

Christ & His Bride

Lesson #27

Message of Jesus Christ To The Church

August 13, 2025

Goals: Examine Christ's letters to the 7 churches. What are His concerns or condemnations in each letter? What are His commendations? What is His counsel? What are the promises to the individual who will heed His message and overcome Christ's concerns?

Rewards begin with the right to eat of the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God & escalate with the right to sit with Christ on His throne. This seems to indicate a progression of spiritual growth & maturity. Rewards to those who overcome graduate from church to church.

Key To Overcoming: From Ephesus to Laodicea > Fellowship With The Father & Jesus Christ.

Recall: 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:

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.

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].

Consider: Do I Have unconfessed Sin or Fears that need to be surrendered?

Do I have an inner abscess that would otherwise fester if I don't confess?

Am I choosing to pursue the will of God and endure suffering for Christ?

The Key: Fellowship With God and with Jesus Christ

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

Pergamos = *The Constant Danger Of Doctrinal Compromise*

Compromise Is Often The First Step Toward Complete Defection. The modern church or believer who has forsaken so many fundamentals of Biblical faith must heed the warning!

Consider: If I don't overcome my fear of suffering and persecution,

I will easily be swept into compromising God's Truths.

My life will be devoid of spiritual power. Satan will have a foothold in my life.

The promises to those who overcome will be out of my reach.

Rev. 2:13a I know your works, and where you dwelt, where Satan's throne is.

Jesus commended them for their Faithfulness in Holding To Jesus' Name and

Not Denying Their Faith, even when facing persecution.

Rev. 2:14a BUT I have a few things against thee,

Note: Their holding fast in a difficult environment did not excuse their acceptance of false teaching that Jesus describes.

Rev. 2:14 Because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a Stumbling Block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. [license to sin]

Thus you have those that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

Question: Why do some Christians accept cultural shifts and try to fit in?

People with no Biblical Christian worldview often follow the crowd, some out of a desire to fit in, others out of ignorance. Both have nothing on which to depend when questions arise that they don't understand or have never faced. What should I do if...?

As Christians with a Biblical worldview, our automatic response should be, what does the Bible say? What is God's perspective? We know what is right because the Bible addresses right & wrong in every possible context: religious, societal, interpersonal, & governmental.

Smyrna went straight into persecution because they stood for the Truth of God's Word. Pergamos compromised to avoid persecution.

➤ I don't want to be called intolerant, bigoted judgmental, and/or a radical Christian.

Tozer: Your mind must be changed from an attitude of compromise to one of insistence on

Doctrinal & moral purity. Don't tolerate sin by bowing to the pressure to be open-minded!

Rev. 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly,
and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

Rev. 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

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.

1. The rewards to Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos do not offer positions of great responsibility in Christ's coming Kingdom. These are more of intimacy & fellowship.
2. NOW His followers must overcome false teaching which involves a battle with the enemy.

Thyatira = A Monument to *The Danger Of Moral Compromise*

Charles Erdman: The letter to the church in Thyatira begins the 2nd group of letters to the churches of Asia Minor. In the first group, the church at Ephesus [Apostolic - weeded out heresy] was characterized by a loyalty to Christ which was lacking in love.

In the church of Smyrna, loyalty was tested by fire. [Satanic opposition]

In the church of Pergamos the loyalty was lacking in moral passion.

Yet all three churches were true to the faith and had not yielded to the assaults of evil. However, the case of the church at Thyatira, as of the churches in Sardis and Laodicea, the situation was far more serious.

Here not merely a small minority was indifferent but large numbers had actually yielded to the demoralizing influence of false teaching, and of sin.

The church of Thyatira represents the period between 590 AD to 1517 AD, known as the Dark Ages, the "Devil's Millennium." What began in Pergamos comes to full bloom in Thyatira.

Rev. 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass;

- He is coming as the God who does not tolerate.
- He is coming in severe judgment against this corrupted church.
- To see His anger, note Rev. 2:23. He says, "I will kill her children with pestilence."

Rev. 2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Christ's Condemnation: Tolerating False Teachings:

Jesus rebuked them for allowing Jezebel to lead people astray with her false doctrines and seductive teachings. This highlights the danger of compromising with sin and accepting unbiblical teachings, even if they seem appealing or are promoted by influential figures. The church's tolerance of sexual immorality was a serious problem. This demonstrates the need for the church to maintain moral purity and not compromise with worldly practices. This letter shows the depth of sin that compromise ultimately leads to...

- Full-scale idolatry, Full-scale immorality, & worst of all, Tolerance of both.

Einstein: The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them and do nothing.

Rev. 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

The Lord threatened to use this assembly as a solemn example to "all the churches:"

Do Not Tolerate Evil. Jezebel & her followers would be sentenced to tribulation and death!

"Worldly Christians are always more worried about those exposing the evil than the evil being exposed."

Some churches and Christians pride themselves on their tolerance. God's Command >

II Cor. 6:17-18 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Truth: We must be Bereans and study God's Word to detect false teachings and ideas.

When false doctrine is being preached, those who know the truth have a duty to stand up and do something about it! When we sit back and allow wickedness to go unchecked, we invite the anger and judgment of God!

Tozer: Never allow the majority to overrule the clear teaching of God's Word.

If we let down the wall just a little and compromise with the world, the world will not stop until it has everything we value. We will be left with nothing but the anger of a holy God!

When we compromise our standards to appeal to the world, we are turning our backs on truth.

When we open the door to let the world come in, do not be surprised if the Lord walks out.

Jesus Admonishes Those Who Do Not Have The Doctrine of Jezebel

Rev. 2:25 But that which you have already hold fast till I come.

Note: This is no minor warning. The tendency of believers is to lose ground rather than hold fast and move ahead.

Greg Laurie: You are either advancing or retreating as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Things naturally go downhill unless there is great effort against those forces that, like gravity, tend to pull us downward. There is always the need to cling to the Lord and hold tightly through a close walk with Him in the Word.

Key Point: Jesus urges the godly remnant to Hold Fast and Await The Coming Of The Lord.

"Till I come" refers to Christ's return for His people, at which time He will reward them for their faithfulness [Rev. 3:3; 16:15; 22:7, 17, 20]. The Rapture! [I Thess. 4:13-18]

This is the first reference in the 7 letters to the coming of Jesus Christ for His church.

He presents His return as the HOPE of this remnant who are engulfed by an apostate system.

Rev. 2:26-29 AND He Who Overcomes, And KEEPS MY WORKS Until The End

to him will I give power over the nations: ²⁷ And he shall rule them with a rod of iron;

as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

²⁸ And I will give him the morning star.

²⁹ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Sardis Warning against The Danger Of Spiritual Deadness

Orthodoxy without life, of mere outward appearance, of being, whited sepulchers.

Rev. 3:1 I know thy works, that you have a name [reputation] for being alive, but you are dead.

Rev. 3:2-6 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die:

for I have not found thy works perfect before God. [spiritual growth; maturity]

³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. ⁴ Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which

have not Defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.

Strong's #514 = axios = To Be Worthy Of; On The Grounds Of Being Fit, Meet,

Prepared, Suitable [41x in Scripture]

White: #3022. leukos = bright, brilliant

It often symbolizes spiritual purity, righteousness, holiness, and divine presence.

The Old Testament stresses: In order for the priests to stand before the Lord,

they had to have on "Holy" Garments. [Ex. 28:1, 36-38]

- These garments were "for glory and for beauty." [Ex. 28:2, 40]
- These garments meant the priest reflected God's holiness.
- Without this garment of holiness, the priest was forbidden to come into God's presence [Lev. 21:6-8]

Lev. 7:21; 22:3 Many of the ceremonial laws God gave to Israel were to show them how

to cleanse themselves from defilement so that they could commune with a holy God.

Lev. 5:2 Defilement of any sort, even when caused unintentionally,

separated a person from the community and from God's dwelling place among them.

Num. 19:13, 20 No defiled person could enter the sanctuary of the Lord.

Ezek. 23:39; 44:7; Mal. 2:11 Anytime enemies or backslidden Israel desecrated God's temple with neglect or abuse, God considered it defiled.

II Chron. 29:16; Lev. 16:20 No one could offer acceptable sacrifices or prayers
until the temple had been cleansed from its defilement.
Neh. 12:30; 13:30; Ex. 29:4 Priests had to go through a ritualistic cleansing process
before ministering to the Lord,
indicating that association with the world in any way brought defilement.

In Exodus, God chose the Levites to serve in His sanctuary continuously.
Israel did not take seriously the holiness of God, even in the temple, where the Holy of Holies
was found. The Levitical priests, despite being chosen to act as ministers in the temple,
couldn't fulfill their duties without corruption.
They allowed the unworthy to come into the temple and served as priests to idols.
Truth: God was serious! Keep His temple holy and have the right people ministering there.
Consider: What will happen to the Levitical priests in Christ's Millennial Kingdom?

The Levitical Caretakers In Christ's Millennial Kingdom

Ezekiel 44:4-14 concerns the statutes, laws and holiness that must be observed in the Millennial
temple. The LORD used the vision of the glory of the LORD filling the temple to impress upon
Ezekiel the importance of these things.

V. 6-8 Israel is reminded of her never to be repeated sin of allowing unbelieving foreigners
into the sanctuary, thereby profaning it and voiding the covenant.

V. 11, 14 These foreigners were used as caretakers so that the priests could focus on
their more important duties.

It is now the Levites, demoted from being priests, who will become the temple's caretakers.

Defile or destroy: move down from a higher level, quality or status to a lower level!

v. 10 The Levites must face the consequence of seeking idols instead of God.

The Levites became a stumbling block of iniquity to Israel and they must bear that shame.

v. 11 The Levites will be disciplined because they didn't stand for what was holy and right in the
years before the captivity. They will be allowed to kill the sacrifices, assist the worshippers,
serve as gatekeepers, and help in the temple, but they will not have priestly privileges.

v. 12-13 They shall not come near to God, for they are no longer priests.

And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me,
nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place:

but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

A faithful, covenant keeping God will keep His word to the Levites. He will restore the house of
Levi to their responsibilities to work and to serve in His Millennial Temple. However, because of
their years of rebellion, they will work the gates and keep the house. They will not come close
to God, they will not enter the holiest places, nor come close to the holy objects.

Those who did not appreciate the importance of the job will miss out in the Millennial Kingdom.

Powerful Truth: How one lives his or her life results in very real repercussions for His coming kingdom.

The Zadok Priest in the Millennial Kingdom

God will take away from them the privilege of priesthood and it will be given to Zadok who was faithful to God and faithful to David in days of declension and in days of apostasy.

Tremendous privileges are reserved for the sons of Zadok. Passages in Ezekiel describe their special role and position. The list of promised privileges is considerable.

Ezek. 40:46 *And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him."*

Ezek. 43:18-19 "And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering."

Zadok was a high priest during the time of King David and King Solomon, and his descendants were considered to be a part of the most faithful and dedicated line of priests.

By giving them the task of offering the sin offering, God is emphasizing the significance of faithful and obedient service in the worship of Him.

When the rest of Israel went astray, the Zadok family priests remained faithful to their temple duties. Therefore, they will be rewarded by continuing their faithful temple service, directly before the Messiah in the messianic kingdom.

Ezek. 44:15-16 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God: ¹⁶ They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.

The sons of Zadok are granted the privilege of coming near to God and ministering unto Him. This symbolizes the intimacy and closeness that is offered to those who are faithful and dedicated to God. It reflects the idea that those who are faithful in their service to God will have a special, close relationship with Him. It is a powerful message about faithfulness, loyalty, and the rewards of serving God. It highlights the importance of remaining faithful even in the midst of unfaithfulness, and the honor and privilege that comes with serving God faithfully.

Ezek. 44:17-18 And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

¹⁸ They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads and shall have linen breeches upon their loins. They shall not gird themselves with anything that causes sweat.

The linen garments symbolize purity and holiness. By wearing linen garments, the priests were outwardly demonstrating their holiness and their special consecration to God. Therefore, the directive for the priests to wear linen garments signifies their consecration and separation unto the Lord.

In Rev. 19:8, the Bride of Christ is given fine linen to wear, which represents the righteous acts of the saints.

I Peter 2:9 But you are a Chosen People, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a People For God's Own Possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Powerful Reminder: God desires holiness, reverence, and distinctiveness in worship.

As we seek to draw near to the Lord and serve Him, may we be mindful of the call to be clothed in righteousness and purity, and to conduct ourselves as a holy priesthood, set apart for His service.

Ezek. 48:10-11 And for them, even for the priests, shall be this holy oblation; [sacred offering]

- toward the north 25,000 in length, and [~8.3 miles]
- toward the west 10,000 in breadth, and toward the east 10,000 in breadth, [~3.2 miles]
- toward the south 25,000 in length: and
- the sanctuary of the Lord shall be in the midst thereof.

It shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

This speaks to the themes of faithfulness, obedience, and spiritual leadership. It underscores the importance of remaining loyal to God even in the midst of unfaithfulness and rebellion.

The allocation of land to the Zadokite priests symbolizes the blessings and rewards of faithful service, while the contrast with the Levites serves as a cautionary reminder of the consequences of unfaithfulness.

This verse serves as a call to all believers to remain steadfast in their commitment to the Lord and to uphold the standards of righteousness and faithfulness in their leadership and example.

Powerful Reminder: Those who remained firm, those who did not go with the crowd, those who did appreciate the holiness of the temple, the descendants of Zadok, would be lifted up as an example and given the jobs the less than faithful had forfeited.

Powerful Truth: How one lives his or her life results in very real repercussions for His coming kingdom.

Rev. 3:5 To him that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess [acknowledge] his name before my Father, and before his angels.

⁶ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Philadelphia: The Faithful Church

Rev. 3:8 I know thy works: you have kept my Word, and have not denied my name.

- Faithfulness: Praised for their unwavering commitment to God's Word.
Did not deny Christ's name, even when facing persecution.
- Obedience: Followed God's commands and demonstrated a pattern of obedience.
- Loyalty: Remained loyal to Christ and did not succumb to pressure to deny Him, even when faced with opposition.
- Endurance: Patiently endured trials and persecution, demonstrating a steadfast faith.

Rev. 3:10-11 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I come quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. Jesus would take them to be with Him before the coming tribulation [I Thess. 4:13-18].

He also exhorts them to remain faithful, because this would lead to rewards in the afterlife.

Rev. 3:12 To him that overcomes, I will make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he will never have to leave it. And I will write on him the name of my God, and he will be a citizen in the city of my God—the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven from my God. And I will also write on him my new name.

Laodicea: Danger of Lukewarmness

Crowning Indictment: A Warning Against Self-sufficiency,

Of Being Unconscious Of Desperate Spiritual Need. Repent & Be Zealous.

Rev. 3:15-17 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold [invigorating, refreshing] nor hot [healing, therapeutic]; I wish that you were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Prescription: Heed Counsel of Jesus Christ to Overcome Lukewarmness & Apathy

Refocus on Eternity! Inheritance is at stake!

Rev. 3:18 Therefore, I formally advise you to: buy from Me

- Buy From Me Give your life over to Me, in exchange for
- gold spiritual treasure; transformed Christlike character
- refined by fire made pure by God's grace, and the trials of this present life
- you may be rich have eternal glory in Christ from virtuous merit.

White raiment that you may be clothed, & that the shame of thy nakedness does not appear.

Need Eye Salve so they can see: metaphor for the spiritual sight they lack.

- It prevents them from recognizing their true condition.

Eye salve from Jesus symbolizes spiritual insight and discernment.

- Represents the Holy Spirit's work in revealing truth.
- The Holy Spirit grants us discernment.
- He leads me to seek Christ for the spiritual insight and discernment needed to walk in truth and righteousness.

Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup [have fellowship] with him, and he with me.

I Cor. 1:9 God is faithful [He is reliable, trustworthy and ever true to His promise—
He can be depended on], and through Him
you were Called Into Fellowship With His Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord.

The Christian Life Is Full Of Conflict, Tribulation, & Trials But VICTORY AWAITS
All Believers Through The Victory Accomplished By The Savior.

But It Is A Victory That Must Be Appropriated By An Active Faith That Is Fed Through
Fellowship With The Lord.

Question: Am I willing to be changed by the Lord? Will I heed His counsel to buy from Him

- Gold refined in the fire to prove my faith genuine
- White garments of justification and sanctification so I will be properly clothed
- The eye salve of the Holy Spirit to have my spiritual eyes opened

If heeded, the counsel of Jesus is the cure to overcome my lukewarmness and apathy.
These are in preparation to be the Bride of Christ.

Am I willing to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit for the journey of sanctification?

Rev. 3:21-22 To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne,
even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne.

²² He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

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