

Christ & His Bride

Lesson #26

Heed Christ's Counsel

August 6, 2025

God The Father has specific guidelines for the Bride of His Precious Son, Jesus Christ.

The account of Abraham desiring a specific bride for his Son, Isaac, provides a picture in type.

<u>Types:</u>	Abraham	type of	God the Father
	Isaac	type of	Jesus, the one & only son of the Father
	Servant	type of	Holy Spirit
	Rebekah	type of	Church; Bride of Christ

Eliezer [type of Holy Spirit] had to take an oath to 3 things:

Oath #1: *He would not select a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanite women.*

There was a curse on Canaan and his descendants

God warned the Jews: Do not compromise with the Canaanite way of life.

Destroy everything that would tempt them in that direction. *Ex. 34:10-17; Deut. 7*

Key: Abraham's refusal to even consider a Canaanite woman teaches us that only those who are of the household of faith can have part with Christ.

Oath #2: Go to Abraham's own country and relatives to find a wife for Isaac.

Oath #3: Do not take Isaac back to Abraham's homeland [Chaldea= type of the world] if the woman is unwilling to return with Eliezer.

Rebekah, who lived in Mesopotamia, the city of Nahor, which is Chaldean [Babylonian], must be willing to come out of this land, follow the leading of Eliezer [type of the Holy Spirit] and make the long journey to the land of Isaac to become the bride of Isaac, type of Jesus Christ.

Key: The prospective bride must be Willing to Follow Eliezer, type of Holy Spirit.

As Eliezer, by the precious gifts he gave Rebekah, revealed the wealth of his master Isaac, so the Holy Spirit by his gifts, gives us a foretaste of what is in store for The Bride of Christ.

The testimony of Abraham's servant sank down into her ears, and into her heart, and entirely detached her heart's affections from the scene of things around her. She was ready to leave all and follow after, in order that she might apprehend that for which she had been apprehended. If the hope of being Isaac's bride, joint-heir with him of all his dignity and glory, if this were a reality, then to continue to tend Laban's sheep would be practically to despise all that God had, in grace, set before her.

But, no, the prospect was far too bright to be thus lightly given up. True, she had not yet seen Isaac, nor yet the inheritance, but she had believed the report, the testimony of him, and had received, as it were, the earnest of it, and these were enough for her heart.

Her decision to move away from her family and her land, to marry a man upon whom she has never set eyes, parallels the courageous actions of Abraham leaving all that is known to depart on a journey into an unknown future, accompanied only by the Generous Promises Of God. She was 100% committed to the man she had never seen!

The hope of being Isaac's bride led Rebekah to say, "I am willing to go," when her "brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at least ten."
Consider: The Danger of Delay in starting the journey to meet the bridegroom.

This is the journey of Sanctification.

"She was fully prepared to enter upon an unknown path in companionship with one who had told her of an object far away, and of a glory connected with him, to which she was about to be raised [an exalted position: Bride of Isaac]. "I will go," and "forgetting the things which were behind, and reaching forth toward the things which were before, she pressed toward the mark for the prize of her high calling." [Bride of Isaac, type of Jesus Christ]
What will the journey entail before she meets her bridegroom face to face?

Ray Steadman: "The love story of Isaac & Rebekah is a picture of Pentecost. Here is Abraham standing for God the Father sending his unnamed servant into the far country to take a bride for his son -- to invite her to come, to call, to woo, and to win her -- to bring her back at last to the Father's house where the son is waiting to claim his bride for himself.
How beautifully that portrays how God, at the Day of Pentecost, sent his Spirit into the world! It is the Spirit's job to call out a people for God's name, to win a bride for Christ. He has been at this task for about 2,000 years now, and the Son is waiting to receive that bride."

The Church, as His bride, consists of those that have been called out of the world and its system to be separated unto Him. We have not seen Jesus with our physical eyes, yet spiritually seeing Him, We Are Called Without Reservation To Be His.

I believe God has a 7,000-year plan to deal with mankind before eternity. The last 1,000 years will be the coming 1000-year Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ on the earth which will be as the Garden of Eden. Rewards and positions of authority will be granted at the Judgment Seat. The curse will be removed from the earth and the animals. Satan will be chained in the abyss. Untold millions of people will be born who need to come to salvation in Jesus Christ.

In Rev. 2-3, Jesus examines each of 7 churches and delivers a unique message to each one.

- They are written to the church, to believers in Christ. There could have been unbelievers in their midst, but unbelievers are not a part of the church.
- There is no call to faith or to believe in Jesus Christ.

Our WORKS are emphasized in Rev. 2 & 3: I KNOW YOUR WORKS to each of the 7 churches.

- He offers concluding promises to the believer who overcomes [conquers or is victorious].
- Conditions for overcoming are never stated as faith in Christ.

Powerful Truth: All Christians are overcomers in Christ, but not all Christians overcome.

- Overcomer noun refers to the person who achieves victory.
- Overcome verb refers to the action of achieving that victory.

I John 5:4-5 For whoever has been born of God overcomes the world; and

this is the victory that has overcome the world: OUR FAITH.⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the world, but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

- Faith, not faithfulness is the primary focus point in this position.
- Becoming an overcomer is linked to a new identity in Christ, where believers are empowered to live a life of victory and faith.
- Because of their faith, believers are identified with Christ's victory and
- have the Potential To Overcome.

Powerful Truth: Every born-again believer is an overcomer positionally in Jesus Christ. All believers are overcomers in the sense they have become children of God, have been translated out of darkness into the glorious light of Christ, have been taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. In this glorious position, they have become identified with Him as to His person and work and enjoy many other marvelous blessings in Christ. Some teach that because one is an overcomer in Christ [our position], therefore, the promises in Revelation 2 & 3 are for ALL believers.

Consider: If all believers are overcomers,

- the commands to these churches [& all commands to believers]
- are empty and unnecessary because they are guaranteed victory.
- there is no room for believers who fail or die in their carnal state.

Believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ with wood, hay, stubble. [I Cor. 3:11-15]

Consider: To give rewards to everyone for a virtue that all have does not make sense.

Evidence from the analogy of Scripture is consistent with the teaching of the New Testament in other places.

a. Born again believers in Christ cannot lose their salvation, but Scripture teaches they may lose, forfeit, or gain rewards according to what he does with the stewardship God has given him.

I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10; Col. 2:18

I Cor. 9:25-27 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 in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore, I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus, I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. [castaway]

Note: Paul was fearful of not winning the prize and becoming a castaway.

Lest: Strong's #3381 - God Forbid That I Should

Castaway: Strong's #96 = One who is unapproved, rejected and worthless = one who is not worthy of inheriting because he is not fit, prepared or ready

Word Studies in the Greek New Testament -

Castaway means disapproval after having failed to meet the requirements.

It has been 63 years since Pentecost and 35 years since Paul's departure.

Jesus is presented in Rev. 1: His eyes like a flame of fire;

His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace,

Rev. 2 & 3 are letters dictated by Jesus Christ to the 7 churches. Specific pattern:

Salutation Christ self-designation

Commendation of good Condemnation of evil

Counsel Warning & exhortation

Promise of Rewards To Those Who Overcome

Invitation to Hear What the Spirit says unto the churches.

This is a WARNING to the churches of today to "hear what the Spirit says unto the churches."

Revelation highlights specific promises to the individual believers [overcomers] who OVERCOME. *To Him Who Overcomes.*

Key: Victory in the Christian life is not guaranteed for all believers. [I Cor. 11:30; I John 5:16].

The Promise Of Reward Is Restricted to the Faithful Believers Who Overcome specific trials and temptations. Each letter presents an illustration of the battles we must overcome and for which rewards are promised for overcoming.

If the promises of Rev. 2 and 3 are not restrictive, then we have what appears to be a contradiction

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

Rev.3:21 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.

HODGES: To apply these promises to all believers seems to rob them of their force as promises. A command that everyone keeps is superfluous, and
a reward that everyone receives is nonsense.

John's major burden in Revelation 2-3 is to challenge Christians to become overcomers by laying before their gaze the magnificent future they can inherit if they are faithful to the end. He repeatedly contrasts the Faithful Overcomer & the unfaithful Christian.

Ephesus: The Danger Of Departing From Our First Love

Rev. 2:1-3: I know your labor, your patience [steadfast endurance], & that you cannot bear [tolerate] those who are evil. & you have tested those who say they are apostles & are not & have found them liars; [they are false] & you have persevered [persisted steadfastly] & have patience & have labored [endured] for my name's sake & have not become weary.

Serving very busy doing the works of the Lord > much activity

Sacrificing labor = toil to the point of exhaustion

Steadfast patient = endurance under trial > kept going when the going was tough

Suffering Patiently Bore Burdens; toiled without fainting ALL for His Name's Sake

Rev. 2:4 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans which I also hate.

➤ This busy, separated, suffering people suffered from heart trouble.

- They left or departed from their first love.
- First indicates the love Which has been left is a Love which existed previously.

Rev. 2:5a Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen,

- Recall your initial passion and devotion to God at the beginning of your journey.
- Recognize how far you have strayed from that initial state.
- Emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and awareness of one's spiritual condition.

Adrian Rogers: Some people may believe it makes no difference how they live after Justification. There Is No Blacker Lie That Could Come Out Of Hell. While a child of God will not lose his salvation, he has much to lose if he continues to practice sin.

When he gets to the Judgment Seat Of Christ, rather than having gold, silver, & precious stones, there will be a pile of wood, hay, & stubble.

Key: Remember [keep on remembering] from where you have fallen.

Cultivate a desire to regain the Fellowship. God desires my devotion rather than doctrine.

Recognize Your TRUE Condition: If you have lost The Joy of the Lord, it is because you have left the position of Devotion & Occupation With Christ.

Rev. 2:5b and Repent, and Do the First Works:

- You have lost sight of your primary calling.
- Rekindle their love for God and renew their commitment to him.
- Urgent appeal for instant change of attitude & conduct before it is too late.

Do the first works restore the original fellowship that was broken by my sin & my neglect.

Moses Neglected God's Command of Circumcision of All Males

Note: God had just chosen Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Ex. 4:24-26a Now it happened at the lodging place, that the LORD met Moses and sought to kill him [making him deathly ill because he had not circumcised one of his sons]. Then Zipporah took a flint knife and cut off the foreskin of her son and threw it at Moses' feet, and said, "Indeed you are a husband of blood to me!" ²⁶ So He let Moses alone [to recover].

- Reason for God's anger is Moses's neglect and failure to circumcise his son which is a covenant obligation for male Israelites that demonstrated obedience to God.
- God refused to overlook his neglect.

Swindoll: "As Moses was on his way to do the will of God, the LORD stopped him in his tracks.

'Hold it right where you are, Moses. You will become My instrument.

But before you do, there's a very private area of neglect you need to remedy.

It is something I don't take lightly; neither should you."

The Circumcision of The Heart emphasizes the inward transformation that occurs when a person embraces faith in God and allows the Holy Spirit to work in their lives.

It signifies an embracing of a more receptive, loving, and obedient disposition towards God.

The circumcision of the heart is seen as a sign of genuine faith and a commitment to living a life that is pleasing to God, not just outwardly observing religious practices, but experiencing an inward transformation.

Rev. 2:5b and Repent, and Do the First Works; Restore prayer, Bible reading/study, meditate on & memorize the Word, obedient service & worship.

Rediscover and embrace the fundamental aspects of their faith that they have neglected.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Key: He emphasizes the importance of maintaining a fervent relationship with God and warns that failure to do so could result in losing His presence and favor.

The candlestick also represents the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit.

Billheimer: The way in which we live our lives now will apparently determine our degree of enjoyment of His millennial kingdom. Our closeness to Christ now will exactly parallel our closeness to Him then. As we are now, we will be then.

One purpose from eternity is the production and preparation of an Eternal Companion for the Son. This is the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. Since she is to share His throne, she must be trained, educated and prepared for her queenly role.

How? By faithful obedience through faith in their new life in Christ > SANCTIFICATION

Truth: An overcoming faith is focused on Jesus Christ. It is not an event. It is continuous.

My EXPERIENCE in Overcoming is a Process: After one is justified, God's will is sanctification.

I Thess. 4:3a For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, [It is not automatic.]

It is a life-long process that entails a fight and a battle to be obedient, faithful, yielded and allow the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to work in us and through us.

- The Holy Spirit prepares us for positions of authority in Christ's coming kingdom.

The Holy Spirit is the POWER that will produce the fruit of the spirit and the new life of Jesus Christ in a believer. As we abide in Him, He causes us to triumph and overcome.

- Every believer needs to keep his "vessel" clean by confessing his sins. I John 1:9
- Every believer is to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit > Eph. 5:18.
- The believer's position as an overcomer will become a reality in his life.

Nikao = to come off as victorious or overcomers = in the present tense signifying saints who are continually living victoriously even in the midst of tribulations and hostility

- Hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes, temptations and persecutions
- Attitude: God will be faithful, no matter what.
- Possess the "peace that passes all understanding."

Rev. 2:7 To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Barnhouse: Some have said that eating from the Tree of Life was the equivalent of receiving eternal life, but this is most Evidently a false Interpretation.

All believers possess eternal life at the point of believing in Christ. Furthermore, eternal life,

as God's Gift to those who believe, is never maintained by what we do.

My Belief: The Rewards View Of These Promises: Overcomer passages are promises to encourage and kindle love and obedience in view of who they are in Christ and what they possess in Him and guarantees of special blessings or rewards in His Coming Millennial Kingdom for faithful service and lives of faith.

God's Plan: Man is created in His image to have fellowship with God in Eden and to rule and dominion. The Tree of Life is present.

The Tree Of Life First Appeared in Genesis 2:8-9. The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The Tree Of Life was also in the midst of the garden, and the Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil.

Gen. 2:15-17 Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Gen. 3:6 Adam and Eve both ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil.

- They chose Knowledge of Good & Evil over Life. What was result of the choice?

Gen. 3:22-24 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to Guard THE WAY To The Tree Of Life.

Note: Man lost the Right to the Tree of Life; his exalted position; fellowship and sinless nature.

Result of Fall: Man sinned and was no longer in a position to rule and have dominion.

He has been cast out of God's paradise and does not enjoy the fellowship he had with God before the fall. There is a curse on the earth.

Gen. 5:3 And Adam lived an 130 years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image.

Believers in Ephesus Chose Knowledge Over Life. They were strong on doctrine, weeded out heresy and gatekeepers of truth, but they left their first love. They abandoned the love relationship with Jesus Christ which is the KEY to their spiritual growth & maturity.

God's purpose for born again believers NOW is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit + Word of God. God's purpose is for believers to be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, to rule and reign with Him in His coming Millennial Kingdom.

The Tree Of Life shows up again when Jesus Christ sets up His Millennial Kingdom.

The earth is refreshed like the Garden of Eden and He is physically with us.

His likeness that we lost; ability to rule & have dominion that we lost; being in the Paradise of

God that we lost; His physical presence among us that we lost; the fellowship we lost >
Tree of Life shows up as those who overcome are in His image and in a position to rule and co-reign as joint heirs with Christ.

- The tree of life represents an eternal, life-giving relationship with God, one that the first Adam forfeited access to with his disobedience

Consider: Because God Will Grant Or Give Them The Right To Eat Of The Tree Of Life, it seems to be conditional upon our works and obedience to His commandments.

These suggest a quality of life - rich fellowship with God. This fits well with the context in Revelation. Justification comes to all without cost, but the "tree of life" is presented as a conditionally earned and merited reward to those who overcome.

The tree of life, then, must offer some kind of superlative experience and blessing though the details are simply not explained to us.

Rev. 21:6 I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. [freely]

Belief #2: The rewards offered come to the one who overcomes. It costs him.

Rev. 21:7 He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Consider: This outcome costs and involves a life of discipleship.

- All believers are children of God. tekna = children
- My son = in the Greek huioi = mature son

Note: We arrive at the state of full sonship by a life of obedience and faithfulness.

Notice: It seems the ones who have received the free gift without cost in verse 6 have in addition, persevered faithfully and overcome. They are the ones who will inherit.

"Eating of the tree of life is a reward that shall be given to the one who overcomes in addition to his salvation. His works, built upon the foundation that is Christ Jesus, abides the test of the Lord's appearing, and he receives over and above his entrance into eternal life."

Consider My Belief: I believe the admonition to Ephesus is the first step in our journey to spiritual maturity. If I do not repent and do the first works, I will not progress in my spiritual growth. Therefore, the remaining promises to those who overcome will not be for me. I will NOT lose my justification, but I will arrive at the Judgment Seat of Christ as the person in I Cor. 3:15: He himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Because I failed to repent of departing from my first love and walked through life devoid of hearing my Shepherd's voice, I did not produce any spiritual maturity worthy of reward. I will have an entrance into His Kingdom, but I will forfeit so much.

Nelson Study Bible: Eating of the tree of life is a promise of special intimacy with the Lord, a promise of Renewing The Fellowship Enjoyed Before The Fall.

Man was cast out of God's Garden of Paradise.

The privileged access once denied Adam will be enjoyed by the one who overcomes.

I Thess. 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory.

Rev. 22:12-14 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ¹³ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the Right To The Tree Of Life, and may Enter The City By Gates.

Robes #4749 stolē: described a full-length outer garment reaching to the feet, woven of fine material, and generally worn by persons of dignity. In first-century Judea it marked social rank, learning, or priestly service. The final occurrence of stolē closes Scripture with a promise: Eternal communion with God hinges on being properly clothed. The washing of robes echoes priestly preparations for sanctuary service, hinting at believers' future vocation to "serve Him day and night in His temple." [Rev. 7:15]

Eschatological Hope: Robes link present salvation to future glory,
joining justification, sanctification, and glorification in a single image.

Question: Am I willing to repent and return to the first works to restore a heart of devotion and love to Jesus Christ, to restore fellowship? Am I willing to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit for the journey of sanctification?

Consider: What happens to those who don't repent and overcome? Where are they?

Why must I obey His command to repent of leaving my first love?

Persecution awaits. I must be in fellowship with Him and under the control of
The Holy Spirit to overcome my fear.

Smyrna = The Danger Of Fear Of Suffering

Rev. 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Rev. 2:10a Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days:

➤ Length of their trial is short in comparison with their eternal rewards.

Comfort: Present Sufferings end with this life.

Blessings & reward continue through eternity.

Consider: It has been allowed by God for His purpose and for a predetermined amount of time.

The purifying fires of affliction caused the lamp of testimony to burn more brilliantly.

The promise is for more suffering; Not relief. Jesus gives hope to His church:

Matthew 5:10-12 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward

in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Note: There is no mention of complaining among them > Christ-like

No matter what challenges we confront, we can take comfort in knowing that God has prepared incredible blessings for those who suffer hardship because of their love for Him.

The apostle Paul encouraged us by example to preserve through trials: We patiently endure.

II Cor. 4:7-10; 16-18 But we have this treasure in clay jars,

so that the extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

We are afflicted on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

¹⁰ always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our body.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not despair, but even if our physical body is wearing away, our inner person is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our momentary, light suffering is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison ¹⁸ because we are not looking at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. [See also II Cor. 6:4-7; II Cor. 11:23-27]

With the laser-focused determination of an Olympian athlete, Paul set his sights on the goal of finishing the race and winning the heavenly prize. [Phil. 3:12-14; I Cor. 9:24-25]

Rev. 2:10b be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

The crown of life is an award from God that will be awarded to those who,

because of their love for Him, faithfully endured trials and tests on earth.

James 1:12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

In the original Greek, the word rendered "crown" in James 1:12 denotes a prize.

➤ This is a special reward for endurance under persecution.

➤ It does not signify any royal position or authority over others.

The Crown of Life is reserved for believers who leave behind the safety and shelter of Christian infancy in search of spiritual maturity.

They discover that the battlefields of this life are training grounds as they

➤ "press on toward the goal to win the prize" [Phil. 3:12-14].

Future crown-bearers know this life is only temporary [I Cor. 7:31] and, therefore,

➤ choose to pursue the will of God and endure suffering for Christ [I John 2:17].

Rev. 2:11 He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.

Consider: What happens to those who don't repent and overcome? Where are they

The King is coming for a Bride who has made herself ready and is watching for His return.