. Rewards have more to do with levels of responsibility that will be given to us. When we become more like Him we will be qualified to share with Him in the inheritance, and to work with Him in important positions of high responsibility over the whole universe."

Colossians 3:24 calls it the "reward of inheritance."

Consequently, there is an urgent need in the Christian body for a renewed recognition of our own personal accountability before the Lord (after we have been saved), just as Daniel Webster said. It's essential that we have a "kingdom perspective" where we see our lives here on earth in the context of eternity. We must understand that once we are saved, we are still responsible for what we do with the rest of our lives here and now.

It isn't "cheap grace"! *Effective faith is more than just belief*. It's more than just knowing the Scriptures! And it's more than just going to church on Sundays. Saving faith is *learning how to be a partaker of Christ's Life*—which means **not only receiving His Life** at our new birth (being born again), **but also living His Life** every day!

The Bible calls these kind of sanctified Christians (those who partake of His Life) "overcomers." And the Lord promises some incredible things to these overcomers: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." (Revelation 21:7)

Both of us have been Christians for more than 50 years and we are only just now seeing the importance not only of becoming overcomers, but also of our own personal accountability before the Lord. We don't want other believers to have to wait 50 years in order to see and understand these things. We want to help them know *now* what "the hope of their calling" is and understand *now* what the "riches of their inheritance" are in the coming kingdom. (Ephesians 1:17, 18) We want them to see that they are deciding *today* what kind of Millennium they will enjoy *tomorrow*.

Next month we will explore exactly what an overcomer is; why it's so important to become one; and, what the future holds for overcomers.

To be continued: Introduction Part 2. This article has been excerpted in part from Chuck and Nan's book, *The Kingdom, Power, & Glory*.

Notes:

1. From *Perhaps Today*, by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, Tyndale Publishers, Wheaton, IL, 2001, pp. 178-179.

The Kingdom, Power & Glory - Part 2

Nan's Corner

Author

[Nancy Missler](#)

Last month we began a new series called *The Kingdom, Power and Glory*. As was stated in that first article, Chuck and I are convinced that the truths contained in this series "are some of the most life-changing principles we've encountered since our new births." That's a big statement considering we both have been believers for over 50 years and in ministry for 35!

We told the story of the famous statesman, Daniel Webster (who, by the way, was a believer), and how he felt that the greatest thought that had ever passed his mind was his own personal accountability before the Lord. And, he meant *after* he was saved. This, we said, is the subject we will be exploring over the next several months—the importance of our own personal accountability or responsibility before God as believers.

Again, a few of the issues that we are going to cover might go against some of your traditional viewpoints. So, we encourage you to “be open and teachable” like Acts 17:11 exhorts and then, “search the Scriptures to see if these things be so.”

We used to believe that God’s whole reason for calling us was to “be conformed into His image.” (Romans 8:29) But, we’ve come to understand that God’s calling is far more extensive than that. *The real reason for our calling is to rule and reign as kings and priests with Christ in the coming Millennial Kingdom and after that for eternity.* Both Genesis 1:26-28 and Revelation 5:9-10 confirm that we were created for this very purpose.

Being conformed into His image is critically important (being a living example of Christ is what will bring others to Him), but the real purpose for our calling is to have positions of authority alongside of Christ in the coming kingdom. But, here’s the catch: ***Our life here on earth is the training ground, the proving ground, and the testing ground for that privilege. In other words, it doesn’t happen automatically! It’s doesn’t happen without effort! The deciding factor is how we live our lives here and now!***

Consequently, there is an urgent need in the Christian body for a renewed recognition of our own personal accountability before the Lord (*after* we have been saved). It’s essential that we have a “kingdom perspective,” where we see our lives here on earth in the context of eternity. We must understand that once we are saved, we are still responsible for what we do with the rest of our lives here and now.

Saving faith is more than just belief. It’s more than just knowing the Scriptures! And it’s more than just going to church on Sundays. Saving faith is learning how to be a partaker of Christ’s Life—which means not only receiving His Life at our new birth (being born again), but also living His Life every day (through sanctification)!

What Is an Overcomer?

The Bible calls these kinds of “sanctified” Christians (those who partake of His Life) “**overcomers**.” The Greek word to *overcome* is *nikao*, which means “victory over hostile powers.” Christ, of course, is the real overcomer, but as we become cleansed, open and yielded (sanctified) vessels, He can overcome the world, the flesh and the devil through us. Overcomers, then, are those faithful and obedient Christians who not only *talk* about doing the will of God, but who also *do* it.

As we begin to discuss overcomers, we want to make something absolutely clear. We are *not* talking about someone who is perfect or religious or good. We’re talking about someone who simply *recognizes his choices*, confesses his sin, and then chooses to turn around and go God’s way. Remember David in the Old Testament? He was an overcomer and yet remember all the ways he blew it? The New Testament even calls him “a man after God’s own heart.” Why? It’s because David knew how to confess his sin, how to turn around from following it, and then, how to go God’s way.

This is the kind of overcomer that we are talking about. He is just a regular person who has learned to follow Christ regardless of what is going on in his own life. He could be that janitor in the school building down the street, or that laundry woman in the back room of that large downtown hotel or that widow in the country who faithfully gives her one dollar every week to the Salvation Army.

In our opinion, these believers are often more faithful overcomers than the most popular Christian television personalities. In no way is being an overcomer dependent on our socioeconomic status, our educational abilities or our years as a Christian. Being an overcomer simply depends upon our own moment-by-moment choices.

Why Is Being an Overcomer so Important?

Okay, so why is learning about being a faithful overcomer so important? Why make such a big deal about it? It’s important because the Bible teaches us that ***overcomers are the only ones who will inherit the Millennial Kingdom and possibly rule and reign with Christ.*** They are the ones *who will have various levels of responsibility in the coming kingdom.*

Now, don't misunderstand me. We believe that *all* Christians will be a part of the Rapture. *All* Christians will enter the Millennial Kingdom. And, *all* Christians will be "with Christ." We have that eternal security. But only the "*faithful overcomers*"—the ones who have fulfilled the conditions set down by God in His Word—will inherit and have positions of authority in that kingdom.

Some of those "conditions" are found in Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; Matthew 24:45-47; Galatians 5:19-21; James 2:5 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. So, there's a huge difference between simply *entering* the Millennial Kingdom (which all believers will do) and actually *inheriting* that kingdom (which only the faithful overcomers will do). All born-again believers will enter, but only the overcoming Christians will rule and reign. Again, the ***deciding factor is how we live our lives here and now***. This is why learning how to become an overcomer is so very important! What we do in this present life *does* affect our role in the future kingdom.

Kingdom Perspective

At the beginning of the "church age," this *kingdom perspective* (that we are being trained here to rule and reign with Christ *there*) was the central message and the prevailing thought taught throughout Christendom. Now, however, at the end of the age, this message has been essentially forgotten. Except by a few great men:

Charles Stanley (Baptist pastor, radio preacher, and author of 45 books) wrote in his book, *Eternal Security*: "Does our behavior matter once we are assured of our salvation? You bet it does. *Are there any eternal consequences when a believer sins?* Absolutely. Will eternity be the same for those who follow Christ faithfully and those who live for themselves? Not a chance. Our God is a God of justice as well as grace. His offer of grace is continually extended to even the most vile sinner. But His justice moves Him to keep a careful record of those who remain faithful and those who do not. His grace moved Him to sacrifice His only Son to provide a way for our salvation. But His justice causes Him to take special note of those believers who are willing to sacrifice for His Son."

Donald Grey Barnhouse: (Pioneer of radio preaching, Presbyterian pastor and author of many theological books) says in his commentary on Romans: "We can be sure that at the Judgment Seat of Christ there will be a marked difference between the Christian who has lived his life before the Lord, clearly discerning what was for the glory of God...and a nominal Christian...All will be in heaven, *but the difference between them will be eternal*. We may be sure that the consequences of our character will survive the grave and that we shall face those consequences at the Judgment Seat of Christ."

Erwin Lutzer (Pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, radio personality and author of 30 books, including *One Minute after You Die*) notes in his book, *Your Eternal Reward*: "The assumption that "rewards" are nothing more than the crowns themselves is false in my opinion. Rewards have more to do with *levels of responsibility* that will be given to us. When we become like Him, we will be qualified to share with Him in the inheritance, and to work with Him in important positions of high responsibility over the whole universe."

Tim LaHaye (Pastor and the author of the *Left Behind* series and 50 other books) says in his book, *The Popular Bible Prophecy Workbook*: "Apparently Christians will be assigned to specific areas of service in the kingdom directly proportionate to the amount of 'good works' performed while alive on earth."

So, the message we would like you to consider is this: *All* Christians will be "with Christ" in the Millennium and in heaven, but only the *overcomers*—only those faithful and obedient ones who recognize their choices and allow Christ to live His Life out through them—will inherit that kingdom and have positions of authority there.

It's grievous that the church today seems to be relying upon the illusion that being born again and bringing others to Christ is the ultimate goal of preaching the gospel. It's not! It's just the beginning. *Working alongside Christ in the coming kingdom is the final and ultimate goal!* Paul even tells us in Philippians 3:14 it's *the prize* of the "high calling" of God.

To be continued next month: *Aren't All Believers Overcomers?* This article has been excerpted in part from Chuck and Nan's newest book *The Kingdom, Power and Glory: The Over-comer's Handbook*.

The Shackles of Our Presuppositions

Author
[Chuck Missler](#)

It is disturbing to discover how much we are all victims of our own presuppositions.

A truth's initial commotion is directly proportional to how deeply the lie was believed. It wasn't the world being round that agitated people, but that the world wasn't flat. When a well-packaged web of lies has been sold gradually to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker a raving lunatic.

—Dresden James

As we study the Word of God, let's guard against becoming victims of our own presumptions and presuppositions.

There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all argument, and which cannot fail to keep man in everlasting ignorance. That principle is condemnation before investigation.

—Edmund Spencer

Our recent book, *The Kingdom, Power and Glory*, is an excellent example. While we are most gratified by the numerous emails received from people whose lives have been profoundly affected, refocused, and revitalized by the practical implications of our book, there are some who stumble over several widespread misconceptions. There at least three major hermeneutic pitfalls one can encounter.

1. “Everyone in Heaven Is Equal”

Many are disturbed to realize that not everyone who enters heaven will be “equal” in their assignments or responsibilities. The Scripture clearly teaches that we all are to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10) to receive the rewards for our “fruit bearing”—perseverance and diligence. Our sins have been completely dealt with at the Cross. But our fruit bearing subsequently is the issue before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Our behavior after receiving Christ matters!

Unlike the assurance which all Christians have that we possess eternal life and will be raised up to enjoy it in the presence of God (Jn 6:39-40), our partaking as metachoi of the Messiah in His dominion over creation is attained by doing His will to the end (Rev 2:26-27).

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

1 Corinthians 3:14,15

These men (and women) are believers; their justification is not at issue (Cf. 1 Cor 3:15). Judgment will emanate from the Bema seat, with a just recompense of reward for works—fruit bearing—positive and negative as appropriate (Mt 18:23-35; 24:42-51; 25:14-30; Mk 8:34-38; Lk 12:1-12; 41-48; 19:11-27).

This, of course, is the main practical thrust of our recent book (and our featured study this month, *Inheritance and Rewards*).

In his colorful *Foreword* to our book, Dr. William Welty highlights our message to the Church of Laodicea, which certainly characterizes the church of today (Cf. Rev 3:14-22). The fact that our book is highly controversial in some quarters shouldn't surprise us. As Dr. Welty queries, “What do you suppose was the reaction of the Pastor of the Church of Laodicea when he received John's missive from Patmos?”

2. “Kingdom of Heaven” and “Kingdom of God” are Synonymous

Only Matthew uses the specific term, “Kingdom of Heaven,” and he does so 33 times. (Yet, he occasionally uses the more comprehensive term, “Kingdom of God,” five times.) Most commentators fail to recognize that the Kingdom of Heaven is a genitive of source, not a genitive of apposition. (In both Hebrew and German, the word “of” and the word “from” are identical. Translating it, the Kingdom *from* Heaven, would relieve the ambiguity.)

In addition to being referenced in several other places, the Kingdom from Heaven is the fifth of the five kingdoms listed in Daniel (Cf. Daniel 2:44-46). Recognizing Matthew's unique specificity reveals much about the forthcoming Millennial Kingdom, and the Throne of David, which would otherwise be obscured.

It is interesting that while the "Kingdom of God" always deals with sevens (seven churches, etc.), the "Kingdom of Heaven" is always in twelves: 12 tribes, 12 apostles ruling over the 12 tribes, 12 Kingdom parables, 12 Kingdom mysteries, 12,000 sealed from each of 12 tribes; the New Jerusalem will have 12 gates, 12 foundation stones, and is described as being 12,000 furlongs in each of three dimensions. (These are explored in our briefing, *Thy Kingdom Come*.)

3. "Outer Darkness" Refers to Hell

Another disturbing presumption relates to the term, "outer darkness," which Matthew uses in several places. I suspect that we all have been guilty of presuming that this refers to "hell." However, the unique construction in the Greek strongly indicates otherwise, and profoundly impacts our understanding of Matthew's unique presentations of the Kingdom events.

This phrase, τὸ ἐξώτερον, exoteron, is more precisely, the "darkness outside," and is so rendered in the *International Standard Version* (ISV). The Greek term τὸ σκότος, skotos, means literally "the shadow" or "the darkness."

The term τὸ ἐξώτερον, exoteron, "the outside place" is, strictly speaking, a comparative adjective of ἔξω, exo, which means "outside." Dr. William Welty, one of the principal translators of the ISV, admits that it could be more accurately rendered as "the darkness farther away," implying a place which entails lesser illumination than places closer in. (The LXX employs ἐξώτερος over 20 times in the final chapters of Ezekiel, which specifically deal with the Millennial temple.)

The allusions in all three Matthew citations are clearly "observer true," in that they are given from the standpoint of one who is inside the Father's house, which any New Testament era observer would see as being the Jerusalem Temple.

The *Shekinah* glory, the observable light that emanates from the manifested presence of God, is seen within the Holy of Holies, and is not directly observable from any other area of the Temple grounds, except on very rare occasions (such as the Temple dedication ceremony, when the Glory of God filled the entire Temple and its surrounding compound, resulting in a condition during which no one could carry out ministerial responsibilities).

The place that is "the darkness outside" refers to any area of the Temple grounds other than the Holy of Holies. It's talking about the place in which the *Shekinah* does not normally manifest, but which is, nevertheless, within the Father's House.¹

Many competent scholars recognize that this phrase is commonly misunderstood, due to an erroneous presumption from an unintended connotative transfer. This view, therefore, is consistent among an abundance of acknowledged experts, including:

- Thayer *Greek/English Lexicon of the New Testament*²
- Kenneth Wuest, *Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament*³
- Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament* (with Parallel Greek)⁴
- Warren Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*⁵
- Charles Stanley, *Eternal Security*⁶
- Erwin Lutzer, *Your Eternal Reward*⁷
- Tony Evans, *The Prophecy Study Bible*⁸

These references are in addition to those of Joseph Dillow,⁹ G. H. Lang,¹⁰ and A. Edwin Wilson,¹¹ et al. This doesn't mean that these views are unquestionably correct; it simply highlights that our view is not inconsistent with the best of contemporary conservative scholarship. The supplemental phrase, "weeping and gnashing of teeth," is simply a Hebraism expressing extreme disappointment, and is not necessarily invariably associated with damnation.

The Scriptures indicate that God will wipe tears from our eyes in heaven. Why are there any tears? There is no death, no sorrow, or pain (Cf. Rev 21:4). I suspect that it may be our response when we, at the Judgment Seat, are confronted with the opportunities we have missed or deferred:

Of all the words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: It might have been.

As Christians, our behavior matters. Every day that the Lord tarries is another day in which we can improve our report card.

These topics are further addressed in new special studies deriving from our book, including *Inheritance and Rewards*, and *The Whole Counsel of God*, which will be released next month. But always remember that our trademark verse, over the past four decades, is still to be your personal guide:

These [the Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, but searched the Scriptures daily, to prove whether those things were so.

Acts 17:11

Notes:

1. This would seem consistent with the diagrams on pages 146-147 of our book, *the Kingdom, Power and Glory*.
2. Thayer, page 226; Cf. Mt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30.
3. Wuest, p.18.
4. Zodhiates, page 25.
5. Wiersbe, Vol 1, p.92.
6. Stanley, page 90.
7. Lutzer, page 74, 77.
8. Evans, p.1234.
9. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings*.
10. Lang, *Ideals and Realities*.
11. *Selected Writings of A. Edwin Wilson, Ruling and Reigning, The Unfaithful Christian*.

7 extraordinary promises for those who overcome

What is the reward for living a faithful life?

12 min · [Ann Steiner](#)

“To him who overcomes ...”

God loves His creation. Sin corrupted it, but now He has a plan to return it to its original state of perfection, and He will reward those who help Him carry out this plan.

Sin was born because of Satan’s desire to set himself above God, and it destroyed the harmony of heaven. Now God needs sin to be completely eradicated from all of His creation, in such a way that there is no possibility of it happening again.

So He created mankind with the express intention that they should rule over sin. ([Genesis 4:7](#)) His entire plan is that mankind should live a life where they hate and resist sin, and say yes to Him – to overcome. One who overcomes sin in their life is proving that God’s way is perfect, and is part of

the work of abolishing sin for all eternity. Each one who does this will taste the rich rewards of living such a life. These promises apply to *all* who *overcome*.

Continue reading below ↓

The 1st extraordinary promise: The tree of life

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." [Revelation 2:7](#).

The tree of life is symbolic of eternal life.

Amongst the trees in the garden of Eden, God placed the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He told Adam and Eve that they may eat freely of every tree, except for the tree of knowledge. One simple rule.

But Adam and Eve disobeyed, choosing their own will over God's good and perfect will, and through that simple act, sin also entered the world. If they ate of the tree of life now, they would have got eternal life. Then sin would have come into eternity. So, God cut off access to the tree of life. ([Genesis 3:24](#)) They lost their opportunity for eternal life.

But because of what Jesus did for you, now you live in a time where you again have the opportunity to "eat" of the tree of life. What does that mean? Every time you choose to do God's will instead of your own you lay hold of something eternal; something is gained in your heart that has eternal value. Every time you resist temptation and overcome sin, you take a bite of the fruit of THE tree of life. You are storing up for eternal life on the new earth that God creates. ([Revelation 21:1](#))

Click to read more: [The 1st extraordinary promise: The tree of life](#)

The 2nd extraordinary promise: You will not be hurt by the second death

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." [Revelation 2:11](#).

The second death is the lake of fire ([Revelation 21:8](#)). This is the judgment over everything that is tainted by sin. When someone has not used the opportunities in their life to overcome sin, they will be hurt by this second death, because nothing that cannot stand the fire of judgment will be allowed into eternity.

For you who *have* used your opportunities while still here on this earth to *overcome* sin, you will not be hurt by that second death. You have recognized the sin that you are tempted to, judged it as unacceptable for one who wants to practice righteousness, and resisted it.

Click to read more: [The 2nd extraordinary promise: You will not be hurt by the second death](#)

The 3rd extraordinary promise: Hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name

"To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it." [Revelation 2:17](#).

The hidden manna

The hidden manna gives vitality and life and is something that you already receive in this life. It corresponds to your hidden life: that place inside where no one knows what is going on except for you and God. When you pray for help in your hidden life, when you are tempted to impure thoughts,

to pride, to lying, etc..you receive nourishment and power from on high. This is the hidden manna and is given to everyone who asks for it, everyone with a longing to be free from sin.

The white stone and a new name

At the time the book of Revelation was written, a white stone was equivalent with innocence. If you were to be tried for a crime, a white stone signified acquittal, and a black stone signified guilt. To receive a white stone means that you are free from condemnation. You have been tried and have been found worthy.

The white stone is a symbol of whom you have become through your faithfulness and your determination to rule over sin. It is rock-hard faith and purity. Here on earth your faith is being tested – there in eternity it will have been proven; it's withstood the testing. Written on this stone of flint-hard faith will be your new name.

This name will reflect the battles that you have stood in, and sufferings that you have endured. It will illustrate who you've become because of your faithfulness and God's grace. ([2 Peter 1:4](#)) You know the battles you had to endure to get there, and you will immediately identify with that name. It will be the ultimate symbol of victory and transformation.

Click to read more: [The 3rd extraordinary promise: Hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name](#)

The 4th extraordinary promise: Power over the nations, a rod of iron, and the morning star

"And he who overcomes and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' – as I also have received from my Father; and I will give him the morning star." [Revelation 2:26-28](#).

Power over the nations – the rod of iron

The world is full of unrighteousness. Injustice is rampant, on every level of society. But, all those who overcome will reign on earth with Jesus during the millennium. ([Revelation 20:6](#)) You can be along in putting all of this in order, to liberate innocent people who are suffering under oppression and abuse. In order to do this you will have to "break some vessels!" Then you will need a "rod of iron." To walk into situations and start setting them straight.

Training is required in order to get a hold of this rod of iron. When you start to rule over sin in your own life that is the training ground; that is where you get power. How can you help restore the world, unless you have learned to overcome the powers of sin and darkness? The rod of iron symbolizes the tremendous power contained in an overcoming life!

The morning star

Peter describes the morning star as *"the prophetic word...that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart."* [2 Peter 1:19](#).

The prophetic word is the Word of God, and when you allow that word to shine into the dark areas of your life and bring to light the sin that dwells there, and you are humble to take that grace and use it to overcome the sin that you find, then the morning star rises in your heart. Light replaces darkness, and your entire being becomes light. As more and more areas of your life are cleansed from sin, you will shine brighter and brighter until that morning star is yours. The fullness of light is in your being.

([Proverbs 4:18](#))

Click to read more: [The 4th extraordinary promise: Power over the nations, a rod of iron, and the morning star](#)

The 5th extraordinary promise: White garments and the Book of Life

"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." [Revelation 3:5](#).

White garments

For you who have overcome sin, the bride of Christ, it is only fitting that you wear garments that are without *"spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but ... holy and without blemish."* [Ephesians 5:27](#). Because you have kept yourself pure from sin, the white garments will testify of your purity for all eternity. As a result of your obedience, your faithfulness and patience in being an overcomer, you have the right to walk together with Jesus in white. ([Revelation 19:8](#))

The Book of Life

To begin with, everyone's name is written in the Book of Life. It's sin that causes one's name to be blotted out. ([Exodus 32:32-33](#)) If you want to remain written in the Book of Life, then you have to overcome sin. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish,"* Jesus said. ([John 10:27-28](#)) The pathway to overcoming sin has been clearly laid by our Forerunner and Shepherd. You just need to be willing to follow Him on that way. Click to read more: [The 5th extraordinary promise: White garments and the Book of Life](#)

The 6th extraordinary promise: A pillar in the temple of My God

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name." [Revelation 3:12](#).

How to become a pillar

Pillars can bear; they are immovable. It is the same for you who overcome. You will be made into a pillar. No matter what life sends you, what trials and temptations you have to face, you will never lose your faith. You will be able to bear anything.

But there is more to it than winning one victory, and then you become a pillar. No, it is *"He who overcomes I will make a pillar."* This is a process. It is he who overcomes, and overcomes again, then again. It is a victorious life. Your faithfulness in your trials and temptations shapes you into a pillar that becomes stronger and stronger. Then you will be a part of the temple of God as described in [Revelation 21](#). A pillar that can also strengthen, bear, and be a support for others. You will be a useful tool for God.

Claimed by Jesus

The New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ. ([Revelation 21:2,9-11](#)) By writing on you the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and His own new name, Jesus is claiming you as His own! It is a sign of belonging. When you have fought against sin, endured, and overcome it, just as He did when He was flesh and blood like us here in this world, then you belong together with Jesus and His Father. The glory of such a promise is incomparable.

Click to read more: [The 6th extraordinary promise: A pillar in the temple of My God](#)

The 7th extraordinary promise: Sit with Me on My Throne

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." [Revelation 3:21](#).

Reigning with Jesus

God's grace has given you the opportunity to be part of the bride of Christ! As part of that bride you will sit together with Him on His throne, judging and reigning over the earth! The wisdom that you

need to be able to do so can only be found through what living an overcoming life has taught you.

[\(Wisdom of Solomon 1:3-4\)](#)

When it comes to how much wisdom you gain, it is entirely in your hands. You will have countless opportunities in your life to overcome sin. Each of these opportunities, these temptations, is a chance to grow more in the virtues of Christ and increase your eternal value.

I personally don't want to be the last one, just scraping in with the glory of a fizzling star. I want to shine with the glory of the sun! This is the only appropriate way to thank God, and honor Him for the unbelievable, inexpressible life and eternity that He has called me to, and for His unfailing goodness and love.

Click to read more: [The 7th extraordinary promise: Sit with Me on My Throne](#)