

(Revelation) Revelation 2:20-3:22

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance, perfection, and being an overcomer in the face of spiritual immorality and hypocrisy.

Duration: 1:00:23

Scripture: Revelation 2:20

Topics: "Spiritual Vigilance", "Overcoming Sin"

Description

Zac Poonen explores the messages to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, emphasizing the importance of spiritual vigilance and obedience. He highlights the dangers of spiritual immorality and complacency, particularly in the churches of Thyatira and Sardis, where false teachings and hypocrisy led to spiritual death. Poonen encourages believers to overcome sin and remain faithful, warning that those who do not take their spiritual condition seriously risk being cast out. He contrasts the faithful churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia, which exemplify perseverance and brotherly love, with the lukewarm church of Laodicea, which represents spiritual pride and self-deception. Ultimately, he calls for repentance and a return to true devotion to Christ, reminding the church that overcoming is essential for eternal reward.

Transcript

Now we continue our study in the Book of Revelation, and if you remember in our last study we were considering Chapter 2, and we saw that Chapter 2 and 3 come under the heading of The Things Which Are, the threefold division of the Book of Revelation in Chapter 1, verse 19. The Things Which You Have Seen, which is the vision of the risen Christ, and The Things Which Are, which relates to the churches in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, and The Things Which Take Place After These Things, which begins in Chapter 4. And there are messages to seven churches here, and we considered four of them in these two chapters. We just want to look at a few verses in the closing part of Chapter 2, which we didn't have time to complete in our last study.

That was to the church in Teatira. We saw that to the first church in Ephesus, the message was, You have left your first love. The second church was the church in Smyrna, Chapter 2, verse 8, where there was no rebuke, they were faithful in suffering.

The third church is Chapter 2, verse 12, the church in Pergamum, which had got involved in worldliness. The teaching of Balaam had come in there. Now the fourth church, Teatira, where they had allowed a woman called Jezebel, or some equivalent, maybe that's a symbolic name of one who in the Old

Testament led God's people astray.

But there was someone there who had power in the church, a carnal lady who had power in the church. And it's a very dangerous thing when carnal ladies get power in the church. And the thing is, she was misusing the so-called gifts of the Spirit, abusing the gifts of the Spirit, speaking about prophesying, but prophesying in order to condone sin.

And it speaks about those who commit, verse 20, those who commit, in the last part, those who commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. Now there are two types of immorality spoken of, adultery spoken of in the Scriptures. One is physical, the other is spiritual.

Spiritual adultery is when we are unfaithful to Jesus Christ and given to the sins in our flesh and end up as a spiritual harlot, which is finally called Babylon in the book of Revelation. And here was a particular teaching, we can look at it also in a spiritual way, that here was a particular teaching that was encouraging spiritual adultery. In other words, they were not taking sin seriously.

Carnal people had got power in this church, and they were leading people into spiritual immorality. And it says in verse 21 that God gave her time to repent. God is very merciful even to such people.

He gives them time to repent. There was a specific time given, but she does not want to repent. In that time allotted, God allots a time for every one of us in which he expects us to repent.

And it says here that she does not want to repent of her immorality. Notice here in verse 20 that this was a form of teaching. It was not just a loose life lived by certain people, but there was a particular teaching that was coming forth in this church that was encouraging this type of spiritual immorality.

In other words, a particular teaching could be the teaching of false praise, for example. A teaching that leads people to think that because Jesus has shed his blood, we don't have to be so careful about sin anymore because the blood of Jesus cleanses us. That type of attitude leads to spiritual immorality.

And it says here in verse 22, I will cast her upon a bed and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation unless they repent of her deeds. And there we see about tribulation that God gives. There is tribulation that man brings, but here it speaks about tribulation that God sends as a punishment upon those who indulge in this type of spiritual immorality with the spiritual Jezebel.

And then it speaks in verse 23 about her children. Now there's a difference between those who commit spiritual adultery with her and those who are the result of that spiritual adultery, that is, children. We can look at it like this.

Those who commit spiritual adultery with her are those who cooperate in this type of false teaching. And the children, we can say, are those who end up as a result of this teaching and follow in this way. They may not be as guilty, they may not be leading in teaching this type of spiritual immorality, but they follow it and they also will be punished.

Now God doesn't punish immediately everybody out in the world who lives in sin. But when people come into the church in the name of Jesus Christ and then they condone sin in their life, then He judges. In the first letter to Corinthians, chapter 11, Paul says to the Corinthians, he says, you come together to break bread in the church and then you don't judge yourself of sin in your private life.

What is the result? The result is many of you are sick and many of you are physically weak and some of you die before God's appointed time for you to die comes. That happens to believers who play the fool with sin. They get sicknesses which can't be cured with injections or pills or any such thing and they die before God's time for death comes because of a loose attitude towards sin.

Then he goes on to say, but I say this to you, to the rest who are in the theatera, who do not hold this teaching. That means who do not hold this loose attitude towards sin. I will place no other burden upon you who have not known the deep things of Satan.

You see, there are people who speak about deeper truths and the Lord is saying that sarcastically that those deeper truths are actually the deeper truths of Satan. How do we know whether something is really the deeper truths of God's word or just a deception? Well, the test of everything is what Jesus said, by their fruits you shall know them. What is the result of that teaching? Doctrine is like a seed and we can't examine a seed always under the microscope and find out whether it's true or false.

But sow the seed into the ground and in a few years you'll get a crop and when you look at the crop you know whether it was good seed or bad seed. So if you find that a particular doctrine does not lead you to be free from sin, you can be fairly sure that's not the doctrine of the New Testament. If there is a doctrine that the end result of which is that you can sin in your life and still have a good conscience, you can be pretty clear that those deeper truths, whatever they are, are deeper truths of Satan.

Now there are a lot of people nowadays in these last days speak about end time truths and deeper truths and all these things, but it does not free people from sin. Well, then we have to say those are the deep things of Satan because they don't lead anybody to be free from sin. The teaching of God is that which leads us to be free from sin.

And then it says here in verse 25, What you have hold fast until I come, that is, those who do not have this teaching. Keep it, hold on now to the truth that you have received because it's very easy in a day of compromise to let go these things and to begin to become compromisers ourselves. And it says in verse 26, he who overcomes, that means he who overcomes sin and the world and the devil, he who keeps my works until the end, that is, works of obedience, who carries on doing it till the end, either till the end of his life or till the time Jesus comes again, to him I will give authority over the nation.

That is the reward that the Lord is going to give to the overcomer to rule. In other words, today if I rule my spirit, one day God will give me authority over the world in the millennium. Now is not the time to rule over people.

Now is the time to rule over my own spirit and to rule over the lust in my flesh. And one day God will give us authority to rule over the nation, to shepherd them, it says in verse 27, the margin, with a rod of iron in the millennium. When Jesus rules on earth for a thousand years, those who have been overcomers here will reign with him and rule the nations with a rod of iron and break all resistance, for there will be resistance even in those days.

Just like I have received authority from my Father. In other words, as Jesus overcame and received authority from his Father, we can overcome and receive authority from Christ. And I will give him, the overcomer, the morning star.

The morning star is the star that is seen just before the rising of the sun. And that is a particular promise to the overcomer that if you overcome in your life before the sun rises, that is before Jesus comes to, like it says in the book of Malachi chapter 4, it says in the last day, Jesus will arise as the sun with healing in his wings, the sun of righteousness, Malachi 4 verse 2. Before the sun rises, a little while before that, those who overcome will see him as the morning star. They will be taken up to be with him.

That's a promise of the rapture. Before the sun rises, before the 1,000 year rain begins, and that we will see later on as we come into the book, that if we overcome, before the world sees Jesus as the sun, we will see him as the morning star. In the last chapter of the book of Revelation, we see that again, Revelation 22, and verse 16, the last part, I, Jesus, have sent my angel, I am the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star.

Jesus is the sun to the rest of the world, but to the overcomer, we see him as the bright morning star before the sun rises. And it concludes in Revelation 2, 29, again with the phrase, this is a message to all the churches. Down through 20 centuries, here is a message to every church.

And now we move on to chapter 3 and verse 1. Here is a message to the fifth church, to the messenger of the church in Sardis, right. He who has the seven spirits of God, the seven spirits of God means the sevenfold Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referred to with seven names, for example, in Isaiah chapter 11 and verses 2 and 3, the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, the spirit of the Lord, spirit of knowledge, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

So, and in the New Testament too, there are seven titles given. He is called the sevenfold Holy Spirit. And the one who has the seven stars, that is the messengers of Christ, are in his right hand.

He says, I know your deed. Now this is an amazing leader and an amazing church, in this sense that there is nothing good said about him. Some of the other leaders and churches, there is something good in them and some bad things, but this particular leader and the last one, which we shall see a little later, the Lord has nothing good to say about this one and nothing good to say about the seventh one, which we shall see in a moment.

And we see here, the Lord says, you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. He had a reputation that he was spiritually alive. That means a reputation among believers, because the unbelievers are not interested whether you are spiritually alive or not.

You have a name that you are alive, but God says in my sight you are dead. What does that teach us? That believers can have an opinion about us, which is 100% the opposite of what God's opinion about us is. He who has ears to hear, let him hear that.

That a believer, many believers, may have a tremendous opinion of my spirituality and God's opinion about my spirituality may be exactly the opposite. Exactly the opposite. And so, the one who consoles himself by the fact that believers, other believers in the church, have a pretty good opinion of my spirituality, we can say he's in the top of the list of the spiritual idiots.

He's an absolute idiot and an absolute fool to console himself that other believers think I'm alright. That's the condition of this fellow here. You've got a name that you're alive.

And here was a church that got a name that it was alive. But God's opinion of that church was completely dead. So what people think about us as a church is absolutely unimportant because they can only see the

outside.

You can go to a church, you can hear the noise and the praise and worship and the music and this and that and other, and you can think it is alive. God who sees the hearts and minds of those people may think they're completely dead. And then he tells them, verse 2, well we can say very faintly perhaps there's one little good thing that's said about this church in a sense in a negative way.

Wake up and strengthen the things that remain which are about to die. That means there are a few things which are on the verge of death which haven't yet died, but strengthen them otherwise even that will die. He was on the road to total spiritual death and God was warning him like he warns us.

Praise God that the Holy Spirit warns us in the church when we're going in the wrong direction. And what does he say? He says wake up. He says you're spiritually asleep.

He doesn't say you've got false teaching. There was no Jezebel here with false teaching. There was no doctrine of Balaam in this church.

There was no doctrine of the Nicolaitans. No false teaching, but hypocrisy. And that's the worst danger.

And it says here, wake up. Don't be spiritually asleep. That is similar to the word Jesus often spoke.

Watch and pray. Watch means be alert. That's a better word.

Watch, we don't understand so much in our day. Be alert. Don't go to sleep spiritually.

Be alert all the time. And I believe that's the word we need particularly in our day. Be alert.

Don't go to sleep. You see what happens when we are asleep? When we are asleep, we're living in a dream world, an unreal world. And the real world around us we know nothing about.

That's what happens when a believer goes to sleep. He's not aware of the real world which is the eternal world. He's living only for this world, for this unreal world that's going to pass away.

He's like a man asleep, living in a dream. And the Lord says, wake up and let your eyes be open to spiritual reality and strengthen the things that remain which are about to die. And here's the complaint the Lord has.

I have not found your deeds perfect in the sight of God. Now notice this. As you read through this section, there's no false teaching here.

There's no charge of immorality and idolatry here. No doctrine of Balaam of running after money. But you are not perfect.

Now there are a lot of people who are afraid of the doctrine of perfection. Here was one church that was afraid of the doctrine of perfection. They didn't believe in any such thing and the result was the Lord rebuked them.

He says, you've just got a name before men. Your works are not perfect in the sight of God. In other words, God wants our works to be perfect.

It's possible if we understand the meaning of that word perfect. We don't have time to go into that but we've spoken about that much in the church here. But there's one other thing I want you to notice here which helps us to understand a little bit about perfection.

And that is this phrase in the last part of verse 2. In the sight of my God. That gives us a little indication of what is a perfect work. The work that I do in the sight of men is always imperfect even if it's a good work.

When I give money to God and I want other people to know about it I may give a thousand rupees into the offering box and it becomes an imperfect work because I did it for men to see. When I pray and I pray because I want other people to know about it it's imperfect. It's not in the sight of God.

It's in the sight of men. When I sing in the church to impress other people with my voice it's imperfect. It's in the sight of men.

Not in the sight of God. When I fast and I want other people to know about it or I bring somebody to Christ and I want to get some credit from men for it I've done a wonderful work saving a soul from hell but it's become imperfect because I did it for the honor of men. And that's why we've got a dread seeking the honor of men.

A church which speaks on perfection will always speak against seeking the honor of men because that more than anything else is what leads us to make our works as imperfect. That's how this man got a name that he was alive because everything he did he was very careful to see that men saw it and he got a name that he was alive. And God saw the wretched corrupt dirty motive in his heart and said your works are not perfect in my eyes.

Remember therefore verse 3 what you received and heard. So here was somebody who had heard this message. This is not like some person in some dead assembly where they never hear.

No, here was somebody who had heard this message but he hadn't taken it seriously. It's a very serious thing to hear the word of God. To hear about perfection.

To hear about not seeking the honor of men and then not bother about it. Remember he says what you received and heard and keep it obedient. That's the word always.

Keep it, don't just hear. If you only hear you'll build on sand. If you hear and keep then you'll build on the rock and repent.

This is the message to every church. Repent, repent, repent. And I believe in the last days before the coming of Christ the true church, the bride of Christ is going to be like a John the Baptist.

The forerunner of the second coming of Christ. You know what John the Baptist message was? Repent. And he didn't preach it to the Romans or to the Greeks.

To whom did he preach it? To God's people. And in the last days the church is going to be like John the Baptist preaching repentance to whom? Not to the unbeliever but to the believers in the church. Repent of this sin of seeking the honor of men.

Of this sin that you've got a name before men but you're spiritually dead in God's eyes. Repent of it. And if you don't wake up even after all that I've said and I warned you I will come like a thief.

And you will not know at what hour I'll come upon you. Now we know that Jesus Christ said that he would come like a thief. But I want to tell you this dear friends.

He is coming like a thief for the unbelievers and for the carnal believers. He's not going to come like a thief for an overcomer. You read that in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verses 1 to 6 I want to read this.

Now as to the times and the epochs brethren you have no need of anything to be written to you for you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they're saying peace and safety then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child and they shall not escape. Now listen.

But you brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you like a thief. No. For you are sons of light.

You're sons of the day. We're not of the night nor of darkness. So then let us not sleep as others do but let us be alert and sober.

What does it say in verse 4? It should not overtake you like a thief. In other words the one who is an overcomer he's not going to be surprised when Jesus comes. Coming like a thief signifies first of all surprise I didn't expect it and secondly it's not something we welcome very much because we're not ready.

That's how it's going to be for a lot of people. And Revelation chapter 3 verse 3 indicates that there are going to be some people like for example the believers who were in the same spiritual condition today as the believers in Sardis. Those believers in the 20th century who are in the same spiritual condition as the believers in Sardis Jesus is going to come like a thief and they're going to be surprised.

The thief would have come and gone. When do you realize that a thief has come and gone from your house? When you wake up in the morning. And so will it be when the overcomers are gone that the rest of these Sardis type believers will wake up and find he's come and gone.

Came in the middle of the night. You will not know what hour I'll come but those who are ready they are ready to go. They will know they will hear the call but he says, here he talks about the overcomers in verse 4 but you have a few names in Sardis.

God got a list of names and he says you've got a few names in Sardis who have not soiled their garments. You see there are, there were a few people in this church who were really keeping their garments clean and in the context of this chapter of this section it seems to indicate that to keep our garments clean means not to seek the honor of men. To live before God's face otherwise I soil my garments.

But he says you have some people in Sardis who do not seek the honor of men but who live in the sight of my God. Therefore they do not soil their garments they will walk with me in white for they are worthy. Amazing in the book of Revelation where we read very soon in the book of Revelation chapter 5 the Lamb alone is worthy the same Lamb of God says about some human beings that they are worthy.

They are worthy and that also we read in Luke 21 verse 36 Luke 21 36 it says keep on the alert the same phrase wake up keep on the alert at all times praying in order that in the King James version it reads like this that you may be accounted what worthy to escape all these things and to stand before the son of man. Not everybody is going to be accounted worthy those people who go to sleep are not counted worthy. But

there are certain people who are accounted worthy to escape these things and to stand before the son of man and he's speaking about the second coming of Christ in that chapter.

Let's turn back to Revelation 3 so there are some people whom Jesus says are worthy and verse 5 Revelation 3 5 he who overcomes will be clothed like this in white garments like these overcomers clothed in white garments and I will not erase his name from the book of life now that teaches us that it is possible for a man's name to be erased from the book of life we read in the book of Exodus in chapter 32 and verse 33 Exodus 32 33 the Lord said to Moses whoever has sinned against me I will blot him out of my book whoever has sinned against me I will blot him out of my book and the Lord himself has said that that's pretty clear that a man's name can be in the book and the Lord can blot it out there's no second opinion on that when the Lord himself has said it and so it says in Revelation 3

verse 5 I will not erase his name from the book of life it's possible for a man to have his name in the book of life and for his name to be blotted out Jesus told the disciples who came back in Luke chapter 10 saying Lord it's wonderful even the demons are subject to us in your name and the Lord said to those disciples in Luke 10 20 rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven and Judas Iscariot was among those disciples when Jesus said that but his name got blotted out if you have the time sometime you can read Psalm 69 verse 25 to 28 where is the prophecy about Judas Iscariot Psalm 69 verse 25 to 28 we know that's a prophecy about Judas Iscariot because it's quoted in Acts of the Apostles chapter 1 verse 20 and one of the things written there about him is Psalm 69 verse 28 may they be

blotted out of the book of life his name was there and it was blotted out because it is unfaithful but he who overcomes his name will not be blotted out of the book of life and further Revelation 3 verse 5 I will confess his name before my father the book of Jude verse 24 says that one day Jesus is going to present us falsely before the presence of his father with what? with shouts of joy, with exceeding joy that means that Jesus is going to say father I'm just proud to confess this younger brother of mine, think dear brothers and sisters to be in that number whom Jesus in that day with great joy will confess our name because he's proud to own us in that day as one who didn't live for the world didn't live for the lust of the flesh didn't live for the honor of men but lived for God's

glory and before God's face, I will confess his name if we confess him before men now he will confess us before the father and Jesus said in Matthew 10 verse 32 if we deny him before men he will deny us in that day and so here again is a message to all the churches verse 6 now we go to church number 6 which is the church in Philadelphia verse 7 here is the best of the seven churches now out of the seven churches, the Lord rebukes five and there are only two churches whom he does not rebuke at all and that is the second church, the church in Smyrna and the sixth one, the church in Philadelphia and it's very interesting to see that the church in Philadelphia has so many good things he has to say, much more than the church in Smyrna, it's an excellent church and it's an exemplary church,

it's the type of church that the Lord is looking for in these last days he who has ears to hear, let him hear this is the type of church the Lord is looking for in the last days the word Philadelphia means brotherly love brotherly love that's the type of church the Lord is looking for in the last days to the angel of the church in Philadelphia writes, he who is holy, who is true who has the key of David who opens and no one will shut and who shuts and no one opens says I know your deed notice this he says here the one who is holy the one who is true, the one who has the key of David and in the new testament it's mentioned many times that Jesus Christ was born of the seed of David of the flesh of David and he overcame sin and it says he has the key of David that means he's got authority as

one who came in our flesh overcame sin and therefore he has authority today who is holy, who is true who has the key of David who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens, that means when the Lord shuts the door no one can open it and the Lord opens the door no one can shut it this is what gives us great confidence as we go through life I don't stand before closed doors if I am an overcomer because Jesus has got the key to every door and if he shut the door I just turn away from there and go towards the door the Lord has opened it's a tremendous promise tremendous title that Jesus has the one who has the key of David who opens and no one will shut who shuts and no one opens that's why we pray to him because we believe he's got the key to every door knock he said and it will

be opened unto you, how can he open to us, things which look impossible in the eyes of men because he's got the key to every door, he was the one who opened the fish's mouth and asked the fish to bring Jonah outside he can open every door if we cry to him in faith he has authority notice it says in verse 8 I know your deeds I have put before you an open door which no one can shut nobody can stop you from being a witness for me in that town, I have put before you an open door and notice this, you have very little power, they were humanly speaking weak he's not talking about their spiritual power he's talking from a human standpoint they were not big shot they were not wealthy people they were weak people humanly speaking, they were not the most influential people in the town of

Philadelphia they were weak they were not smart and clever and all that, but here was their qualification they had obedience that's the church Jesus is looking for you have kept my word you have confessed me before men and you have not denied my name that's a phrase that occurs many times in the book of Revelation, the word of God those who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus those who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, here was a church that kept the commandments of God and held to the testimony of Jesus and so we see, obedience the testimony of Jesus held up boldly and Philadelphia meaning brotherly love that is the type of church Jesus is looking for I want to belong to a church where they preach obedience to the commandments I want to belong

to a church where they have brotherly love among themselves I want to belong to a church that unashamedly holds up the testimony of Jesus Christ will such a church be opposed it certainly will you know by whom by religious people verse 9 I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews we can say today, in these days who say they are Christians and are not but to lie they say they are believers but they oppose you behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet and what will they know that I have loved you that I have loved you that's what the world is to know, that the father loves us as he loved Jesus you see there we have the foundation for the doctrine of perfection God loves me Jesus loves me I find my security in that love I have loved you and because of

that, what's the result I keep the word of Jesus the last part of verse 8 and I have fervent love for my fellow believers we love God and one another because he first loved us that is the church which Jesus commends we are opposed by religious people those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews opposition from religious Christendom now it's very interesting to see that this synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews is mentioned in only two churches do you remember which the other one was the church in Smyrna chapter 2 verse 9 that these two churches which are the ones which are commended and praised by Jesus the most were the two churches who were opposed by religious people of their days isn't that interesting that's exactly like it was with Jesus Christ who were the ones

who wanted to crucify Jesus Christ not the Romans, not the Greeks but the religious Jews and I want to say this brothers and sisters if we are going to be a church that is commended and praised by Jesus we

can expect maximum opposition not from the Hindus and Muslims but from the so called believers if you are not receiving opposition from so called believers I would say you perhaps are not one of those churches being commended and praised by Jesus you are one who seeks the honor of men notice that, it's very significant that the two churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia were the only ones who were being opposed by religious Jews so called God's people religious believers, so called God's people fighting probably they call these people heretics but they stood for the truth they believed in

one who had the key of David as it says in verse 7 they believed in a Jesus who came in the flesh of David and that was called heresy but Jesus praised that church and verse 10 because you've kept the word of my perseverance you see this is the great word here, you have kept the word of my patience the word of my endurance that's another word that comes many times in the book of revelation the word of perseverance he who endures till the end let endurance have its perfect result that you may be perfect and complete lacking in nothing, James 1 4, because you have kept the word, notice the emphasis again on obedience, obedience obedience to the word enduring in obedience I also will keep you from means I will keep you out of the hour of testing that hour which is about to come upon the

whole world to test those who dwell upon the earth now this refers to a future day when a time of terrific tribulation from God now notice we have already considered in chapter 2, there are 2 types of tribulation, in chapter 2 verse 10, tribulation from men, which is a good thing that we are to face but chapter 2 verse 22 we read about tribulation from God tribulation from men we cannot escape Jesus faced it, the apostles faced it, we have to face it too, but tribulation from God, the type of tribulation spoken of in chapter 2 verse 22 we don't have to face that we don't have to face the wrath of God certainly not and so when that time comes, the Lord says I will keep you out of that hour of testing which is about to come upon the whole world because it is going to test, whom is it going

to test we can use one phrase for those who dwell upon the earth the earth dwellers that means those whose mind is set upon the things of earth they belong here their mind is here they spent all their life trying to make more money, get the honor of men and live for the world and Jesus says alright live there, you can live there, I'm taking out those whose mind was set on the things above, who wanted God and his pleasure and his honor, I'm taking them the rest of you, you took my name you call yourself believers, but your mind was 100% set on the things of earth you can be there, isn't that righteous of God, that's absolutely righteous of God to leave behind those whose mind is set on the things of earth sure there's nothing unrighteous there I'm coming quickly, verse 11 he's speaking

about the second coming you see the Lord is able to keep us like we read in Luke 21 pray that you may be accounted worthy to escape, here was a group of believers who were accounted worthy to escape these things and to stand before the Son of Man, the Lord is able to do that and verse 11, I'm coming quickly, hold fast what you have in order that no man take your crown that teaches us that it's possible for God to reserve a crown for you and you may not get it because you didn't hold fast even though this is a wonderful church, yet the Lord warns it, warnings are necessary, even for overcomers hold fast what you have, otherwise you'll no longer be an overcomer, somebody else can take the crown meant for you there was a crown for Judas Iscariot but he never got it maybe Paul or somebody

else got it what was meant for Judas think of that brothers and sisters that God may have had such a wonderful plan for your life and reserved a crown for you at the end of it all and because you never fulfilled this plan, because you live for the world and live for yourself you missed it so take heed that no one takes your crown, but he who overcomes, verse 12 I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God God's temple

is the church not a building not a denomination, but those who have overcome he will not go out from it anymore I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God God's name will be written on our foreheads if we overcome and the name of New Jerusalem, what is New Jerusalem New Jerusalem we read in Revelation 21 and verse 10 9 and 10 is the bride

of Christ New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ, across the name of the head of the overcomer will be written the word belonging to New Jerusalem now that teaches us so clearly that not every believer is going to be in the bride, no it's so clear he who overcomes, only on him will be written that he belongs to New Jerusalem what about all these other fellas it's a great deception to believe that anybody and everybody who names the name of Christ is going to be in the bride, that's a deception it's a deception that came from the pit of hell to teach believers to live just as they like and the word of God says so clearly he who overcomes I will write upon him the name of the city of my God the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from my God and my new name that teaches us there's a

new name that Jesus Christ is going to have which will be upon us he who has a year let him hear, what is the message that comes through in all these messages to the churches what is the spirit saying overcome overcome as we have considered before the message that the Holy Spirit says to the unconverted world is come, come to Jesus as we read in Revelation and chapter 22 and verse 17 the Holy Spirit is saying come you unbelievers come but to those who have come to Jesus the Holy Spirit has got another message you know what it is overcome overcome we shouldn't confuse these two he's not telling the unbelievers to overcome he's telling the unbelievers to come he's telling the believers to overcome let's see that clearly are you an unbeliever the Holy Spirit is saying to you come are you a

believer have you already come then the Holy Spirit is speaking to you too saying repent and overcome come then finally the message to the last church verse 14 to 22 this is called a church in Laodicea and it's interesting that the word Laodicea means the opinions of the people and that's exactly how it is in the last days with many churches the majority opinion we can say if we want elders everybody votes and whoever gets two thirds majority will be an elder you know what's two thirds of one thousand shall I tell you six, six, six the number of the antichrist that's how they elect elders in many churches the opinions of the people two thirds majority to the angel who is the messenger of the church in Laodicea right, the amen that's the word Jesus used many times in the gospel of John

verily, verily, amen, amen that means truly, truly the truth the faithful and true witness Jesus is a faithful witness he's a true witness he doesn't tell any lies the beginning of the creation of God means the origin of God's creation doesn't mean the first one was created like the Jehovah's Witnesses falsely teach, it means the one who began God's creation the one who began God's creation the one who was eternally with the Father verse 15 I know your deed that you are neither cold nor hot I wish you were cold or hot now here's another church a church about which nothing good, the Lord has nothing good to say about this church, absolutely nothing good or about its leader but it still called itself a church and there was no immorality here, no idolatry, no false doctrines this is a sort

of a respectable church which has got all the right doctrines, no gross things, you don't have drunkards and immoral people around here, but they are lukewarm you know where their lukewarmness comes from you'll see that in a moment in verse 17 it says because you say I'm rich maybe materially maybe spiritually I have understood so much I have concordances I have bible study help, I have faith, I have Christian books I'm rich and I have become wealthy, maybe spiritually, at least that's what he thought knowledge, and I have need of nothing and the Lord says you don't know that you're wretched, miserable poor, blind

and naked you know what verse 17 reminds us of? it reminds us of the pharisee who prayed in the temple, Luke 18 verse 11 I thank you God that I'm not like other men I'm rich

spiritually, I don't commit adultery like some of these fellows standing around here I fast I type, I pray, I go regularly to the meetings, I know all about the new and living way, I know all the verses, I know this, I know that I'm not like all these dead denominations over there you know who becomes a Laodicean now I'll tell you the one who started off as a Philadelphian the previous church who was once upon a time a wholehearted brother he ended up as a Pharisee because he didn't hold fast to what Jesus told him to hold fast he ends up thinking I am rich I've got revelation, I've got revelation on things which other people don't have a clue about and the Lord says you don't know you're wretched, miserable poor, blind and naked when a Philadelphian backslides he gets into a worse

condition than any of the people in the other churches that's the thing we must remember a Laodicean is a Philadelphian backslider and he is the worst type of Christian on the face of the earth one who has understood the truth understood the way of righteousness Peter says that in 2 Peter 2 the last few verses it is better for such people not to have known the way of righteousness, what is the way of righteousness? the new and living way than to have known it and then go and live in their sins oh that's like the pig that's turned back to its wallowing in the mire and the dog that's turned back to its vomit and they sit there and think they've got so much knowledge think that they are so spiritual because they've got so much head knowledge of the Bible and no life what do they lack? they

are not fervent that word hot there means boiling hot it's like the like you boil the milk and boil the water so that all the germs are burnt out so Jesus says it must be in our heart in our heart it must always be boiling hot so that there is no opportunity for the bacteria of sin to survive in our heart when a jealous thought or a suspicious thought or a lustful thought comes it gets burnt up in this boiling hot water you are not boiling hot he says, you are lukewarm and that lukewarmness, listen to this that lukewarmness did not come out of false doctrine, it did not come out of immorality, you know what it came out of? spiritual pride and they didn't know their true condition wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, so what does the Lord say I'm going to do? verse 16, because you

are lukewarm neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth, now what do we vomit out of our mouth?

I'll tell you, that food that is not digested into the body when we give ourselves to the Lord the purpose is that we get digested and become a part of the Lord's body, the body of Christ now if I don't want to be a part of the body of Christ on earth, I want to be myself, I want to stand up in the church as an individual all by myself, I don't want to be a part of the body I want to get some honor for myself and be someone myself, well then I'm not going to be fervent the Lord says I'd vomit you out, it's like you know if you eat a potato and the potato just refuses to get digested inside your stomach to become a part of your body what happens after a little while? the whole body brings it up and you vomit that potato out, you said you potato, if you didn't want to be a part of the body

then you got to get out, well that's all the Lord's saying, I will vomit you out of my mouth, that's serious, that means you had gone in and then you got thrown out amazing a lot of people have got to alter their theology to fit in with these teachings of scripture I will vomit you out of my mouth why? because you're lukewarm okay, therefore the Lord says, He doesn't give them up altogether, He warns them, I advise you buy from me now this is not something you get free, when it says buy you got to pay a price there are

some things we get free shall I tell you what? forgiveness of sins, you can't pay a single pie for that, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, that's free but there are certain things we've got to buy like the man who found a hidden treasure in a field and he sold everything he

had in order to buy it who found a pearl of great price and he had to sell all his pearls to buy it there are certain things in the Christian life you've got to buy for example, gold tried in the fire that speaks of a living faith that brings the divine nature to us gold is a picture of the divine nature and if I want the divine nature if I want to partake of the divine nature, I have to pay a price I have to forsake everything and white garments, that speaks of an external righteousness an inward divine nature and an external righteousness of purity in my life and in my speech and in my behavior you've got to pay a price for that and thirdly I sell to anoint your eyes, that speaks of the revelation of the Holy Spirit that when we read the word of God it's not a dry old book but the Holy

Spirit just opens it up he anoints our eyes with eyesalves so that I see the hidden meaning of scripture the Lord says you've got to pay a price for that and that's not the price of going to Bible school you don't get this eyesalve in the Bible school you get it from the Holy Spirit you've got to humble yourself forsake everything and say oh God open my eyes and the Lord says these are the real riches, the divine nature the righteousness in our external life the revelation of the Holy Spirit you want these? pay the price and you can have it verse 19, those whom I love I reprove and discipline that's a wonderful verse that as long as the Lord is disciplining us there's hope for us brother but when the Lord stops disciplining you, you're really in a sad condition when you can sin and you

don't get punished for it you know what that proves? it almost proves that God's given you up I'd feel terrible if I sin and God doesn't punish me in some way for it I'd say oh God have you given me up?

I did something so terribly wrong there and you just ignore it, who do we ignore? we don't ignore our own children's disobedience, we ignore the disobedience of that fellow's child who doesn't belong to me and God forbid that should happen to us that God treats us like somebody else's child but as those whom I love I discipline be zealous therefore and repent I want to be among those who are disciplined when I go wrong, I don't want to be in that crowd who are like illegitimate children whom God leaves alone those whom I love I reprove and discipline like a true father who loves his children, he'll do two things to his children if he loves them, he will discipline them with a rod and he will rebuke them with words that's the mark of love rebuke with words and discipline with a rod verse

20, behold I stand at the door and knock here's an amazing church where Jesus is outside the door have you noticed that? this is having his praise meetings and special meetings and everything else going on there and Jesus himself is outside the door, don't ever belong to a church like that, because if Jesus is outside the door, where should you be? outside the door with him, if you're his bride if the husband is outside, what business has the wife got to be inside? be outside, don't sit inside that, I stand at the door and knock but not everybody is going to listen if anyone, that means there may be one here, one there who hears my voice and opens the door I'll come into him I will dine with him, I'll fellowship with him and he with me he who overcomes again I will grant him to sit down

with me on my throne as I also overcame and sat down with my father on his throne, again we see that the way Jesus overcame we are to overcome too that teaches us that Jesus had to fight a real battle against sin when he was here on earth he overcame temptation, we are to overcome temptation, he overcame the devil we are to overcome the devil he overcame the glory and honor of this world we are to overcome the

glory and honor of this world and like he got a throne we can get a throne too if we suffer with him Romans 8 verse 17 says, if we suffer with him we can reign with him today I'm called to suffering in the future I can reign and then in conclusion he who has a year let him hear what the spirit says to the churches to all the churches, now I want to say brothers and sisters as we

conclude this study that these seven churches are pictures of seven different types of churches that have been in existence in all these twenty centuries seven types of assemblies that are in existence even today and if you look through them you see a progression downward I told you there were five churches whom the Lord rebuked and two churches whom the Lord commended let's look at these five churches the first one was Ephesus what was their problem they lost their devotion to Christ that is always the first step downward 2 Corinthians 11 3, I fear, let the serpent like he beguiled Eve take you away from the simplicity of devotion to Christ, the first step downwards, I lose my devotion to Christ then second Pergamum, what was the problem in Pergamum in Ephesus, the Nicolaitans the people

who ruled others didn't have power, we read they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans Revelation 2-6, but by the time it came to Pergamum, the Nicolaitans verse 15 of chapter 2 had power because they lost their devotion to Christ, what happened the priests and the pastors and the bishops and the popes took over sure no doubt about that and then and the teaching of Balaam but not publicly third step downwards in Thyatira we read in chapter 2 verse 14 that idolatry and immorality was only held by some people in Pergamum but by the time you come to Thyatira this has become a public teaching Jezebel has started preaching this publicly the abuse of the gifts of the spirit woman power carnal women getting power you see the steps downward, I have a few things against you chapter 2 verse 14 that

some of you hold the teaching of Balaam but in the next church it's taken over the church and then the next step downwards it started hypocrisy the sin is now covered up but still there are some things which are not dead verse 2, but by the time you come to Laodicea it is total death in spiritual pride and the call is now to the individual I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears my voice it's five steps downward from the loss of devotion to Christ to total spiritual death ending up as a pharisee in spiritual pride and in the midst of this you have these two churches that is Smyrna and Philadelphia and what are their good points Smyrna faithful in suffering and Philadelphia obedient to the commandments and brotherly love that's what God looks for faithfulness in suffering obedience

to the commandments and brotherly love

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