

Revelation Chapter 2

2:1. To the messenger [the pastor] of the church in Ephesus write: The One who has empowered [given authority to] the seven stars [pastors of the seven churches] in His right hand [hand of approval], the One who keeps walking [through-out the Church Age] in the midst of the seven golden lampstands [the Lord's support of the seven local churches of Asian Minor], communicates these things:

Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ κρατῶν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχνιῶν τῶν χρυσοῦν·

The Lord approves, authorizes and empowers those pastors who teach Bible doctrine in the local Church. There are two reasons why God provides pastors who teach doctrine. First to provide doctrine for those who desire it; second, to give the negative believers the opportunity to reject good Bible teaching and cause these disinterested believers to face the consequences of their decisions (grace before judgment).

We now have our first and most important historical trend of the Church Age. It is the communication and the reception of Bible doctrine. This is the basis for any historical uptrend or age of prosperity in history. There is no true prosperity apart from Bible doctrine. Though Satan has tried desperately as the ruler of this world to simulate true prosperity he always fails, it always collapses.

This verse is the verse of historical uptrend. While this is the devil's world, Jesus Christ controls history, however, in compatibility with human freedom. He does not contradict or coerce human volition. The sovereignty of God and the freewill of man are related, not contradictory. He controls history through positive volition toward truth choosing the divine plan instead of Satan's cosmic administration.

Therefore, there are no tragedies in histories. The reason why there are no tragedies in history is because people individually and collectively are the

products of their own decisions. Historical disaster results from wrong decisions which destroy future options.

Too often people individually and collectively make wrong decisions by trading their freedom for what appears to be security, or what appears to be pleasure. The exchange of freedom for security results in cosmic involvement and historical downtrend as noted by the rise of socialism, liberalism, the welfare state, redistribution of wealth, and other Satanic philosophies which offer security instead of freedom.

Therefore, there are no tragedies in history, only in drama. Historical disaster is related to certain cosmic trends such as “the demand for power exceeds the need for power.” Arrogance, the motivating evil of the cosmic system demands power and authority not authorized by the laws of divine establishment. Therefore, disaster occurs when arrogant people and nations fail to see their own inconsistencies, only the inconsistencies of others. Disaster occurs when bad decisions create bad environment known as degeneration. Disaster occurs when jealous people or envious nations fail to see their own sins and evil production, only the sins and evil production of others. Emphasis on peace and security at any price or at the price of freedom brings disaster.

Paul on his 2nd and 3rd missionary journey went to Ephesus which was located three miles from the coast of the Aegean Sea. It was opposite the Island of Samos and had a tremendous harbor at the mouth of the Cayster River. This city with a population of three hundred thousand was connected by roads to all the major cities of the province of Asia Minor.



On his 2nd missionary journey, Paul and Silas departed Antioch of Syria, went through Cilicia and Southern Galatia. At Lystra, a city of Galatia, Timothy joined the team. These three then went to Troas and then onto Macedonia where churches were established in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. Silas and Timothy were left in Macedonia while Paul having to leave Berea hastily went to Athens. Timothy delivers a report about the Thessalonians to Paul in Athens. From Athens, Timothy is sent back to the Thessalonians to encourage them through his teaching. Paul having left Athens, goes onto Corinth. While in Corinth, Timothy and Silas arrived bringing some funds from the Philippian Church and a report regarding the Thessalonica Church. After hearing the report, Paul wrote 1st Thessalonians circa 52 AD, and 2nd Thessalonians a short while later. After spending about 18 months in Corinth, Paul set sail for Ephesus for a short stop before returning to Antioch, Syria as per Acts 18:18-22, “Paul having remained [in Corinth] many days longer [18 months], took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for [Antioch] Syria, and with him were

Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea [the eastern seaport of Corinth], he [Paul] had his hair cut for he was keeping a vow [the Nazarite Vow]. They came to Ephesus, and he left them [Priscilla and Aquila] there. Now, he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, but taking leave of them, and saying, 'I will return to you again if God wills,' and he set sail from Ephesus. When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church [in Jerusalem], and went down to Antioch [Syria].” This ended officially his 2nd Missionary Journey.

After spending some time in Antioch, Syria, Paul began his third missionary journey. Since Paul will spend up to three years in Ephesus on this journey, it behooves us to know something about Ephesus. Ephesus was at the crossroads of the Roman Empire for it linked the orient with the west. Between its harbor and the main city was a boulevard seventy feet wide with beautiful pillars along its sides. Also, the city was famous for an open-air theater carved out of the side of a mountain and seated 25,000 people. The Temple of Artemis with 120 pillars, one of the Seven Wonders of the World was also located in this city before it was destroyed in 356 B.C. on the same day as the birth of Alexander the Great. (Each of these pillars, studded with gold, silver and various precious gems, was dedicated by a king or a famous prince and had been engraved with their famous deeds and accomplishments. Ephesus was also the Roman headquarters for the province of Asia. Thus, there was a Roman garrison, a governor and court there, and most importantly, it became the greatest church in the first few centuries of the Church Age.

Circa 1200 B.C. Ionians migrated to Ephesus so that by the time Paul had a ministry there, the people spoke primarily Ionic Greek, a very sophisticated form of Greek from which Attic Greek developed. So, an Ionian with a large vocabulary could communicate very well with this sophisticated language. This is just another reason why they became such a successful church. Ionic Greek became the most revolutionary, the most dynamic language of the ancient world.

Emotions are no substitute for thought. Some people will never truly orient to life because they have never done anything to increase their vocabulary. They do not realize that the greater the vocabulary, the greater is the potentiality for thought. And in the day in which we live, emotion has been substituted for increasing one's vocabulary, and so many want only to feel good at all costs which becomes the basis for alcohol dependance, drug addiction even attendance at churches which emphasize emotions. When you have an entire generation of people who cannot think, then you have a generation of people who live by their feelings, by their emotions and will degenerate to the point of self-destruction.

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he bumped into an unusual group of believers who had not yet received the assets of the Church Age, the 40 things which the person receives when he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Three of which were specifically mentioned in the "Jewish Pentecost" namely the Indwelling and Filling of the Spirit and the distribution of a spiritual gift.) So, though living in the Church Age, they were operating under the assets of the Old Testament. This situation occurred because they had believed in Christ before the Church Age, and so, in order to receive the experiential spiritual life of the Church Age, they would need to have a Pentecostal experience equivalent to the Jewish Pentecost which occurred in Jerusalem around 30 A. D. and the gentile facsimile which occurred under the authority of Peter as found in Acts 10.

The Jewish Pentecost of Scripture had two facsimiles namely the gentile and the Old Testament ones.

1. Though only the Jewish Pentecost occurred on the opening day of the Church Age, 30 A.D. on the Day of Pentecost, the facsimiles were given the same assets as were given to those who had become Christians on the Jewish Pentecost.

2. The Jewish Pentecost occurred in Jerusalem, the Gentile facsimile occurred in Caesarea, and the Old Testament facsimile occurred in Ephesus.

3. In all three locations, the Filling of the Holy Spirit was given which implies the Indwelling of the Spirit, along with spiritual gifts, and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

4. The above assets also imply the other assets given at salvation to these converts to Christianity in the Church Age.

5. The Jewish Pentecost demonstrated and proved that Jewish converts enter the royal family of God in the Church Age. The Gentile facsimile demonstrated and proved that gentile converts of the Church Age enter the royal family of God. The Old Testament facsimile demonstrated that the Old Testament believers who enter the Church Age are also made members of the royal family of God.

6. All other converts to Christianity in the Church Age even though not a part of the Jewish Pentecost, the Gentile and Old Testament facsimiles were and are entered into the royal family of God at the point of their salvation.

7. The Jewish Pentecost occurred circa June 6th, 30 A.D in Jerusalem. This story is found in Acts 2:1-15, and verses 29-41 “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. (2) Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. (3) They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. (4) All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues [languages] as the Spirit enabled them. (5) Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews [pilgrims] from every nation under heaven. (6) When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken [via the gift of languages] (7) Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans [uneducated Jews]? (8) Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? (Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia [Minor], (10) Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya

near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (11) (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God [the gospel] in our own tongues [via the gift of languages]!” (12) Amazed and perplexed, they [the pilgrims] asked one another, “What does this mean?” (13) Some [the residents of Jerusalem], however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” (14) Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem [the citizens of Jerusalem were not interested in the gospel], let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. (15) These people [disciples with the gift of languages] are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! [no one is drunk by this time] (29) “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch, David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. (30) But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. (31) Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. (32) God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. (33) Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. (34) For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand (35) until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” ’ (36) “Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” (37) When the people [the pilgrims] heard this, they were cut to the heart [from Common Grace] and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (38) Peter replied, “Change your thinking [about Christ and believe) and be baptized [after your salvation], every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ as a result of the forgiveness of your sins [pre-salvation sins forgiven at salvation]. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [the Filling of the Spirit] (39) The promise [of salvation] is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. (40) With many other words he warned them, and he pleaded with them, “Deliver yourselves from this corrupt generation. (41) Those who accepted his message [of salvation]

were baptized [water Baptism] and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

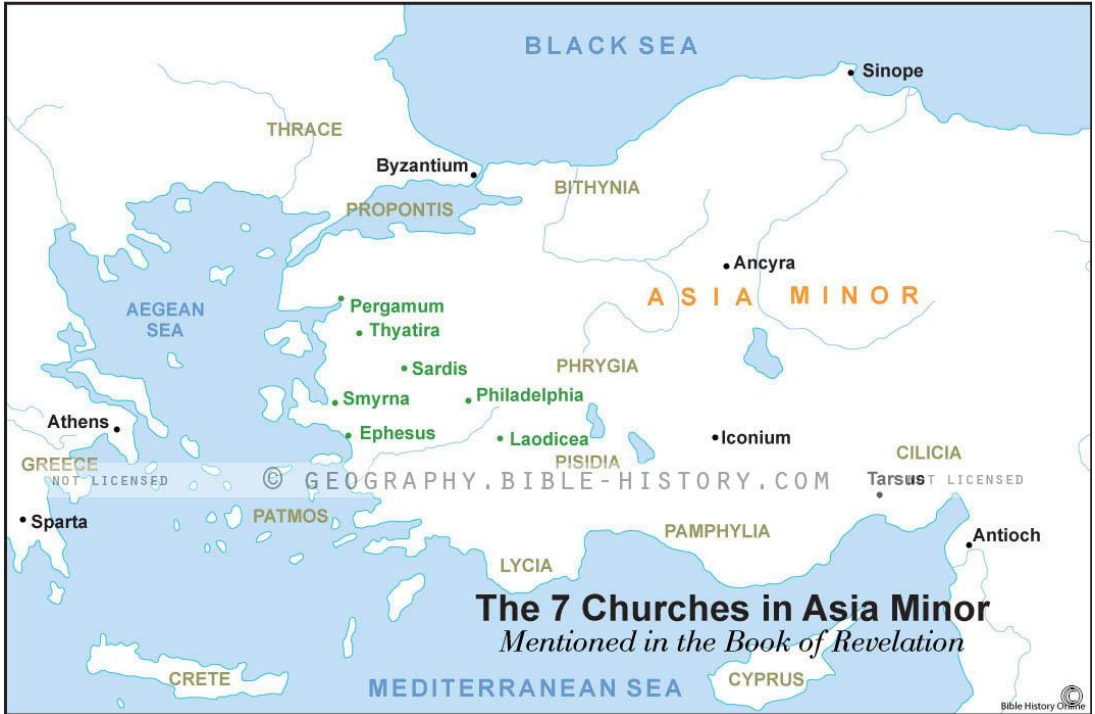
8. The Gentile Facsimile to the Jewish Pentecost took place in Caesarea. Acts 10:24 and verses 34-48, “The following day he [Peter] arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. (34) Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism (35) but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right [believes in Christ]. (36) You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of reconciliation through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. (37) You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, (38) how God [the Father] anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (39) “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, (40) but God [the Father] raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. (41) He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen [by faith in Christ] by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. (42) He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. (43) All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of [pre-salvation] sins through his person. (44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message [the Filling and Indwelling of the Spirit and spiritual gifts]. (45) The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. (46) For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, (47) “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have [on the Day of the Jewish Pentecost]. (48) So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.”

9. Now, for the story of the Pentecost which occurred under the authority of the Apostle Paul in Ephesus is found in Acts 19:1-9 which we might call the Old Testament facsimile of the Jewish Pentecost, “And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul [circa 54 AD] having passed through the upper coast [the highlands of northwest Asia Minor] came to Ephesus [from the northeast by following the valley of the Cayster River] and found certain disciples [Old Testament-believers who had believed in Christ under the ministry of John the Baptist]. (2) he [Paul] said to them, “Having believed did you receive the Holy Spirit [the Indwelling and the Filling of the Spirit]?” And they said to him, “We did not so much as hear whether there was [a ministry related to the] Holy Spirit.” (3) And he said to them, “Therefore, on what basis did you receive [water] baptism?” And they said, “On the basis of John's baptism” [to be distinguished from the pre-canon- baptism of the early church]. (4) Then Paul said, John baptized with a baptism characterized by a change of thinking [John only baptized those who had changed their mind about Christ and had believed], saying to the people that they should believe in the One coming after him [John, the Baptist], that is, in Jesus. (5) And having heard [what Paul had said], they were baptized [by God the Holy Spirit] into the person of the Lord Jesus [Spirit-Baptism]. (6) And as Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke with foreign languages [communicated the gospel in some foreign language] and prophesied [about the content of truth and material not yet put into book form: a communicational gift necessary since the Bible had not yet been completed and circulated]. (7) And there were in all about twelve men. (8) And going into the synagogue, he spoke with confidence for about three months, disputing [to argue from the reasonable standpoint of the Word] and persuading [influencing by presenting correct information] the doctrines concerning the kingdom of God [the kingdom of the regenerate]. (9) But when some [Jewish unbelievers in the synagogue] began to be hardened [by rejecting the gospel: the inceptive imperfect] and did not believe [in Christ], speaking evil of the Way [the Lord Jesus Christ as the way of salvation] before the multitude, he departed from them and separated the disciples [must separate from apostasy], disputing daily in

the school of Tyrannus [Tyrannus was a court physician in Rome who after his retirement founded a medical school in Ephesus].”

The Lord led Paul to Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey after Apollos had left for Corinth. The Lord used Priscilla and Aquila to help Apollos, not Paul (Acts 18:27-19:1). How was it that Priscilla and Aquila were residing in Ephesus? When Paul left Ephesus at the end of his 2nd missionary journey to return to Antioch, Priscilla and Aquila remained behind (Acts 18:19). A short time later Apollos, a Jewish Alexandrian came to Ephesus and began to teach boldly and eloquently in the synagogue. After hearing him, Priscilla and Aquila realized that Apollos was not up to date on church age doctrines. So, they pulled him aside privately and gave him a briefing regarding these doctrines. It was not necessary for Apollos to meet Paul at this time, but it was very important for him to have met Priscilla and Aquila.

The Holy Spirit led Paul in such a way on his 3rd missionary journey as to avoid the cities of the Lycus Valley. You see, when Paul came back to Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey, he did not travel on the main highway which ran from Galatia to Ephesus, the most direct route. (This would have taken him through the Lycus Valley in which were three cities: Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. (It was God’s will that his ministry to those in these cities would not be face to face but would be handled through written epistles such as Colossians and Philemon.)) Rather, after departing Galatia he traveled northwest as per Acts 18:23, “After spending some time in Antioch [Syria], Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.” So, when he was directed by the Lord to go to Ephesus, he merely came down the Cayster Valley from the northeast which is described by the phrase in this verse as, “the upper coast.” (The Cayster River flowed southwest into the harbor at Ephesus.)



At the end of the 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul makes a short stop at Miletus where he met the pastors of Ephesus for a farewell speech before departing for Jerusalem (Acts 20:17-38).

2:2. I [deity of Christ] have known [omniscience; foreknowledge] your modus operandi and vivendi both your strenuous effort [hardship, difficulty, pressure] and your perseverance [applying under the pressure of undeserved suffering], furthermore, you are not able to tolerate evil men, and you have tested those who call themselves apostles [the Gnostics], and they are not, and you found [via investigation and observation] them to be false;

Οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ τὸν κόπον καὶ τὴν ὑπομονὴν σου, καὶ ὅτι οὐ δύνη βαστάσαι κακούς, καὶ ἐπίρασας τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ οὐκ εἰσίν, καὶ εἶρες αὐτοὺς ψευδεῖς·

The mature believers, through thorough examination and analysis by means of their discussions with these teachers and leaders of Gnosticism discovered that Gnostic teachings and beliefs did not align with the true doctrines of Scripture.

Evil:

1. Evil is the policy of Satan which became operational when Ishah (after the Fall called Eve) and Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
2. Eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil temporarily destroyed their relationship with the Lord via the loss of their human spirits and the acquisition of a sin nature.
3. The sin nature is Satan's major agent for the implementation of his policy of Evil.

4. 'Good' outside of God's plan is Satanic and always leads to Evil. So, evil is more than 'good.' Evil combines good and sin to attack God's plan for mankind.

5. Evil attacks the Laws of Establishment, laws related to the individual, marriage, family, and nation. Evil also seeks to hinder the unbeliever from understanding and believing in Christ, and if he should believe then attacks his spiritual life.

6. Therefore, any attack on the individual's right of freedom (the right to succeed or fail), the right to privacy, the right to accumulate and own property and the right to protect oneself, wife, family, and property via firearms is evil. (Of course, the criminal has forfeited these rights since he in arrogance attacks the rights of others.)

7. A few examples of such violations are as follows: census taking, NSA spying on law abiding citizens, high taxes which attacks success for the purpose of redistribution to those who are failing economically which in turn attacks the right to fail, forced shutdown of businesses, forced mask wearing, social distancing, social security, national health plans, forced vaccinations, the seizure of weapons from law abiding citizens, preventing a woman in her first tri-semester from having an abortion, any attack upon marriage such as the husband's authority, autoerotism, fornication, adultery, communal living, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, bestiality etc., any attack upon the authority of parents over their children such as the parent's responsibility to administer proper corporal punishment to their children, forced chemo and vaccination of children etc., attack on nationalism through any form of disarmament, the failure to prepare young male citizens for warfare, the United Nations or any other form of internationalism that attacks nationalism etc.

8. Satan's attempt to blind the minds of unbelievers through religion, 2 Corinthians 4:4, "In whose case, the god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God." and the luring of Christians away from the execution of the spiritual life through legalism

and emotion is part of Satan's plan of evil as per 2 Corinthians 2:11, "so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan for we are not ignorant of his schemes."

9. Evil is the adverse trend of society which leads to the malfunction of society, the removal of the legitimate authority and ultimately the destruction of society.

10. Evil is Satan's policy and function as the ruler of this world. Evil is Satan's system by which he administers the rulership of this world. Satan cannot restrain sin as the ruler of this world and Satan's human good is inevitably parlayed both into sin and evil. So evil then is the modus operandi and the modus vivendi of Satan as the ruler of this world. Though Satan would like to bring in a world government under his authority, a rule sponsoring world peace and prosperity, he neither has the integrity nor the ability to accomplish this goal.

11. Evil is the function and innovation of that person who is consistently involved in the cosmic system.

12. The origin of evil is Satan's genius to devise a system namely Cosmic 1 & 2 to oppose God. So, evil originated in a higher form of creation; it originated in angelic creation. It originated with the greatest of all creatures to come from the hand of God, Satan himself.

2:3. Furthermore, you keep having perseverance [learning and applying under undeserved suffering from the time of Paul in 54 AD until the writing of John in 96 A.D.] **and have endured** [have passed most, if not all of the undeserved suffering tests] **because of My name's sake and have not fainted** [in their souls] **under pressure** [have not grown weary].

καὶ ὑπομονὴν ἔχεις, καὶ ἐβάστασας διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐ κεκοπίακες.

They endured under testing; first they passed Providential Preventive Suffering with its three tests namely people, thought and system testing. These tests are a warm-up for the different Momentum Tests.

Momentum testing is designed for two reasons. First to provide the believer with the opportunity to apply doctrine he has learned. Secondly, to accelerate the believer's momentum. Spiritual growth results from perception of Bible doctrine, but that growth is accelerated from the application of Bible doctrine to the categories of testing. All suffering is divided into three categories: suffering for testing and blessing, suffering for discipline and punishment and suffering caused by bad judgment. Momentum Testing or suffering is the subject in view here. In summary, no believer can fulfill the plan of God and glorify the Lord apart from momentum testing.

People testing. People become a major distraction to momentum when the believer gets his eyes on people through love or animosity. People testing comes in two categories. (1) In personal love or admiration, the object of your love often controls your life or provides for you unhappiness, unless you have attained spiritual self-esteem, spiritual autonomy, or spiritual maturity. In wanting to please the object of your personal love, you find yourself being a different person and not following your normal function. The reaction of a person in love is disillusion and bitterness followed by implacability and vindictiveness as one continues in the cosmic system. (2) In personal hatred or animosity, the object of your antagonism or irritation often has control of your life or happiness, unless you have advanced to spiritual adulthood. The solution to people testing is to get your eyes on God and His plan, and not on people.

When you become jealous, angry, bitter, vindictive, or implacable; when you are dissatisfied, antagonistic toward someone else, friend or stranger, lover or enemy; you surrender the control of your life to that person. You become a slave to the object of your antagonism or love. At the same time, you have no control over your life, canceling all the characteristics of spiritual self-esteem and spiritual autonomy.

Therefore, to make a personal love relationship work, the believer must use a virtue base totally outside himself. Otherwise, people will make him

miserable all his life. Only the advanced believer has the capacity for personal and impersonal love and so has control of his own life and he maintains control of his own happiness. Therefore, disappointment, disillusion, frustration, dissatisfaction with others cannot mar his happiness under the principle of misery derived from getting your eyes on people. Furthermore, once you attain spiritual adulthood, and you begin to function under the three categories of suffering for blessing, God becomes the source of your happiness. People can only become a distraction to the fulfillment of God's plan for your life when human relationship becomes more important to you than Bible doctrine.

Thought testing. Failing thought testing is generally related to the believer's negative volition toward doctrine. There are two different ways in which negative volition toward doctrine is developed: you are arrogant and preoccupied with yourself and therefore you do not take the intake of doctrine seriously; you are antagonistic toward its content, or are hypersensitive about some principle or some truth especially if it makes you look bad. You may be prejudiced against some area of truth due to some false teaching in the soul that causes you to resist doctrinal teaching that hits that area of prejudice.

Thought testing occurs at all stages of Christian experience, but its direct application as a part of suffering for blessing in momentum testing is the subject here. It occurs in spiritual self-esteem when providential preventative suffering provides some preliminary thought testing. In spiritual autonomy, momentum testing includes thought testing. In spiritual maturity, evidence testing provides definite thought testing. To pass thought testing at any stage of the Christian life, the believer must have the following. (1) Pertinent metabolized doctrine to meet thought testing at a given stage. (2) The filling of the Spirit at the time of thought testing to make the correct application of metabolized doctrine. (3) This means the ability not to be distracted by false issues or to be misled by wrong priorities.

Mental attitude in the Christian life is the function of your thinking and the pressure of thought conflict in your soul. What you really are at any given time is what you think. All of us are constantly changing in our thinking. This can mean instability in life. Therefore, the real you is the thought content of your soul. Proverbs 23:7, “As he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, ‘Eat and drink,’ but in his right lobe [thinking] he is not with you.” This verse uses hypocrisy as an illustration of the fact that we are what we think, not what we do, and not necessarily what we say. A thought can make or break you, depending on the nature of the thought. It’s either thinking derived from metabolized doctrine in your right lobe or thinking derived from the propaganda of Satan. One will improve you; one will break you apart.

Galatians 6:3, “If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” Here is a thought that will destroy you. 1 Corinthians 10:12, “Therefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall.” Since thinking is such a crucial issue, there are mandates throughout the Bible regarding thought testing. Romans 12:2, “Stop being conformed to this world [age], but be transformed by the renovation of your thought, that you may prove what the will of God is, namely, the good [spiritual self-esteem], the well-pleasing [spiritual autonomy], the complete [spiritual maturity].” Romans 12:3, “For I say through the grace which has been given to me to everyone who is among you, stop thinking of self in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but think in terms of sanity for the purpose of being rational without illusion as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from doctrine.”

System testing. Characteristics and categories: The characteristics of a system are three-fold. (1) Authority. (2) Policy. (3) Objective. The personnel under the authority can face system testing. The policy of management can also cause system testing. The objective of the organization can cause system testing as well. There are seven general categories of different systems. (1) Business organizations, large or small. (2) Military services. (3) Professional organizations, such as medical

organizations, law firms, engineering companies, law enforcement. (4) Ecclesiastical organizations, such as local churches, denominations, cults, theological seminaries, Christian service organizations. (5) Athletic organizations, such as professional, college, high school teams. (6) Divine institutions, like marriage and family. (7) Government: national, state, or local.

There are good and bad organizations, systems, leadership, policies, and objectives. Your system testing may be from either category, good or bad. Therefore, there are many areas of system testing related to people, policy, and purpose of any organization. Because no one is perfect and because everyone has an old sin nature, personality, policy, and purpose conflicts will inevitably exist. Generally, there are three areas of system testing. (1) The authority may give unfair and unjust treatment, as from management, the boss, supervisor, senior officer, coach, professor, government bureaucrat, husband, parents, etc. Favoritism on the part of management can inevitably lead to personality conflict in an office. (2) The policy may be unreasonable, or it may conflict with normal living or with your own personal norms and standards, or it may be a stupid though still enforceable policy. (3) The objectives may be unreasonable or even impossible because of lack of ability in the personnel trying to fulfill them. Or there may be a conflict between your personal life and the objectives.

Sooner or later in life someone is going to be unfair to you and if that some is not just an individual but an individual in a system then you have system testing. The believer becomes the victim of a rotten system which requires him to apply impersonal love plus the three stages of the faith-rest drill and or some other doctrine. If not, he fails system testing.

The world is filled with bad systems which seek to destroy the integrity and the honor of individuals. Many organizations become rotten and corrupt when the leadership of such a system is rotten or corrupt through involvement in the cosmic system. Many illustrations exist, e.g. the judicial system where the judges are sociologists instead of interpreters of the law; they favor criminals while ignoring the victims.

System testing distracts the believer from spiritual momentum when he becomes preoccupied with himself, when he resents human injustice to the point of self-pity, when he becomes bitter and full of hatred and implacability, when he seeks revenge instead of leaving the problem in the Lord's hands.

Disaster testing is when the believer faces either personal or collective disaster or both simultaneously. The Christian must understand that these tests are necessary if he is going to gain the necessary strength to continue his advance. The Christian becomes strong when he successfully goes through the furnace of suffering. Unfortunately, many Christians react to disaster testing rather than understanding its necessity.

Personal disaster testing is designed as suffering for blessing for acceleration of momentum. Historical disaster, collective disaster, or national disaster testing is related to the bad decisions of others in which you are involved by association. For example, a lot of people suffer unfairly when the president decides to implement socialism. There are at least six characteristics of disaster testing. (1) Pain, physical or mental pain and anguish. (2) Crime, where you are the victim. (3) Persecution (not paranoia). (4) Privation, meaning hunger, thirst, exposure, fatigue. (5) Loss of loved ones, property, success, money, etc. (6) Disease and handicaps.

Historical downtrend is a maximum number of people in a given area living in the cosmic system. In this situation, there must be maximum faith, maximum spiritual self-esteem, and maximum spiritual maturity if you are going to pass the disaster test.

Prosperity testing. We must all face the prosperity test before we can attain maturity. God will provide in logistical grace some system of prosperity, some system of human recognition, something that can be construed as prosperity. Does that change our scale of values and make the learning and applying of doctrine secondary? If so, we will flunk this test and this failure will prevent us from cracking the maturity barrier.

There are two categories of prosperity testing. (1) Individual prosperity testing, in which some form of success challenges the top priority of doctrine. (2) Collective prosperity testing, in which a city, state, nation, or group becomes very prosperous. The believer sharing in that prosperity becomes distracted from doctrine, lured away from the protocol plan of God. The pursuit of pleasure excludes the priorities of integrity both in establishment and in the Christian life. Collective prosperity testing challenges the society to choose between truth and hedonism. Every believer must pass the prosperity test before he can achieve spiritual maturity. Prosperity is the most subtle distraction to the spiritual life.

The cosmic system can offer you success, sex, fame, wealth, promotion, social and professional prosperity, but all these are without happiness and you make your own misery. Passing this test consolidates the believer's scale of values, making them consistent with the protocol plan of God, resulting in stabilizing the right priorities of life, and giving capacity to enjoy prosperity. Passing this test means that the mature believer receives God's greatest prosperity, the greater blessings of time and eternity.

Regarding these tests namely people, thought, system, prosperity and disaster testing, many Christians in the Ephesian Church then took and successfully passed Evidence Testing. They were able to accomplish this since their first love was for God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ "because of My name's sake."

Paul spent nearly 3 years in Ephesus circa 53-56 A.D. during his 3rd missionary journey which teaching gave them a tremendous understanding of the spiritual life. We know that he established many churches in this area for he called the pastors of Ephesus together at Miletus and gave a farewell message to them before closing out his 3rd missionary journey.

In circa 61 A.D., Paul wrote to the Ephesians from his house arrest in Rome teaching many advance doctrines and dealing with some of their failures regarding impersonal love, chapter 4, regarding marriage, chapter

5, and children, and slaves in chapter 6. Also, in this last chapter, he explained the basics of the spiritual life via military analogy. Since many in this church became mature believers, it is quite evident that they heeded the admonition of Paul. They went all the way to maximum glorification of God. They started out by passing Providential Preventive Suffering, then Momentum Testing and finally Evidence Testing.

2:4. But I hold [aoristic present is very Koine] **this against you, that you have abandoned** [deserted] **your most important** [first in degree] **love** [their love for God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ].

ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφῆκες.

Many of the Christians of Ephesus heeded Paul's admonition in his epistle to them. However, roughly 45 years later when John wrote, some had lost their momentum by leaving their first love, their love for God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. However, when they, the churches in Ephesus were admonished by John in 96 A. D., they recovered and contributed more than any other area toward the golden age of the Roman Empire. So, this church along with many other great churches brought about the golden age of the Roman Empire from 96 A.D. to 180 A.D. under the emperors, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius, and Marcus Aurelius. However, many of the Christians in the Roman Empire including the Ephesians failed to pass the prosperity test ushered in by the Golden Age of the Roman Empire which failure brought about a decline in the Empire which decline dovetailed with the rule of the evil Emperor, Commodus.

2:5. Therefore, recall to mind from what state you have fallen [intensive perfect], **and change your thinking and execute the most important production** [of the spiritual life]; **or else I will come to you** [in divine discipline] **and will remove** [potential indicative] **your lampstand out from its place** [the local Church franchise] **if** [3rd Class] **you do not change your thinking** [by using the Recovery Procedure and reestablishing your priorities].

μνημόνευε οὖν πόθεν πέπτωκας, καὶ μετανόησον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποίησον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι καὶ κινήσω τὴν λυχνίαν σου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτῆς, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσης.

The stars give-out light just as good ministers communicate the light of the Word. Churches where Bible doctrine is taught and mastered are golden lampstands which bring light to the world. In summary, the stars send out light from heaven. The lampstand sends out light from the burning fuel of Bible doctrine and sheds true light upon the events of history.

When the pastor no longer teaches the Word of God as a star giving out light, he will be removed from the right hand of the Lord, and the members of the congregation are no longer interested in learning the Word, the golden lampstand as per Revelation 2:1 is removed from history.

Daily decisions of the believer determine the historical uptrend or downtrend of the client nation to God. The uptrend of history is related then to the believer's use of divine power namely the two power options. The downtrend of history occurs when the believer rejects God's power for the cosmic system of Satan.

2:6. At least [yet] you have this in your favor namely that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which deeds I also hate [an anthropathism expressing the Lord's attitude toward evil].

ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔχεις, ὅτι μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν, ἃ καγὼ μισῶ.

They do not hate the Nicolaitans, but their deeds. The Nicolaitans are the licentious branch of Gnosticism. They are the great enemy of the Church in the 1st, 2nd and even third century. It is related to the phallic cult in Revelation 2:14, 15 which Balaam taught Balak in order to undermine Israel in the Old Testament. The leader of the cult was given the Bible name of Jezebel (Revelation 2:20). The Nicolaitan-Christians compromised with paganism.

The important issue here is that Christians must distinguish between people and their weaknesses. None of us are perfect. Under impersonal love, the Ephesian believers did not hate the Nicolaitans (conqueror of the people) who attracted people through its licentiousness and religious function as it was connected to idolatry. (Balaam means destroyer of the people.)

2:7. ‘He who has an ear [capable of perception, but involves motivation and volition], let him hear what the Spirit communicates to the churches. To him who is a winner [overcomes], I will authorize him [predictive future: I will give him the privilege] to eat from the Tree of Life which is in the Paradise of God.’

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ.

Connected with your ears is a principle called volition. You can learn anything you want to even though it may take you a little while. The ear represents the grace system of perception. Hearing has always been one of the major systems of perspicacity. God has provided a grace system for the perception of Bible doctrine, a system where IQ is not an issue, only positive volition and consistent decisions to learn doctrine; this goes far beyond merely hearing sound. It deals with motivation and volition and your desire to learn, your teachability. What you learn today motivates you for learning something in addition to that tomorrow. Doctrine is built on doctrine and each doctrine learned becomes motivation for learning the rest.

The Tree of Life was associated with perfect happiness in the environment of the Garden, as well as the perpetuation of Adam and his wife’s relationship with God in the Garden, Genesis 2:9, “Out of the ground, the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” Genesis 3:22, “Then the Lord God

said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil, and now, he might stretch-out his hand and take from the Tree of [everlasting] Life and eat and live forever.’ When man sinned and was driven out of the Garden, he was cut off from the Tree of Life, Genesis 3:24, “So, He drove the man out and at the east of the garden of Eden, He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the Tree of Life.” The tree of life is not seen again by man until the eternal state, Revelation 2:7. Revelation 22:1, 2, “Then he [the angel] showed me the River of the Water of Life [the first monument of eternal life], bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God [the Father] and from the throne of the Lamb [the Lord’s throne in the New Jerusalem] (2) in the middle of the street of the city [was the River of the Water of Life]; so, on either side of the river, the Tree of Life [the 2nd monument of eternal life] with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. [a memorial that there is no conflict between nations in the eternal state] Revelation 22:14, “Happy are those who wash [perfective present: the use of the Recovery Procedure starting at salvation and continuing throughout their lives] their robes in order that they might have the privilege to the Tree of Life and that they may enter the city [of the New Jerusalem] by the gates.”

Paradise:

1. A Persian word describing a garden where the Parsi partied.
2. The king’s garden for magnificent parties associated with great happiness was called paradise.
3. In the New Jerusalem, God will have his own Paradise Club with beautiful gardens for winners only.

At this point, it is important for us to understand why Adam rejected the Tree of Life in the garden for the woman outside of the garden. By creation, man was designed for happiness, and prosperity which was to be perpetuated indefinitely as long as he was positive toward God’s plan. The

prohibition to not eat from the fourth tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was the only test of obedience. Only disobedience to this one command could destroy their happiness and relationship with God. The tree of life, of course, combined capacity for happiness with immortality (perfect happiness and immortality go together) and could only be lost by a negative action on the part of the man and the woman. In other words, the Tree of Life would be useless to man in the status of spiritual death. And since man died spiritually when he ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree, it was absolutely, necessary that the Tree of Life be removed until a future time, i.e. eternity.

Unhappiness breeds unhappiness namely via cursing by association. The believer associated with unhappy people is vulnerable to unhappiness. Therefore, believer, beware that in your association with unhappy people you do not reject or ignore your source of happiness which is God. Since unhappiness is contagious, separation if possible is the best course of action. However, in many cases, like marriage, home life, business association, physical separation is not possible. (Children should never separate from their parents.) In such cases, the only way the believer can survive is to feed on what is comparable to the Tree of Life, the daily perception of Bible doctrine.

In summary, some situations are endured with happiness while other circumstances simply demand separation. Sorting this out, however, requires maximum knowledge of doctrine for the wisdom to do so. The believer who does this consistently will become a winner and will be rewarded by access to the Tree of Life in eternity, the ultimate in happiness forever and ever.

Because the tree of life is related to the subject of human happiness. The book of Proverbs has something to say about the subject, Proverbs 3:13-18, “How happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding [of doctrine]. (14) For its profit is better than the profit of money, and its gain than fine gold. (15) she” [the personification of Bible doctrine] is more precious than jewels, and nothing can compare with her

[Bible doctrine]. (16) Long life [a full life] is in her right hand, in her left hand are riches and honor [rewards in time]. (17) Her ways [the ways of doctrine] are pleasant ways, and all her paths are prosperity. (18) She is a tree of life [capacity of life] to those who take hold of her [doctrine], and happy are all who hold her fast [doctrine resident in the soul].” In time, learning Bible doctrine is as close as we can get to the tree of life. Those who persist in the perception of doctrine in time will eat from the tree of life in eternity.

Proverbs 11:11-31, “By the blessing of the upright [the mature believer] a city is exalted [blessing by association via a pivot], but by the mouth of the wicked one [the cosmic believer] it is destroyed. (12) He who despises his neighbor [hatred] is destitute of doctrine, but a man of understanding minds his own business [function of the doctrine of privacy]. (13) He who functions as a talebearer [a violation of privacy] reveals secrets, but he who is faithful of spirit conceals the matter. (14) Where there is no guidance [from doctrine], the people fail; but where there is no lack of leadership there is deliverance. (15) He who is a co-signer of a note for a stranger [attempting to gain friendship] will suffer for it, but he who hates co-signing is secure. (16) A grace woman acquires integrity [honor], a strong man in doctrine attains happiness. (17) The grace man benefits his own soul with happiness, but the cruel person [cosmic believer] troubles his own flesh. (18) The wicked [the cosmic believer] earns the wages of a lie, but he who sows righteousness has a true reward. [The true reward is the tree of life.] (19) The truly righteous believer lives [a fulfilling life], but he who pursues evil [the cosmic believer] goes to his death [doctrine of the sin unto death]. (20) The Lord detests men of distorted right lobes [an unhappy person], but the upright in the way [the believer positive toward doctrine] are his delight. (21) Be sure of this, the evil will not go unpunished; but the descendants of the righteous will be delivered [there is blessing by association]. (22) Like a ring of gold in a pig’s snout, so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion [or wisdom]. (23) The desire of the righteous is only good, but the expectation of the evil [the cosmic believer] is wrath. [In other words, they make decisions that bring disaster upon themselves.] (24) One man gives generously yet gains even more;

another man is stingy and comes to poverty. (25) A generous man will prosper, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. [Great believers are happy and generous.] (26) People curse the man who hoards grain; but blessing crowns the one who is willing to sell. (27) He who seeks good finds grace blessing; but evil comes to him who seeks it. (28) He who trusts in riches will fall, but the righteous will prosper like the green leaf. (29) He who causes sorrow to his family will inherit the wind, and the fool will be the servant of the wise in the right lobe. (30) The fruit of the mature believer is a tree of life [happy people witness properly], and he who is wise, wins souls [wisdom comes first]. (31) If the righteous will be rewarded on earth [the mature believer who has happiness on earth]; how much more the wicked [the cosmic believer] and the sinner will receive discipline.”

Proverbs 13:10-16, “Through arrogance comes nothing but strife [arrogance means unhappiness], but wisdom is found in those who take advice. (11) Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow. (12) Hope deferred makes the heart [right lobe] sick; but desire fulfilled is a tree of life. [In other words, you will never find happiness through your hopes in getting something you associate with happiness. Your happiness will only come from feeding on the tree of life that is capacity from the intake of Bible doctrine]. (13) The one who despises the word will pay for it, but the one who respects the mandate of God will be rewarded. (14) The teaching of the wise [communicator] is the fountain life, turning a person from the snares of death. (15) Good understanding of doctrine wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful does not endure. (16) Every wise person acts out of knowledge of doctrine, but a fool [the cosmic believer] exposes his folly.”

Proverbs 15:1-5, “A gentle answer [a happy and wise person doesn’t react angrily when he is challenged or when someone is being unkind] turns away wrath, but harsh words [of a person without soul-capacity] stir up anger. (2) The tongue of a wise person makes doctrine acceptable, but the mouth of a fool [cosmic believer] gushes folly. (3) The eyes of the Lord are everywhere [the omniscience of God], keeping watch on the evil and

on the good. (4) A soothing [healing] tongue is a tree of life. [The healing tongue is the teaching of doctrine which is the tree of life], but perversion in it [the tongue] crushes the spirit [distorting doctrine crushes the spirit]. (5) A fool despises his father's discipline, but he who regards correction demonstrates prudence.”

2:8. And to the messenger [a reference to the pastor] of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν·

Smyrna, a large Ionian city on the west coast of Asia Minor was at the head of the Gulf of Smyrna which reached 30 miles inland from the Aegean Sea, and just 40 miles north of Ephesus. Anciently, it was one of the finest cities of Asia and was called “the lovely—the crown of Ionia—the ornament of Asia.” Because of its magnificent port, it became a prosperous trading center. Along with Ephesus and Pergamum, Smyrna became one of the most brilliant and prosperous cities of Anotalia (Asian Minor). The population of the city at the time that John wrote was about 200,000. To its credit, it was the only one of the seven churches in Revelation 2 & 3 which received no word of reproach from the Lord.

Polycarp, the pastor who succeeded John was a member of John's ministry. After the death of John, he went to Smyrna where he was accepted as the pastor. It was during a pagan festival that Polycarp was brought before the Roman proconsul, Philip in 160 A.D, who tried to force him to revile and deny Christ. Polycarp refused by answering, “For eighty-six years I have been a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my Lord and King, my only Savior?” Polycarp was then seized and burned at the stake.

There are four meanings to the phrase, “The first and the last”.

1. Jesus Christ as “the first” is eternal God, coequal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. As eternal and infinite God, Jesus Christ pre-existed history and was the original creator of all things (John 1:3). Jesus Christ in hypostatic union also concludes history as “the last”. He began history by personally creating man namely Adam. And as the last Adam He will personally conclude history with the destruction of the earth and stellar space. Even though history is the record of man’s thoughts, motives, decisions, and actions, it is Jesus Christ, the first and the last, who controls history. Therefore, there are two sources of judgements and disasters in history: the sovereign decisions of our Lord Jesus Christ and the erroneous decisions of mankind.

2. The second meaning has to do with the two great prophecies of history. They are the first and second advents. So, many prophecies in the Old Testament deal with the details of our Lord’s first advent, all of which are a part of “the first.” Everything pertaining to the First Advent was fulfilled prior to the beginning of the Church Age namely the virgin birth, the incarnation, the hypostatic union, our Lord’s residence and function in the prototype spiritual life, His resultant impeccability, His saving work on the cross, His death on the cross, His physical resurrection, ascension, and session, etc. Therefore, Christ as the first is related to the first advent and the strategic victory of the cross. Christ as the last is related to His victory at the second advent. The first and the last, then, is a title of our Lord Jesus Christ as the prophetic key to human history.

3. The third meaning of our subject by application refers to the uptrends and downtrends of history depending upon the decisions of Christians. Christ is either first or last to every believer dependent upon whether the believer is executing the spiritual life or living in the Cosmic System. In other words, as goes the believer in Christ so goes human history in any generation. When the believer puts Christ first in his scale of values, it contributes to the uptrend of history; when the believer puts Christ last in his scale of values it contributes to the downtrend of history. Therefore, “the First and Last” emphasizes the function of human volition in history especially that of the Christian.

4. “First and last” also by application refers to the source of both temporal and eternal blessing for the believer. Our first blessing relates to time while our last blessing relates to eternity. “First and last” is the fulfilment of the Christian way of life resulting in our Lord distributing Escrow Blessings in time and eternal blessing and reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

The phrase, “who was dead, and has come to life” views the resurrection of our Lord in its entirety but regards it from the viewpoint of existing results: the continuation of human history past the first advent. This continuation of history is the subject of the book of Revelation. Jesus Christ produces the action of the verb through His physical, literal, bodily, resurrection from the dead.

2:9. I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich *spiritually*), **and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not** [true Jews as believers in Christ] **but are a synagogue of Satan** [These racial religious Jews were very antagonistic toward the believers in Smyrna].

Οἶδά σου τὴν θλίψιν καὶ τὴν πτωχείαν, ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ, καὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτούς, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ Σατανᾶ.

“I know” refers here to our Lord’s divine knowledge or omniscience regarding the status quo of this second church which contributed so much to the blessing of the Roman Empire as a client nation where over several hundreds of years, millions of people were led to the Lord Jesus Christ and subsequently thousands advanced to spiritual maturity.

Smyrna was a wealthy city and many believers were, or had been, financially extremely prosperous. There was a wealthy Jewish coalition in Smyrna who delighted not only in eliminating job opportunities for these Christians, but also delighted in destroying Christians in business enterprise by using devious means to do so. All the same, under Logistical

Grace Provision, these believers flourished spiritually, the only wealth that really matters.

2:10. Stop fearing [They were aware of the pending persecution.] **that which you are about to suffer. Note that the devil is about to cast some of you into prison in order that you may be tested, and you will have special persecution ten times** [ten historical persecutions from 96-305 AD]. **Keep on being faithful even until death, and I will give you the Wreath of Life.**

μηδὲν φοβοῦ ἃ μέλλεις πάσχειν. ἰδοὺ μέλλει βάλλειν ὁ διάβολος ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰς φυλακὴν ἵνα πειρασθῆτε, καὶ ἔξετε θλίψιν ἡμερῶν δέκα. γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς.

The imperative mood in this verse with the negative forbids the continuation of fear, their initial reaction to suffering, pressure, and disaster.

There is a principle which David enucleated in Psalm 56:3 when he said, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in you [trusting in the Lord after recovery of fellowship].” In other words, he would come around to being able to think under pressure. And even in the greatest of pressures, the pressure with regard to death: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me.” This principle is the basis for establishing the faith-rest drill as the concept in applying doctrine under suffering even death. Freedom from fear means that the believer has the potential to think under pressure. And the ability to think means the ability to concentrate. The two of them together mean courage, for courage is thinking and concentrating under pressure.

When John wrote this in 96 AD the persecution of Christians had begun under the Emperor Domitian. From Domitian in 96 A.D. to Diocletian in 305 A.D., there would be persecution of Christians 10 times

The Ten Persecutions:

1. Domitian: 81-96 A.D
2. Marcus Aurelius: 161-180
3. Commodus: 180-192
4. Septimius Severus: 193-211
5. Maximinus Thrax: 235-238
6. Decius: 249-251
7. Gallus: 251-253
8. Valerian: 253-260
9. Aurelian: 270-275
10. Diocletian: 284-305

These persecutions prepared the Christians to evangelize the world, especially the barbarians. As Tertullian put it, “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church”. The greatest missionary movement of all time in history would be sown in the blood of martyrs throughout the entire Roman empire over a period of two hundred years. Many of these people are going to die in the most horrible way, and yet they are the basis of one of the greatest counters to Satan’s administration of the rulership of this world that history has ever known.

The first of the ten persecutions occurred during the reign of Domitian from 81-96 A.D., the last of the Flavian Emperors. It is believed that because he was jealous of his older brother, Titus, he had him murdered. In his arrogance and psychosis, he announced his own deification and demanded that his subjects treat him as a god. As a god, he degraded the senate, persecuted Christians, and banished John to the Isle of Patmos in 95 A.D. His wife, Domitia Longina possibly bittered by the untimely death of her son and tired of Domitian’s insanity, arranged to have him stabbed to death in 96 A.D. From the divine viewpoint, he died because of his persecution of John, just as Nero died for his execution of Paul. Furthermore, the Lord who controls history, determined that it was time to begin the Golden Age of the Roman Empire.

The second great persecution occurred long after in 161-180 AD under Marcus Aurelius who was a fine unbeliever, the last of the good Antonine emperors. He was austere from his stoic beliefs but was very philanthropic in his domestic policies. It was in AD 161 that the Parthians attacked the eastern frontier and while they were driven back, the soldiers who fought them brought back from the area across the Euphrates, the Asiatic plague and millions in the empire died. Now, since Christians would not worship the pagan Roman gods and seek help from them, they were blamed for the plague. Actually, the Lord was removing the dead wood from the Roman Empire in order to reinvigorate it. So, it wasn't the gods bringing punishment, but God, the Lord himself. The Romans and Marcus Aurelius were right about it being a judgment from the heavens, but the blame was misplaced for it was not the fault of Christianity as such. Even so, Marcus Aurelius began a great persecution of the Christians. The Lord used the emperor as His agent to remove reversionistic Christians and to test the great ones. After Marcus died at the age of 59 in 180 A.D. possibly poisoned by his son in what is now Vienna.

The third persecution, 180-192 AD, was under the Emperor Commodus, the son of the former emperor. Marcus Aurelius had great wisdom but began losing it when he began his persecution of the Christians. His legal adoption of his evil son demonstrated a complete loss of wisdom. Never had any Antonine Emperor ever adopted his natural progeny if they had one. Rather, they had always picked a highly qualified person for adoption and succession. Even though Marcus Aurelius made a terribly bad decision in adopting his own son, it would be used of the Lord to punish SPQR (Senatus Populusque Romanus) for a period of some twelve years. The eighties were the worst period of the first century. When Commodus became emperor at age nineteen, he instituted a reign of terror which the empire has not seen since the time of Nero's degeneracy. Some examples should suffice. Commodus had great physical strength and would appear in the arena dressed as a gladiator killing unarmed opponents. Often, he appeared in the streets of Rome wearing a lion's skin and carrying a club and called himself Hercules. Walking through the streets, he would club to death citizens to demonstrate his Herculean

power. Not even the Senators were safe from his demonic cruelty for he would enter the senate and slaughter until the Senate floor was covered with blood. The persecution of the Christians was unspeakable, until Martia, a believer became his mistress. When it was discovered that Commodus intended to kill her and all the palace attendants, they hired Narcissus, a wrestler to strangle him to death. Thus, ended the third of the ten special persecutions.

The fourth special persecution was under Severus who reigned from 193-211 AD. He was a superstitious African who in 202 adopted an anti-Christian policy which forbade Christians to witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. It promised death to any Christian who would talk about the Lord Jesus Christ and converts were to be punished as soon as they were discovered. The persecutions first broke out in Alexandria. Mobs of Egyptians robbed, raped and murdered in the name of destroying Christianity. Among the Christian martyrs in Alexandria were Felicity and Perpetua of Carthage; these two were famous for their stand for the Lord before they were horribly killed.

The fifth persecution, 235-238 AD, was under Maximus (Maximinus) Thrax. He was an eight-foot giant of tremendous physical strength and was as brutal as he was strong. When he became emperor, he ordered all Christian leaders to be put to death or exiled. Pontian, the orthodox head of the Church of Rome, was deported to Sardinia and forced to work in the mines there. He eventually died of the privations and inhuman treatment in the mines. Origen took refuge in Cappadocia where the Roman legions functioned and ignored the orders of the emperor. One day, when Maximus Thrax stepped out of his chariot, some people came out of the bushes ambushed and killed him.

The sixth persecution was under Trajanus Decius. Before Decius's reign, persecution of the Christians in the empire had been sporadic and local, but about the beginning of January 250 A.D., he issued an edict ordering all citizens to perform a religious sacrifice in the presence of commissioners. Thus, he is responsible for instituting the first organized

persecution of Christians throughout the empire. A large number of Christians defied the government's mandate to perform a religious sacrifice, for which the bishops of Rome, Jerusalem, and Antioch lost their lives, and many others were arrested. Evil will not go unpunished by the Lord. So, Decius and his son were killed in battle fighting the Goths.

The seventh was under Emperor Gallus who reigned from 251-253. He continued the persecution started by Decius until he was murdered in August of 253.

Number eight on the list was Valerian 253-260 A.D. His persecution of Christians throughout the empire was hindered by a Persian invasion. This forced him to battle the Persians. In the battle, he was taken captive by the Persian Emperor Shapur I after the Battle of Edessa, becoming the first Roman emperor to be captured as a prisoner of war, causing shock and instability throughout the Roman Empire. As a captive, he was horribly tortured by being skinned alive. When the Roman envoys came to sue for peace they were presented with the skin of Valerian. As a result of this, the Christians had peace for ten years.

The ninth on the list was Lucius Domitianus Aurelian who ruled the Roman Empire for almost five years, from the fall of 270 to the fall of 275 A. D. The accomplishments of this reign far outweigh its brevity. Aurelian reunited an Empire that was on the brink of permanent fragmentation, while also defeating a wearying assortment of Germanic incursions. He also found time to build fortifications for Rome herself, and create a series of economic reforms, including a reorganization of the imperial mint. Unfortunately, he also persecuted the Church. Felix, bishop of Rome was the first martyr to Aurelian's petulancy, being beheaded on the twenty-second of December, 274 A. D. Agapetus, a young gentleman, who sold his estate, and gave the money to the poor, was seized as a Christian, tortured, and then beheaded at Praeneste, a city within a day's journey of Rome. Even though Aurelian was successful in battle, certain officers conspired to kill him, the reason being unclear. While the army was camped, Mucapor, a Praetorian officer and several other officers caught

Aurelian alone, and murdered him. The Christian writers Eusebius and Lactantius believe that Aurelian was planning to persecute their faith even more, and thus he incurred God's disfavor. He defeated many of Rome's enemies, but he could not defeat the wall of fire around the Christians.

Diocletian reigned from 284-305 AD. Apart from his persecution of Christians, the tenth persecution, he was an effective ruler. He was a Dalmatian, the son of a freed slave. He was a strong worshipper of the sun god, Jupiter, and under the influence of one of his cohorts he started persecuting believers. In February of 303, he sought to completely root Christianity out of the empire. In doing so, he ordered all copies of the Bible surrendered and burned, all churches destroyed, all meetings abolished. Christians were deprived of their civil rights, including the holding of public office. Weakened by illness, Diocletian left the imperial office on 1 May 305, and became the first Roman emperor to abdicate the position voluntarily. He lived out his retirement in his palace on the Dalmatian coast, tending to his vegetable gardens.

With the retirement of Diocletian, Galerius took his place and continued persecution of Christians until the pressure was too great and he issued reluctantly an edict of toleration which cancelled all persecutions of believers and pardoned all Christians who were still living. In 313 A.D., Constantine issued at Milan the edict which terminated these ten special persecutions of our passage. "We grant," he said, "to the Christians and all others free choice to follow their own mode of worship, whatever they wish ...". These were the 10 periods of persecution of the Christians in the Roman Empire.

Why God chose Rome as the first gentile client nation. However, it was not the Roman Republic but the empire which became the first gentile client nation to God. The genius of Julius Caesar set up a system of administration for the empire that would function perfectly, regardless of whether the emperor was good or bad; competent or incompetent. Many times, rulers of Rome tried to wipe out Christianity in the empire not realizing that they were attempting to destroy themselves and their empire

for as long as there was a pivot of mature believers, Rome would continue to be the client nation to God. In the midst of these attempts to wipe out Christianity, Christianity not only grew in the Roman Empire, but it expanded beyond its borders. Rome survived because believers in these seven churches made decisions to reside and function inside of God's power system, and by making those decisions SPQR as an empire continued until 476 A.D. by which time there were too many cosmic believers in the empire, and missionary activity ceased to exist.

Now for the clause found in this verse regarding the Wreath of Life “. . . and I will give you the Wreath of Life.” The Latin ‘Corona’ was the highest decoration in the army and is the exact equivalent of the Greek ‘Stephanos’ (wreath). The Romans had many different crowns as decorations in the military namely, the ‘corona obsidionalis or grammania’, a wreath of golden strands was the highest and rarest decoration. This was given for breaking a blockade or raising a siege. One example of actions leading to awarding of a grass crown would be a general who broke the blockade around a beleaguered Roman army. The ‘corona civica’ was a crown made of golden oak leaves which was awarded to a soldier who saved the life of another citizen in battle and held the ground where this deed occurred for the rest of the day. The ‘corona navalis’ was the highest decoration in the navy for destroying an enemy fleet or the first marine to board an enemy ship. The ‘corona muralis’ was awarded to the first soldier who scaled the wall of a besieged city. The ‘corona vallaris’ was awarded to the first soldier to scale an enemy rampart. The ‘corona aurea’ was a golden crown for gallantry in battle or any heroic act in battle. The ‘corona triumphalis’ was awarded to a victorious commander. Each crown included a monetary reward, freedom from taxes, children educated at public expense, a statue of the person erected in the public square, and a home wherever you wanted it built. The crown is used by analogy for the greatest honors God can give to believers. There were also decorations worn around the neck, decorations on a baldric worn over the chest, and various spears as rewards.

When the Christian completes the spiritual life and subsequently receive the fullness of blessing from God, he will wear the both the crown (wreath) of righteousness and the crown (wreath) of life. The crown of righteousness and the crown of life go together. If you have one, you will have the other. As a result of having obtained maximum capacity righteousness, the Christian will receive the wreath of righteousness as per 2 Timothy 4:7, 8, “I have fought that honorable fight [advanced through the stages of spiritual growth], I have finished the course [Paul reached spiritual maturity and had passed Evidence Testing], I have guarded the doctrine [as first priority in the soul]. (8) In the future a wreath of righteousness [escrow blessings for eternity] is reserved for me [on deposit since eternity past], which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day [at the Evaluation Throne of Christ] and not only to me but to all those who love His appearing [mature believers, whose thorough understanding of doctrine enables them to be occupied with Christ],” and the wreath of life as per James 1:12, “Happy is the believer who endures testing [passes the three categories of undeserved suffering] for having become approved [at his evaluation after the Rapture], he shall receive the wreath of life, which He [the Lord] has promised to those who love Him [enduring devotion and respect for the Lord Jesus Christ].”

2:11. ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes [through suffering] will not be hurt by the second death [Revelation 20:14; namely the Lake of Fire: knowing this should motivate the believers under great suffering to remain faithful to the Lord].’

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῆ ἔκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.

Whatever suffering the believer may experience in life, it cannot be compared to the suffering of the unbeliever in the Lake of Fire for all eternity. Even if a person should suffer martyrdom, he must bring into remembrance that the Lord has delivered him from the eternal lake of fire. This should motivate the believer to remain loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ

and to endure whatever suffering God's plan has for him. It amounts to a drop in the ocean compared with spending all eternity in the Lake of Fire.

How you live is determined by your attitude toward death. Sooner or later death will become a reality and you will discover an amazing thing: things that you thought were important, things that you spent your life doing, the pleasures you sought, your ambition to succeed and to get ahead and become famous and great and to excel above your peers, all of these things when you face death as a reality will not give you one moment of peace or blessing or courage in time of your dying. If you haven't solved the problem of dying by your scale of values, and where doctrine stands, and the perception and application of doctrine in your life, then you are never going to be able to face death. Death is going to be a horror, a time and moment of truth when you will look back on your life and realize what a fool you were to spend all your time seeking happiness at the expense of learning Bible doctrine, and it is only through learning and applying doctrine that one can be happy.

When facing death:

1. The reality of death is the test of the believer's spiritual condition and true scale of values.
2. In the face of death, the following will not comfort you: money, success, wealth, promotion, and social life just to mention a few things. Dying can be the greatest happiness in life or the greatest misery, and it depends upon the content of Bible doctrine in your soul, not the details of life.
3. Therefore, if Bible doctrine is not first in your scale of values during the living phase of your life, dying will be a nightmare. If on the other hand, doctrine has first place in one's scale of values, dying should intensify one's happiness. So, dying will either intensify suffering or happiness.

4. The ten special persecutions from Domitian to Diocletian made death a reality to millions of people who were believers. Believers living in the cosmic system when facing the threat of torture and death easily renounced their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers having lived their life in God's power system, when facing the threat of torture and death, were not afraid and did not renounce Christ.

5. Regarding cosmic believers, fear of death becomes fear of life. If you are afraid of death you are afraid of life. If there is nothing worth living for, there is nothing worth dying for. But only those mature believers in the pivot understood that issue.

Removing Fear from Death:

1. Bible doctrine resident in the soul removes fear of death as well as fear of life.

2. The believer having executed the spiritual life is not afraid of torture and death. That means that martyrdom is never in vain. Martyrdom without renouncing Christ, is one of the greatest rewardable functions in eternity. At the very least, he will receive the Wreath of Life.

3. Before Constantine the Roman empire was many times evangelized through dying testimony; after Constantine it was generally evangelized through living testimony. In history it takes both. Dying testimony requires, like living testimony, that Bible doctrine is more real than anything in life. Otherwise, when called upon to live or die for the Lord Jesus Christ, he can't do it.

4. The success standards of life must be replaced by the success standards of God's plan. And the judgment seat of Christ will reveal that many people who have a comparatively humble station in life in the Lord's eyes were the great heroes and heroines of history.

5. Only through Bible doctrine can God and His plan be more real than people, ambitions, situations, and pleasures. Beware that you do not function in life according to human viewpoint, on the basis of rationalizing doctrine to fit your ambitions and functions in life. The divine viewpoint must override peer pressure, and arrogant ambition must be replaced by doctrinal perception. When that happens and you fulfil the principle of being faithful, even unto death, there will be a special, super reward for you in heaven.

The doctrine of the Judgment Seat of Christ:

1. The judgment seat of Christ or the evaluation of believers occurs at the termination of the Church Age. It follows the receiving of a resurrection body. (Whether a believer succeeds or fails he will have a resurrection body)

2. The purpose of the Judgment Seat of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one of us [believers in the royal family of God] may receive what is due him for the things accomplished while in the physical body, whether good or worthless.” If the believer lives his Christian life inside the cosmic system what he accomplishes is worthless or evil or both. On the other hand, if the believer lives his Christian life under the omnipotence of God namely the two power options what he does is categorized as intrinsic good and is rewardable.

3. The loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ is a major issue. The gain or loss of reward and blessing above and beyond the resurrection body is determined by your personal volition in time, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid which is Jesus Christ [only one way of salvation]. (12) Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, [production of Christian service while out of fellowship], (13) each man’s work [Christian work or production] will become evident; for the day [evaluation seat of Christ after the Rapture] will show it because it is

to be revealed by fire, in fact the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. (14) If any man's work which he has built upon it [the foundation] remains, he will receive a reward. (15) If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss [of his escrow blessing for eternity], but he himself will be delivered, yet so as [the believer does not go through, but he will think that he did] through fire."

4. Loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ does not imply loss of salvation, 2 Timothy 2:11-13, "Faithful is the Word. If we died with him and we have [retroactive and current positional sanctification], we will live with him. (12). If we endure [keep advancing spiritually through the pressures of life], we will rule with him [in the millennium]. If we deny him [reject the thinking of Christ as found in the Word], he will deny us [rewards in eternity]. (13) If we are unfaithful [no integrity], he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself [our being in union with him; he cannot deny His integrity]."

1 John 2:28, "Now, dear students [children], keep on abiding in him [keep on having fellowship with God] that if He should appear [the imminency of the Rapture], we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame in his presence [at the Rapture]"

5. James 1:12, "Happy is the believer who endures testing [passes the three categories of undeserved suffering] for having become approved [at his evaluation after the Rapture], he shall receive the wreath of life, which He [the Lord] has promised to those who love Him [enduring devotion and respect for the Lord Jesus Christ]."

6. Therefore, the application of virtue to the judgment seat of Christ. Romans 14:10-13, "You there [the weak believer who lives in the cosmic system], why do you judge your brother? [Principle of the weak controlling the strong] or you also [the strong believer] why do you regard your brother with contempt [lack of toleration and impersonal love]? for all will stand before the Evaluation Seat of God. (11) For it stands written [Isaiah 45:23], For surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to

me [the big genuflect after the Rapture of the Church], and every tongue will give praise to God. (12) So, then each one of us [Church Age believers] shall give an account to God concerning himself [at the Judgment (Evaluation) Seat of Christ]. (13) Therefore, let us no longer judge one another: but rather make up your mind, [determine this] not to place an obstacle or distraction in front of his brother.”

7. An athletic analogy to the judgment seat of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:5, “Now if anyone really competes in the athletic games, he does not receive a winner’s wreath unless he trains according to the rules.” The Christian is not going to receive the winner’s wreath at the Evaluation Seat of Christ unless he plays according to the rules set-up by the Father for the spiritual life. We have the cosmic believer who doesn’t train according to the rules, and we have the advancing believer who does. Not only did the Roman athlete live inside the gymnasium for ten months but also followed a set of very strict rules which constantly tested his motivation, his decisions, and his momentum. The concept of perception of doctrine in the divine power system is analogous. Once the athletes went back to their hometowns, they received rewards which are analogous to the rewards received by the Christian at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Then Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run [analogous to the games in the Roman empire], but one receives the prize [in each event]? Run in such a way that you may win. (25) And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-discipline in all things. They [the athletes] do it to receive a perishable wreath [or crown]; but we [mature believers] an imperishable crown. (26) Therefore [Paul’s application] I do not run like a person without an objective; I do not fight like a person beating the air [cosmic believers are shadow boxers] (27) Instead, I discipline my body, and keep it in training [residence and function in God’s power system] lest having preached [communicated doctrine] to others, I myself should be disqualified” [disqualification from both temporal blessing and eternal reward at the judgment seat of Christ].

Message to Pergamum:

2:12. And to the messenger [the pastor] of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword [Rhomphaia] says this:

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Περγάμῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὴν ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξεῖαν·

At the time of writing, Pergamos was the medical center of the Roman empire and was a famous university town. It was also the center for the phallic cult in that part of the world. In addition to the manufacture of its parchment Pergamos was famous for its pottery, its tapestries, and the greatest perfumes in the Roman empire. It was also a source for silver and therefore was a source of coinage for the Roman empire.

Since we have looked at the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos, we need to examine the role of cities in the Roman Empire and how all this related to Christianity. Rome as an agricultural country was a republic; Rome as an urban nation was an empire, but not as the typical empire. It was an association of large cities, and these cities were made up of all races, of all peoples, an association of cities, large and small.

Without the Greek civilization of city states preceding the Romans, there would have been no Roman empire as it came to be. Roman civilization became an urban civilization for the city of the Roman empire was its important entity. The same thing occurred in the United States under manifest destiny. The south was an agricultural area; the north was industrial and so, had the large cities, whereas the South was landed aristocracy. Once the war between the states was settled the United States began to prosper under the industrial complex. Those who were disgruntled for one reason or another followed Horace Greeley's advice and went west, the undeveloped frontier, and there they established townships, ranches, farms, and so on.

The Roman Empire was a confederation of cities. One thing about the Roman empire: they had literally thousands of cities in the empire, and they allowed the citizens of the city to manage their own affairs. That was Caesar's idea. They had provincial governors acting as a general supervisor in large cities like Ephesus. The peoples of the Roman empire considered themselves citizens of a particular city, and thus they lost racial identity and racial prejudice. Therefore, a person considered himself an Alexandrian, an Athenian, a Corinthian, a Philippian, etc. They were all races and of different colors of skin, but they were all citizens of their city and they just simply had no major problem with racial prejudice.

Rome was not an empire as we understand empires. It was simply an association of prosperous cities, free trade between thousands of cities. On one side, the Atlantic, on the other side, the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, all the way up to Hadrian's wall and all the way south to the Sahara Desert. That large chunk of the world had thousands of cities and they traded freely, and prosperity was fantastic. Capitalism was the order of the day and people were prosperous everywhere.

And, of course, it was related to the rise of Christianity. The state of the cities plus their prosperity was the index for the condition of the Roman empire, and when something went wrong with the cities the empire went down; when the cities prospered the empire went up. Obviously, the cities are necessary for the existence and the stability of local churches. In those cities you had large groups of people. So, the apostle Paul, the apostle John, and Peter and many others went to the cities where they evangelized and taught the spiritual life. This would eventuate in the Roman empire becoming a strong client nation to God and a base for missionary activity outside the Roman empire to the entire world.

What held the Roman empire together, then, was the triumph of Christianity. Christianity was in the cities, and while in the rural populations they would cling to the ancient religions, generally in all the large cities Christianity became the factor. The country folk had to come

to the cities to participate in their religious worship and in the cities, they were evangelized.

2:13. I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is [possibly related to the altar of Zeus]; **and you hold fast My name and did not deny My doctrine even in the days of Antipas** [during the reign of Domitian], **My witness** [in the Angelic Appeal Trial], **My faithful one** [he remained faithful in his martyrdom] **who was murdered among you, where Satan dwells.**

Οἶδα ποῦ κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Σατανᾶ, καὶ κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἀντιπᾶς ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστός μου, ὃς ἀπεκτάνθη παρὶ ὑμῶν, ὅπου ὁ Σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ.

“I know where you dwell” is the function of the omniscience of God in eternity past before man existed. The omniscience of God knew every thought, every motive, every action, every function of every person in history. And the omniscience of God entered that information into the computer of divine decrees. He also knew the alternatives, the things that didn’t happen but could have happened, had each individual made different decisions at different times. But it is the printout for Pergamos that is in view when He says: “I know.” The indicative mood is declarative for an accurate assessment of the situation which contributes to the doctrine of historical trends.

1. Demonism is always associated with idolatry and Pergamos was saturated with idolatry. So, Satan made his headquarters there. Satan, like all creatures, can only be at one place at one time.

2. Pergamos was a center for the phallic cult, as illustrated by the presence of the Nicolaitans, a cult which involved demon possession.

3. Furthermore, Satan worship or serpent worship was conducted in the Temple of Aesculapius.

4. Demon-motivated persecution of believers will be noted in the context.

5. Even so, most believers were safe in Pergamos, the headquarters of Satan. So, living in a dangerous place is not necessarily dangerous. What is dangerous for the believer is living in the cosmic system.

6. Satan is powerful, and he is the ruler of this world; so, he is far greater and far more powerful than any of us as members of the human race. And with all his power and his tremendous demon army believers did not leave the city of Pergamos for fear of Satan. Believers were not only living under Satan's nose but were advancing to maturity, right there. That gives us some idea of the tremendous power of God regarding His provision of logistical grace.

Most believers in this congregation held fast to learning the Word of God even under great pressure applied it under great pressure of persecution. Furthermore, they remained loyal to their Savior and Lord.

We are going to study a man whose name was Antipas, a man who is unknown apart from his name and apart from the few words that are written about him in the Word of God. He was a most unusual person in that he passed all his undeserved suffering test including Evidence Testing. He died in what most people would say was a horrible and gruesome way and yet the Word of God says he died gloriously, honorably with integrity. Later in the text we come across a believer of the Old Testament who is set up by way of contrast, Balaam. And Balaam lived his life in the cosmic system, he thought more of money than anything else in the world.

Antipas is simply a nickname for Antipater and refers here to a former pastor of Pergamos before John took over as the non-resident pastor. The reason John had to take over as the non-resident pastor of Pergamos is because Antipas was martyred. The priests of the Temple of Aesculapius became antagonistic toward Antipas, and under the cover of the Domitian persecution they seized him and put him inside of a brass bull which they

heated up and roasted him to death. At the same time there were other believers in the church who were also murdered but only Antipas is mentioned here because he is the one who died so honorably. Bible doctrine was so important and so real to him that the excruciating pain and the torture which he endured was completely set aside by the reality of the Word of God in his own soul.

Obviously, this was a Satan-inspired function to break the back of the church in Pergamos and at the same time to test Antipas as he did Job. The phrase “where Satan resides” implies that Satan took Antipas as a personal challenge. Not only that, but the Lord permitted Antipas to be tested by excruciating torture and ultimately death, again implying Evidence Testing.

The death of Antipas did not, however, intimidate believers whose scale of values placed Bible doctrine as number one. They continued faithful to the Word of God in spite of persecution. Some even followed Antipas to martyr’s graves for their spiritual integrity was stronger than the pain of torture and death.

This assassination undoubtedly made a great impression on Satan. He realized that throughout history he must do everything he can to distract believers so that they will never accumulate the doctrine which Antipas accumulated in his soul for the Christian with that amount of doctrine cannot even be shaken by the power of Satan.

2:14. But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols [while worshipping them] and to commit acts of immorality.

ἀλλί ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὀλίγα, ὅτι ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ, ὃς ἐδίδασκεν τῷ Βαλάκ βαλεῖν σκάνδαλον ἐνώπιον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ, φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ πορνεῦσαι·

Balaam found a way for King Balak of Moab and Midian to defeat Israel through the function of the phallic cult. The young Jewish men were invited to party with the sexy Midianite young girls. The party included drunkenness, fornication, feasting, and sacrificing to idols.

2:15. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

οὕτως ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Νικολαϊτῶν ὁμοίως.

What we have in the Nicolaitans is a combination of Gnosticism with the phallic cult, a licentious type of Gnosticism. It trapped believers into the cosmic system through the function of the phallic cult like the teaching of Balaam. Remember that Gnosticism would accept almost anything and amalgamate it into its system of pseudo spirituality. The word, ‘Nicolaitan’ was derived from two Greek words meaning to win over and defeat people. While the phallic cult of the Nicolaitans was rejected in Ephesus [Revelation 2:6] it was effective with many of the believers in Pergamos.

2:16. Therefore, change your thinking; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them [reversionistic Christians] with the sword of My mouth.

μετανόησον οὖν· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι ταχύ, καὶ πολεμήσω μετὰ αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου.

The *Romphaia*, an ancient broadsword always represented divine punishment even military disaster. We will see this in Revelation 2:12 where the Rhomphaia was used for divine discipline against many evils. This is confirmed as divine discipline in Revelation 2:14-16, “But I have a few things against you [the members of the church in Pergamos], because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. (15) So, you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

(16) Therefore, change your thinking, or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword [the Greek word, *Rhomphaia*] of My mouth.” At the 2nd Advent, Jesus Christ will strike down the invading armies with a *Rhomphaia* as per Revelation 19:15, “And [at the 2nd Advent] a sharp broadsword [Rhomphaia] comes out of His mouth, in order that with it [the sword] He should strike down [to kill with great violence from his integrity] the gentile nations [the enemy armies of many nations invading Israel]. Then [after the slaughter of many armies] He will rule them with an iron scepter [crime will be punished by perfect jurisprudence]. And He treads the winepress of the wine [a metaphor for the bloody slaughter of all these soldiers] of the wrath even the anger of God, the Omnipotent One.”

1. The believer’s decisions regarding doctrinal teaching determine the historical trends of a client nation.

2. The believer has a choice of being taught doctrine by his right pastor or the divine discipline of the double-edged broadsword.

3. Should individual believers or the entire nation be devastated by the broadsword from the Lord, many would say immediately: “What a tragedy.”

4. But there are no tragedies in history, only disasters brought on by individual and collective decisions within a national entity.

5. Because we as a nation have rejected truth such as the Laws of Divine Establishment, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, Bible doctrine, we become liable for discipline from the sharp double-edged broadsword.

And there is an overriding statement to all of this: As goes the believer, so goes the client nation. A maximum number of believers advancing in the spiritual life means blessing for the nation; a maximum number of believers in the cosmic system means divine punishment. The broadsword of historical disaster is a continuing historical trend until the second advent of Christ.

2:17. ‘He who has an ear, must hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes [to the spiritual winner], to him [dative of advantage] I will give [blessing] from the hidden manna [metabolized doctrine hidden in the soul], and I will give him a white pebble, and a new title written on the pebble which no one knows but he who receives it [in time, but in eternity all will know].’

ὁ ἔχων οὐς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκὴν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.

All people have ears and ears become the analogy to the supernatural perceptive system our Lord has established for learning Bible doctrine, and from learning that Bible doctrine to grow in grace. The ears become the illustration for volition and motivation in learning.

In John’s Day most people learned, not by reading, but by hearing whereas today both systems are used. What is the difference between them? When listening to a communicator, the authority of the communicator is obvious. When reading theological material, the authority of the writer is less apparent. This is why God requires the believer to listen to Bible teaching in order to grow spiritually as per Romans 10:17, “So, faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ.”

The ear refers to teachability, therefore to learnability. If you have ears, and you do, you can learn the Word of God. All kind of people have ears for perception, and no one earns or deserves ears. Just as you come equipped with ears from birth, so from the second birth you come equipped with a system of perception necessary to learn doctrine. However, no one hears apart from his own volition, and therefore the importance of positive volition in learning doctrine.

Just as the visible manna was stored in the ark as a permanent memorial to God’s grace, so Bible doctrine is stored in the soul as a permanent

memorial to God's grace. Only Bible doctrine learned inside the divine power system can be used to propel the believer through the three stages of spiritual adulthood. All blessing to the believer is related to the hidden manna, the manna that is preserved as Bible doctrine in the ark of his soul.

The juries in the ancient world voted privately. They had a box which was passed around in which were black pebbles and white pebbles, and each one selected a pebble and put it on the table. A black pebble was guilty; a white pebble was a vote for acquittal. The white pebble here is the Lord's vote for acquittal for the believer. There is no condemnation, no lake of fire for the believer in Christ as per Romans 8:1; we are acquitted because we have personally believed in Jesus Christ. The Lord votes with a white stone to adopt the convert into the family of God with the potential of obtaining the highest possible aristocracy. Those who reject Him as their savior get a black pebble; those who accept Him through faith in His person get a white pebble. Either a white pebble with no title (adopted into God's family with a resurrection body, but not into the elite aristocracy of the eternal state) or a white pebble with a title written on it (a title of eternal aristocracy).

Every aristocratic Roman would adopt a son at age 14 whether it be his own natural son or another young man with great integrity and ability. Once the adoption ceremony was complete, the adopted son was given a new name of aristocracy and had the right of marriage, military service, and had the right to access his father's fortune. Even the Roman emperors used this system of adoption to guarantee greatness in succession. For example, Emperor Nerva began the golden age of Rome in 96 A.D. He adopted Trajan, and Trajan adopted Hadrian, and Hadrian adopted Antonius Pius, and Antonius Pius adopted Marcus Aurelius, the last great emperor of the golden age. None of these adoptions involved their own sons.

On this white pebble is the title that Jesus Christ will bestow on the winner-believers at the Evaluation Seat of Christ. This title means that the believer will be part of an elite eternal knighthood. And to have a white

pebble with a new title of knighthood on it is about as high an honor as one could possibly obtain based upon one's impact on both human and angelic history, not only an honor, but many wonderful privileges and rewards related to it. (The only higher honor would be the 'Order of the Morning Star' to be explained later.)

2:18. And to the messenger [the pastor] of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire [His integrity demands discipline for the believers who reject His spiritual life], and His feet are like burnished bronze, communicates this:

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Θυατίροις ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἔχων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόγα πυρός, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ·



Thyatira is located on a very fertile plain of the Lycus Valley, fifty-eight miles north east of Smyrna. Thyatira became an important station on the Roman road from Pergamos to Laodicea and became a very wealthy city in northern Lydia in the Roman province of Asia.

Thyatira was famous for its labor unions. It was the most completely unionized city in the Roman world. Every artisan in Thyatira belonged to a labor union and every guild or labor union owned property in its own name, made contracts for construction, and had tremendous power and influence. Most famous were the coppersmith unions, and the dyers' union whose purple dye was in demand all over the world. The unions sponsored the phallic cult and various other idolatrous cults and were opposed vehemently to Christianity. In this context Thyatira is threatened with divine punishment through economic disaster namely the bronze feet. People are the products of their own decisions and the unions will make bad decisions which will destroy the economy of Thyatira unless corrected by Bible doctrine.

We are the products of our own decisions. Good decisions open options for greater decisions; bad decisions destroy those options and eventually remove them altogether and the individual is removed under the principle of the sin unto death. But before his removal he has a long and miserable life of divine judgment and discipline. This is brought out now in the flame of fire, for the flame of fire speaks of individual judgment just as the feet of bronze represents national judgment. Jesus Christ will not ever tolerate arrogance. When it says "a flame of fire" it means that our Lord personally is going to do a lot of judging. For example, John 5:22, 23, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but he has given all judgment to the Son, (23) in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him." So, the Lord Jesus Christ has charge of all judgment.

Grace always precedes judgment. Decisions from free will create environment; not vice versa. Personal and historical disasters are not tragedies that just happen accidentally but are the outworking of bad

decisions. Since Jesus Christ controls history, he controls the destiny of all peoples. Even so, he does not interfere with the freedom of choice.

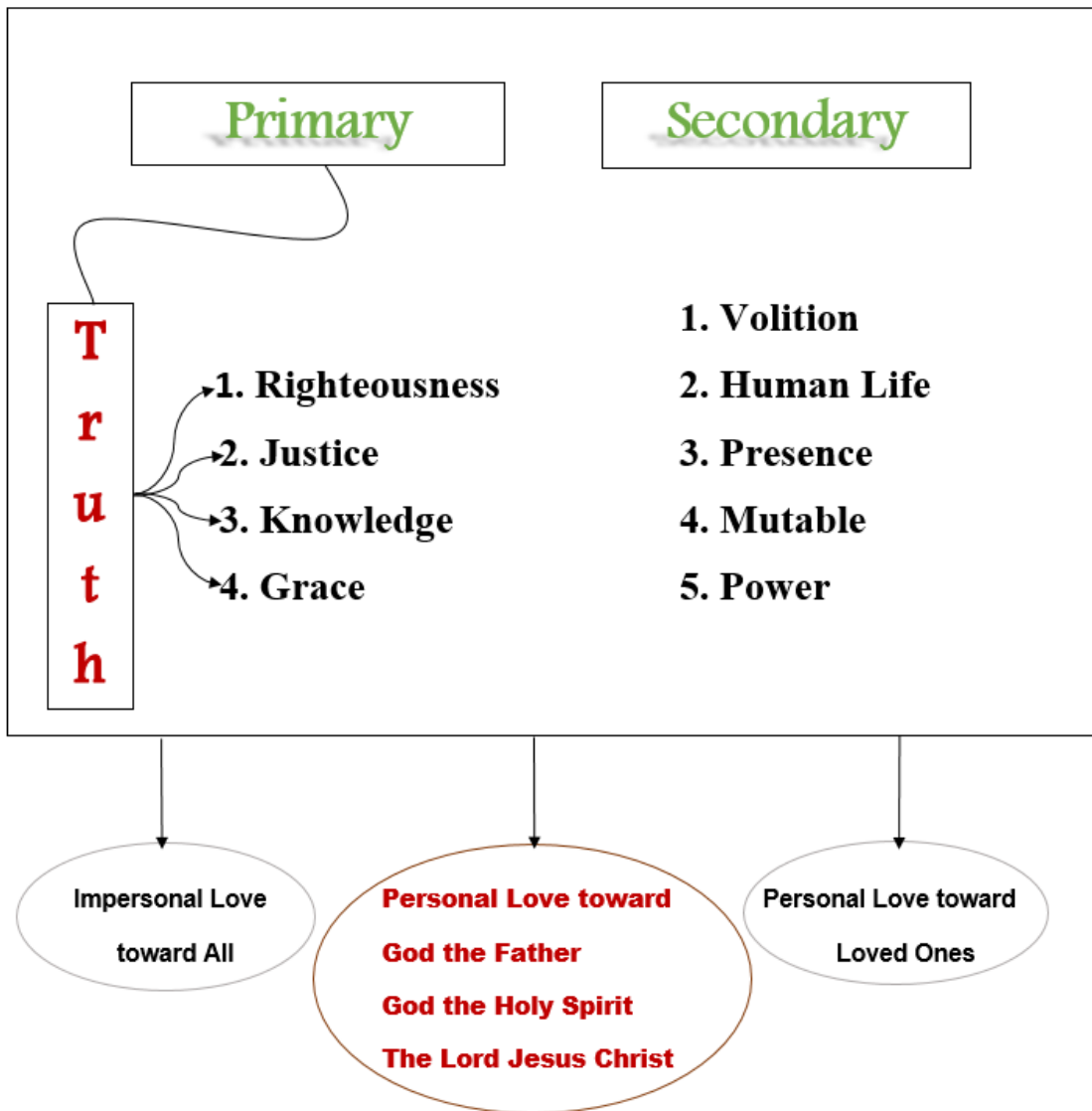
What is the significance of bronze feet? Bronze always relates to some form of divine judgment. Jeremiah identifies with divine judgment as per Lamentations 3:6-8, “In dark places, he has made me live like those who have been long dead [Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern of sewage and then it was sealed]. (7) He has walled me in so that I cannot go out [of the sewage cistern]. He has made my *bronze* chain heavy. (8) Even when I cry out and call for help, He shuts out my prayer [Prayers are not answered during the administration of the final cycles of discipline]” The bronze chains were used to illustrate the 5th Cycle of Discipline and the servitude of the nation. 2 Kings 25:7, “And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze chains and brought him to Babylon.” Bronze is used for economic disaster to a Client Nation as part of the 4th cycle of divine discipline. Deuteronomy 28:23-26, “The heaven which is over your head shall be like bronze [no rain], and the earth like iron [no production]. (24) The Lord will make the rain of your land [the normal rains to cease so] powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you [divine discipline] until you are destroyed. (25) The Lord shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them [retreat in panic], and you will be an example of terror [the intense fear when facing the consequences of rejecting God and His laws] to all the kingdoms of the earth. (26) Your carcasses will be food to all birds of the sky and to the beast of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away.” Leviticus 26:19, “Furthermore, I will also break down the arrogance of your power [a tremendous lust for power in the Land]; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze.” Bronze is also used for destroying future options by making bad decisions. Isaiah 48:4, “Because I know that you are stubborn and arrogant, and your neck is like an iron sinew, and your forehead like bronze.” In our passage we have “His feet were like bronze.” This represents the historical judgments of the nations of the earth by the Lord based on the principle that Jesus Christ controls history.

One of the great principles in the Word of God is living your life in the light of eternity, and when you live your life in the light of eternity you have a wonderful time in time. When you live your life in the light of the moment then you are going to be totally and miserably disoriented to life, and the great tragedy occurs in eternity at the judgment seat of Christ when born again believers who cannot lose their salvation by anything they do after believing in Christ get the greatest shock of their living experience forever and ever — the shock of being in a resurrection body without anything to show for this life. Heaven is a perfect place and like all perfect places there is no equality.

2:19. I know [The Lord provides an estimate of the situation regarding the church at Thyatira] **your accomplishments namely your love and faith** [faith-rest drill] **and service** [full time Christian service related to one's priesthood and ambassadorship] **and perseverance** [through undeserved suffering], **and that your accomplishments of late are greater than at first.**

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν διακονίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου, καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου τὰ ἔσχατα πλείονα τῶν πρώτων.

COMPONENTS OF TRUE HUMAN LOVE



Spiritual babies to spiritual adults: As spiritual babies we learn the grace principle of salvation and rebound; this is our grace orientation. When we have this grace orientation, we realize there are things we must believe, and when we do, we make those things a part of our soul. This is the function of the faith-rest drill. We are now moving into spiritual

childhood. When we get to the point of having a personal sense of destiny, we enter spiritual adolescence. As we advance past a personal sense of destiny/spiritual self-esteem, we enter the adult spiritual life.

The beginning of the faith-rest drill is to believe God when He makes promises to us, such as Psalm 37:4-5, “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. (5) Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this.” In spiritual childhood, we reach out with our faith and claim the promises of God such as: Psalm 4:8, “I will both lay me down in tranquility and sleep; for You Lord only make me to dwell in safety.” Psalm 34:19, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of all of them.” Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Psalm 55:22, “Cast all your burdens upon the Lord and He shall sustain you; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Psalm 56:11, “In God I put my trust. I will not be afraid of what man can do to me.” Deuteronomy 31:8, “The Lord is the one who goes before you; He will not fail you or forsake you. Fear not, neither be confused.” 1 Peter 5:7, “Casting all your anxieties on Him; for He cares for you.” (After advancing beyond spiritual childhood, the believer will begin applying doctrines by faith to his pressures, problems, and difficult situations.)

The faith-rest drill is that problem solving device used by believers in all dispensations for carrying and using the shield of faith. Hebrews 11:1-40, “Now, faith is the substance [reality] of things hoped for [confident expectation becomes absolute confidence as one enters into the adult spiritual life through his advance; absolute confidence of entering the eternal state in a resurrection body], the evidence of things not being seen [though not seen they were a reality through the advanced Faith-Rest Drill]. (2) For by means of this [advanced faith-rest drill] men of old became witnesses [for the prosecution in the angelic appeal trial even as we have this opportunity]. (3) By faith, we understand that the universe was designed by the speaking of God [the Son] so that what is seen [the universe etc.] has not come into existence by the things that are seen [but

by invisible things namely the spoken Word of God the Son]. (4) By means of doctrine [resident in the soul] Abel had offered to the God a greater sacrifice than Cain [Abel's offering depicted the cross; Cain's offering represented his attempt to gain salvation through works], through which offering he received confirmation that he was righteous [executed God's plan regarding experiential righteousness]; the God approving of his sacrifices; and through the same doctrine [resident in the soul], while he was dead, yet he still speaks [his testimony is in the Word of God]. (5) By faith [the use of the advanced faith-rest drill], Enoch was transferred with the result that he should not see death, and he was not found because God had transferred him (from mortality to the interim body). For before his transfer [to Paradise in the heart of the earth], he had obtained the testimony in the past with the result that the deposition stood that he had pleased God [completed the spiritual life]. (6). And without faith it is impossible to please *God* [explaining the spiritual life of the Old Testament] for he who comes to God [by faith in Jesus Christ] must believe that he is [post salvation fellowship with God] and is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (7) By faith, Noah having been warned [by God] about things not yet being seen [destruction of the earth by water], having been motivated by reverence, he had constructed an ark for the purpose of the deliverance of his household, through which [faith], he had condemned the world [antediluvian population had rejected his gospel message], and had become heir of the righteousness [he had completed the experiential righteousness phase of God's plan for him] on the basis of faith [advanced faith-rest drill]. (8) By faith, when Abraham was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was about to receive for an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was going. (9). By means of faith, he lived as an alien in a land of promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents [because he was waiting for the city and the home that God would build for him in the eternal state in resurrection body] with Isaac and Jacob, joint heirs of the same promise. (10) For he himself kept waiting with anticipation for a [satellite] city [Revelation 21:2, 10] having foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (11) By faith even Sarah herself received sexual ability for the deposit of seed even though she was beyond the proper time of life for conception [in menopause]

because she concluded faithful the One who had promised. (12) Therefore, also there was born from the source of one man [Abraham], he was as good as dead [sexual death] and these same ones [Abraham & Sarah] having become sexually dead (in contrast to the promise of Gen 15:5), "Just as many as the stars of the heavens in number (so will your progeny be), and as the sand which is by the lip of the sea innumerable. (13) All of these [mentioned in the Hall of Fame] died on the basis of faith [the Advanced Faith-Rest Drill] not having received the promises [rewards based on resurrection], but having seen them [seen their rewards in their souls] from a distance [looking into eternity because they lived by principle], and having saluted and embraced them [their final faith rest drill as they departed from this life], also having acknowledged that they were strangers and transients on the earth. (14) For they [the patriarchs] who say such things as these, make it clear that they keep on striving for a heavenly home [in the eternal state]. (15) And if, on the one hand, they had continued remembering that country from which they had originated, but they did not, then they would have had opportunity to have circled back toward Ur of the Chaldees [in reversionism]. (16) But, on the other hand, as a matter of reality, they desire and strive for something better, that is, heavenly one, therefore, God is not ashamed of the same ones [the patriarchs] to be designated their God for He has prepared a city for the same ones. (17) By faith, Abraham when he was tested, offered up Isaac as a sacrifice even he who had received the promises [of the Abrahamic Covenant] offered up his uniquely born son [through the sexual revival of both Abraham and Sarah and the changing of their DNA]. (18) It was he [Abraham] to whom it was said 'Through Isaac your seed will be called.' (19) He [Abraham] reasoned [from the doctrine of resurrection] that God was able to resuscitate even from the dead and as a type [an illustration of the resurrection of Christ]. (20) By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau destined to be fulfilled [in the Abrahamic Covenant]. (21) By faith, Jacob, while he was in the process of dying, blessed each one of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his scepter [sign of rulership]. (22) By faith, Joseph while he was dying made mention of the Exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones. (23) By faith, when Moses was born, he was hidden for a period of three

months by his parents, because they saw that he was a beautiful infant, and they were not afraid of the edict from the king. (24) By faith, when Moses had become great, he refused to be proclaimed the son [the heir apparent] of Pharaoh's daughter [He refused the throne of Egypt as pharaoh]. (25) Rather having chosen to endure maltreatment with the people of God [Jews in slavery] than to have [to enjoy] the temporary pleasures of sin [approbation, power, materialistic and pleasure lust etc.]. (26) Therefore, he concluded that the reproach [the disgrace which accompanied his decision] for the sake of Christ was of greater value than the treasures of Egypt; for you see he kept looking ahead to his reward [Escrow Blessings in resurrection body in the eternal state]. (27) By faith, he [Moses] left Egypt behind [never looked back] not fearing the wrath of the pharaoh [Thutmose III]; for you see he persevered [in the spiritual life under great pressure] because he kept on seeing the invisible one [the Lord Jesus Christ]. (28) By faith, he (Moses) executed the Passover even the sprinkling of the blood so that the one destroying the first-born [the death angel] should not touch them [the Jewish believers and families]. (29) By *Moses'* faith, they passed through the Red Sea as through dry land, when they [the Egyptians] attempting to pursue were drowned. (30) By faith [of the great believers], the walls of Jericho fell having been encircled for seven days. (31) By faith, Rahab, the prostitute, did not perish with the unbelievers, having welcomed the scout patrol with peace. (32) And what more can I say? For there is not enough time for me to communicate about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah and about both David and Samuel and, also the prophets. (33) Who themselves through faith, conquered kingdoms [like David], accomplished righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions [a reference to Daniel], (34) Neutralized the power of fire [Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego] escaped the edge of the sword, from helplessness were made strong, being courageous in battle, putting to flight, the invading armies. (35) Women [Two great widows each with an only son] received their dead by means of resuscitation, and others [great women] were tortured, not having accepted their release [by betrayal of loved ones or country] in order that they might obtain something better after resurrection. (36) And others [great believers] experienced ridicule and floggings, in addition to the above, shackles and

incarceration. (37) They were stoned to death [Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 24:20, 21], they were sawn in two [according to an extra Biblical source, this would be a reference to Isaiah], were tested [regarding their spiritual life; Job for example]; they were put to death by the sword [governor, Gedaliah]; they wandered around [rejected and persecuted] in sheepskins and goatskins [rough, uncomfortable clothing]; being destitute, suffering harassment, being oppressed. (38) *Men* of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered over deserts, and mountains, and caves and holes in the earth. (39) And all these [11:4-38; Old Testament representative heroes] having become witnesses [in the appeal trial of the angelic conflict] through faith [the advanced faith-rest-drill] have not received the promise [everything in the faith-rest drill ultimately focused on being brought to completion through receiving a Resurrection body]. (40) God having foreseen [God's omniscience in the grammatical form of a genitive absolute] something better for us [the unique spiritual life of the Church Age]. So, that apart from us [Christians in the Church Age], they [Old Testament believers] should not be brought to completion [in resurrection bodies until the Church Age is completed].”

The faith-rest drill holds all the Problem-Solving Devices on the FLOT line of the soul. (FLOT is a military acronym for the Forward Line of Troops defending on a battle front.) Without the faith-rest drill, Problem Solving Devices 2-10 could not be deployed on the FLOT line of the soul. For example, one deploys the doctrine of Logistical Grace by faith, the Divine Decree by faith and that the Lord Jesus Christ controls history by faith. Thus, the function of the faith-rest drill provides cohesion and coordination for all the problem-solving devices.

There are three spheres of operation involved in the function of the faith-rest drill namely faith mechanics, faith functions, and faith execution. The first sphere of the faith-rest drill is faith mechanics. Faith mechanics has two stages. (1) Stage one of faith mechanics is mixing the promises, principles, and doctrines of God with your faith. (2) Stage two of faith mechanics is the application of the doctrinal rationales to your experience. The doctrinal rationales include: the love of God rationale (applying the

components), the plan of God rationale (XYZ), the policy of God rationale (grace), and the a fortiori rationale. The second sphere of the faith-rest drill is faith function of which there are three categories. (1) The first category of faith function is faith perception which requires the Filling of the Spirit. (2) The second category of faith function is the plaintiff function before the supreme court of heaven as a victim of injustice, real or imagined. (3) The third category of faith function is faith correlation with other problem-solving devices. This is the key to why the faith-rest drill is a must on the FLOT line of your soul. The third sphere of the faith-rest drill is faith execution. (1) Faith execution demands true humility and the avoidance of self-absorption. (2) Faith execution demands professionalism--accurate comprehension and use of the Problem-Solving Devices. (3) Faith execution demands integrity--the spiritual strength to make the right choices, the good decisions from a position of strength in the application of the faith-rest drill.

Regarding service or ministry, the Greek word in our passage is *diakonia*. There is no such thing as entering into full-time Christian service since every believer is already in full-time Christian service. Everything the Christian does while Filled with the Spirit is rewardable production whether it falls under his royal priesthood or his royal ambassadorship and is a part of his ministry or service as unto the Lord.

As some of the Christians of Thyatira demonstrated perseverance (*hupomone* in the Greek), you must live (persevere) in the power system provided by God. All of us are weak in this life and the ruler of this world is Satan who in his genius has provided a power system that is far stronger, far greater than we are. And when we reject the power of metabolized doctrine and the power of the Filling of the Spirit, we move into Satan's system namely cosmic one and two. James 1:12 states, "Happy [privileged] is the believer who endures (perseveres under) testing [passes the three categories of undeserved suffering] for having become approved [at his evaluation at the Evaluation Throne of Christ after the Rapture], he shall receive the wreath of life, which He [the Lord] has promised to those

who love Him [enduring devotion and respect for the Lord Jesus Christ resulting in complete obedience to His mandates].

The greatest happiness comes to the believer who completes the spiritual life, because in doing so he obtains the happiness which God has designed for the mature believer. The happiness of spiritual maturity is a system of integrity and thinking, a happiness not dependent upon people or things, but related to loving God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Since the mature believer has both enduring devotion and respect for God, he has the power, the inner strength to handle any test or suffering in life. After the believer develops a personal love for Jesus Christ, he will receive his final test in life, then upon passing this test he will be approved by the Lord and receive “The Wreath of Life”. This decoration is awarded to invisible heroes for maximum production of divine good through the execution of the plan of God. Therefore, the wreath (crown) of life is related to the invisible hero's (mature believer's) production from his spiritual gift, his ambassadorship, and his royal priesthood. The wreath of life is awarded for consistent filling of the Holy Spirit, consistent perception of doctrine, and consistent use of the Ten Problem Solving Devices resulting in the completion of the spiritual life.

2:20. But I have this against you namely that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols [the immorality and feasting is part of their worship of demons].

ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἣ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφητιν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἐμοὺς δούλους πορνεῦσαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα.

We begin in the Greek with the use of the adversative conjunction *alla*, which is a conjunction of contrast which sets up a contrast with the preceding verse. We now see what the Lord has against the church at Thyatira. It is correctly translated “but.” With it we have the descriptive

present tense of the verb *echo* meaning to have. The indicative mood declares the fact that many believers in Thyatira are living inside the cosmic system.

Then we have the verb, the present active indicative of the verb *aphiemi* which means to tolerate here. Toleration can be a virtue when related to impersonal love, or it can be a sign of living in the cosmic system. Remember that in the cosmic system there is a great deal of toleration for Satanic ideas and concepts and that is exactly what we have here. The Christians in Thyatira are tolerating Jezebel and her evil cult. Tolerating evil is supporting evil.

A smart woman who has great beauty can be quite dangerous or very magnificent. Now, the woman who calls herself Jezebel is a beautiful woman with brains and ambition. The very word Jezebel means beauty and brains, otherwise she would not have been so designated by the writer under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. There is nothing wrong with being beautiful and there is nothing wrong with being smart, but it is the word “prophetess” where we begin to find something very much amiss. She was alleging to have a gift from God that did not exist in 96 A.D. which brings her into focus as a very arrogant and ambitious woman.

Why did she call herself a prophetess? She knew that with a title she would gain the following of a segment of the Christians in the church at Thyatira. Prophetess Jezebel, Senator Mitch McConnell, Secretary Yellen, the Honorable Jerome Powell. Titles mean everything to the idiot, but nothing to a person who can think.

A few points related to this woman who called herself, Jezebel.

1. Jezebel is not her real name. It is a pseudonym for a very smart and beautiful woman living in the city of Thyatira as the head of a phallic cult.
2. She had succeeded in luring believers away from doctrine into the phallic cult in a manner similar with the historical Jezebel.

3. Jezebel in Thyatira was controlling believers, luring them from the blessing of God's plan into the cursing of the cosmic system. Many of these believers were like spiritually weak King Ahab who was led astray by his evil wife, Jezebel. 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived, evil companions corrupt good morals".

A few points on weak believers who are easily led astray.

1. There are two categories of weak people: the evil weak person and the good weak person. A lot of weak people are evil, but just as weak are self-righteous good people.

2. The insecure, irresponsible, thoughtless, selfish, and arrogant makeup the evil weak persons. They tend to control policy, and procedures as a historical trend in social, business, governmental, professional, cultural, spiritual, and sexual life, etc.

3. One of the signs of a declining society is when the weak, the scum in society dominate the strong through arrogant self-righteousness, liberalism, socialism, violence and even bolshevism etc.

4. The scum, the criminal element, the irresponsible, control the strong as a historical trend toward cosmic involvement and inevitable degeneracy.

5. This is why a nagging wife who pouts, makes scenes in public, can dominate, control and manipulate an honorable husband, a person who is kind, considerate and thoughtful. And this is how a power-mad fourth estate, (an irresponsible press) without integrity can dominate the thinking of a nation.

The following clause is interesting, "she both teaches and seduces [leads astray] my servants." That is exactly the function of a religion which uses some form of teaching and doctrine to lead astray. This is a clear-cut illustration of the weak controlling the strong because the strong refuse to live within the sphere of the divine power system.

We are the products of our own decisions related to either God's power system or Satan's power system. Volition creates environment, not environment volition. Note that apostasy is preceded by some form of inculcation which precedes the actual function of apostasy or reversionism. There is cosmic propaganda and there is cosmic philosophy. The believer does not have to listen to false teaching or inculcation, but he will do so every time if he has neglected Bible doctrine and wandered away from the divine power system.

In the human history, man in the appeal trial of the angelic conflict must be free to fail and or be free to succeed, under the principle of freedom and self-determination. Freedom is useless without a sense of responsibility to ensure correct function of that freedom without distortion. And freedom carries the responsibility of making decisions on the basis of integrity, not on the basis of the motivating evil of arrogance.

Man must be so inculcated with truth and doctrine that he will take the responsibility for his own decisions in life, and their consequences. Consequently, recognition and evaluation of our own personal weaknesses is neither degrading nor demeaning, but the means of recognizing the principle of doctrine that God has an answer for every weakness in the human life. He alone can convert weakness into strength.

There must be a search for power to overcome weakness rather than a search for weakness by which strength is overcome. Unfortunately, the believers in Thyatira were failing because they were searching for weakness by which strength was overcome as per Jezebel and the popularity of her phallic cult.

We have noted that all apostasy is preceded by some form of teaching, some form of inculcation, which precedes the actual function of apostasy or reversionism. Remember that cosmic one involvement doesn't mean that you are instantly ready to be a good servant of Satan for once the believer has been indoctrinated in Cosmic One, Satan will send him to

Cosmic Two for his collegiate education. Once the believer graduates with a masters or doctorate, he is ready to serve Satan.

We need God, we need God's provision, we need God's plan for our lives:

1. God's plan begins with salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then it continues after the moment of salvation with residence and function inside the divine power system which He has provided for us under the principle of logistical grace.

2. Man is neither the master of his fate nor the Lord of his destiny. This is illustrated by the historical trend which we have developed before in which the weak control the strong. The weak control the strong in business, in government, socially, and in many other organizations, even in some churches. Though man is not the master of his fate, he is the product of his own decisions.

3. Since man lives in the devil's world, he is vulnerable to involvement in the cosmic system. Therefore, through wrong decisions, the believer becomes involved in the cosmic system of Satan as the ruler-genius of this world.

4. Without the power of God's system and the provision of logistical grace man cannot withstand the pressures and temptations of getting involved in the cosmic system. In other words, none of us as believers on our own are stronger than the cosmic system. We find ourselves therefore caught between two systems. We are human and therefore naturally weak. We find ourselves forced to face the issue: Which system do we choose, the cosmic system of Satan or the divine power system of our Lord? One offers great happiness and blessing, the other offers pseudo happiness and pseudo blessing. The more wrong decisions we make the more we become involved with Jezebel of Thyatira.

5. Apart from doctrine and divine power man does not have the power, the strength, the ability to resist life in the cosmic system. Therefore, the believer must choose something greater than himself by which to live.

6. Every day we must face the same decision all the way to the end of our life on this earth namely to choose one system as over against another, recognizing that our power is not in our inherent ability but in the volition, the freedom we must choose one system as over against another.

2:21. ‘I gave her time to change her thinking, and she does not want to change her thinking [She refused to use the Recovery Procedure. Then to learn and execute the spiritual life] and depart from her immorality.

καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

This is grace before judgment. Since Jezebel was a believer, she was given time to repent of her fornication and cultic function. Fornication here means a great deal more than simply illicit sexual intercourse. It has to do with the entire phallic cult. This woman had many opportunities to use her own free will and walk out on the deal in which she was involved; but she liked what she was doing, it appealed to her arrogance. She not only felt important but got her kicks, her happiness out of controlling people. The more arrogant one is the more he or she likes controlling others. Jezebel of Thyatira, an unknown Christian female was just too arrogant to reverse her course.

The provision of time is a part of logistical grace for every believer and none of us have ever failed and not been given time to rebound, to recover, to remove ourselves from that failure. For some believers, the provision of time is an opportunity to advance to maturity; for other believers who do not appreciate this time given to them, the provision of time is simply for the purpose of extending one’s life for divine discipline. That was the tragedy of Jezebel.

Logistical grace belongs to the reversionistic and cosmic believer just as much as it belongs to the advancing and mature believer. Logistical grace is for all believers, the winners and the losers. The difference is how the believer uses or exploits logistical grace provision and his other options. Advancing believers parlay logistical grace provision into great blessing both in time and in eternity, whereas negative believers use logistical grace to make themselves miserable and to experience divine discipline in time, and loss of reward in eternity.

2:22. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation [disaster, affliction: intensive divine discipline], unless they change their thinking of her deeds [unless they use the Recovery Procedure and leave this phallic cult].

ἰδοὺ βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην, καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετὶ αὐτῆς εἰς θλίψιν μεγάλην, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς·

Jezebel fornicated around Thyatira as a form of religion, not just as a sin. In this way, she parlayed the sin of fornication into the evil of fornication. As a result, the Lord will intensify her discipline, “I will cast her into a bed.” This is a bed of intense punishment culminating in the Sin unto Death.

1. Since the bed is associated with fornication and with illness and disease, it is used to describe the nature of Jezebel’s discipline from our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The Jezebel of Thyatira, from her own free will, chose a bed of fornication. Therefore, our Lord chose for her punishment, a bed of illness and decay.
3. Promiscuity results in both total frustration and unhappiness as well as added divine discipline. The road to happiness goes through the Word of God, not through the bedroom of Jezebel.

4. We as believers are the products of our own decisions. Likewise, Jezebel of Thyatira as a believer was the product of her own decisions.

5. She chose fornication as part of her cult and thereby chose for herself a life of misery, frustration, unhappiness.

6. She was seeking pleasure, but she found self-induced misery and unhappiness to which God eventually added divine punishment, the bed of illness, disease, incapacitation.

7. Since God designed sex as an expression of category two love between one man and one woman, He will not permit the distortion of sex into sin and evil.

8. Illicit sex offers a moment of pleasure and a lifetime of misery and unhappiness.

9. Promiscuity then is a distraction from the road of happiness, a dead end for what could otherwise be a very wonderful and happy life.

10. God who invented sex for happiness also invented happiness which can only exist inside His plan and under God's rules. Legitimate sex related to the divine power system is an expression of human happiness, but any form of illegitimate sex inside the cosmic system guarantees misery, frustration, unhappiness, and punishment from God.

The Christians of Thyatira tolerated this phallic cult. By application, when a large part of the population of any nation are practicing and condoning fornication it is the beginning of social degeneration. It eventuates in fornication being turned into homosexuality and other degeneracies. There is a whole area of social degeneration that starts with fornication between a man and a woman and ends up with all the distortions. (By the way, social degeneration always precedes military disaster. You can't fight a war with socially degenerate people.)

2:23. And I will kill her followers with pestilence [her followers will be executed under the Sin unto Death], **and all the** [believers in the] **churches will know that I am He who investigates the emotions** [literally kidneys but used for emotion] **and hearts** [the stream of consciousnesses where thought exist]; **and I will give to each one of you according to your activities** [whether good or bad].

καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ· καὶ γνώσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἐραυνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν.

For believers who live their lives in the power system there is nothing but blessing and spiritual growth, both in time and eternity, but for the believer who lives in the cosmic system there is self-induced misery from wrong decisions, followed by warning discipline, followed by the intensification of divine punishment, and eventuating with maximum divine punishment for the believer, the sin unto death. The predictive future anticipates the administration of the sin unto death for the cosmic believer who does not use the Recovery Procedure and advance spiritually. Jesus Christ, the prince ruler of the Church, the judge of the royal family, produces the action of the verb. He will administer capital punishment via the Sin unto Death, not for crime as such but something worse than crime namely a believer living under the control of Satan in the cosmic system.

The Sin unto Death is explained in 1 John 5. 1 John 5:16, “If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death [the Sin unto Death], he may ask [pray for him] and he [the Father] will give life [restore his physical well-being] to him, to the ones committing sins not leading to death [the Sin unto Death]. There is a sin [missing the mark, failure] unto [leading to] death [the believer being executed by the Lord], and I do not say that you should pray concerning this one [for example, Saul died the Sin unto Death as per 1 Chronicles 10:13, 14].”

If you know doctrine well enough to discern whether a fellow Christian is “growing in grace and knowledge” (2 Peter 3:18), and you discover that he is very sick and dying, you may pray for his recovery. However, if a Christian is dying from ‘the sin unto death’, you may not pray for him.

How do you know if a Christian is dying the ‘sin unto death?’ If a Christian knows nothing about the spiritual life because he has failed for 40 years to learn the Word of God and is dying, or if a Christian full of fear comes to you screaming “Help, help, I am dying – pray for me please!” then he is obviously dying ‘the sin unto death’.

1 John 5:17. All wrongdoing [*ἀδικία*: unrighteousness] is failure [The Greek word, hamartia in the general sense means to miss the mark, failure]. And there is a sin [failure] not leading to death [If the believer gets out of fellowship through sin but recovers quickly through the use of 1 John 1:9, and continues his spiritual advance, he will not die the sin unto death].

The Greek word, ‘*adikia*’ includes all failure which occurs out of fellowship including sin, good and evil that is manufactured by human power outside of God’s plan (out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit). Every time a Christian, sins, he loses fellowship with the Spirit and begins the stages of Reversionism. However, as long as he recovers fellowship before getting locked into negative volition through the stages of Emotional Revolt of the Soul and Locked in Negative Volition, he will be able to continue his spiritual advance. However, if the believer doesn’t recover fellowship through naming his sins to the Father, he is in deep trouble. Keep in mind that everything the believer does out of fellowship with God is wrongdoing, *adikia* (sin, good and evil). Thus, the believer who spends his entire life out of fellowship with God, will die the sin unto death.

Job’s friends nearly died the Sin unto Death because they interfered with Job’s taking of Evidence Testing. Job 42:7-8, “It came about after the Lord had spoken these words to Job that the Lord said to Eliphaz, the

Temanite, ‘My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends [They were very close to being executed under the concept of the Sin unto Death] because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.’”

Though he may die the Sin unto Death through bad decisions, John explains that since each Christian is in union with Christ, he cannot lose his salvation. You understand that the only way a Christian could lose his position in Christ would be through sin. So, since the believer cannot sin in positional sanctification (in union with Christ), he cannot lose his position in Christ. The believer’s volition only functions in the matter of Experiential Sanctification, only in his experience on this earth can he fail and sin. The Christian cannot sin or fail in any way in Positional Sanctification (in union with Christ) or in Ultimate Sanctification (in his resurrection body). This concept John explains in 1 John 5:18, “We [those who understand that the Christian cannot fail in union with Christ] know that everyone who has been born [regeneration at salvation] from God does not sin [in union with Christ], but He [Jesus] who has been born from God [the Holy Spirit provided the 23 chromosomes at the point of Mary’s conception], keeps watch over him [the believer] and the evil one [Satan] does not snatch him away [Cannot remove his salvation].”

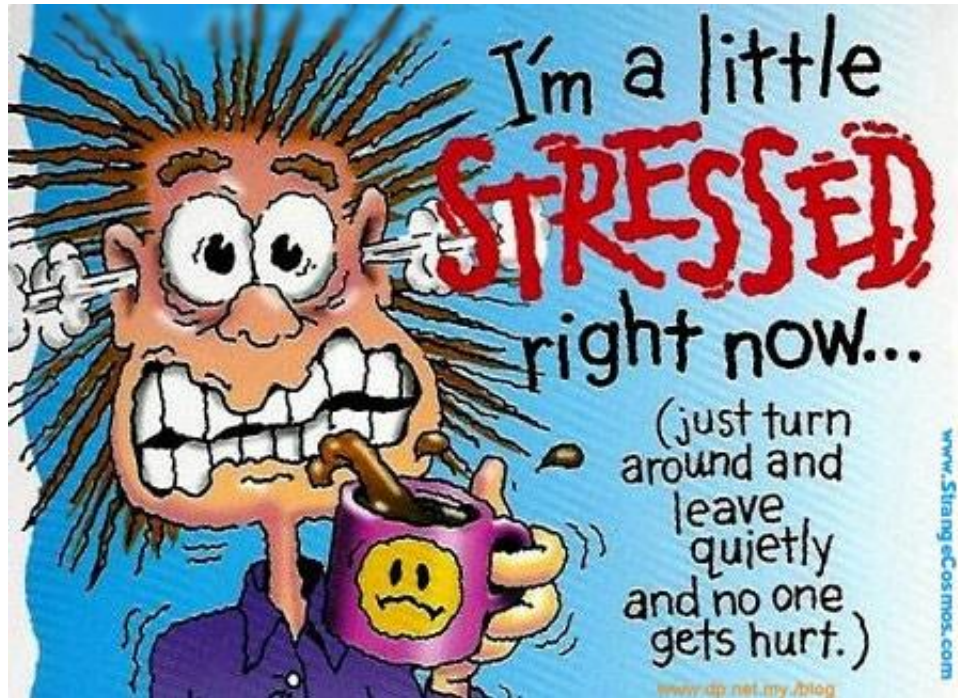
In summary, all Christians sin; none of us are perfect in our experience and never will be (1 John 1:8, 10). So, just because you sin, doesn’t mean that you will die ‘the sin unto death.’ In order for the believer to die ‘the sin unto death’ he must reject learning and applying the Word of God and consequently proceed through the 8 Stages of Reversionism.

Reversionism: Reversionism is an act of reversing or turning in the opposite way, or a state of being so turned. As believers we were designed to execute the protocol plan of God, but in reversionism we turn the other way and cannot be distinguished from our pre-salvation status. Reversionism is the believer’s maladjustment to the integrity and the omnipotence of God.



1. Reaction and Distraction

This reaction and distraction can start on day one as a new believer or two years later, 10 years later etc. It is amazing to me how many new believers fail. They just don't understand the importance of understanding God's plan for their lives. As unbelievers they operated on human ability, talent, personality dynamics and apparently think that they somehow can get by on human power. So, right from the get-go, they are distracted from the spiritual life and live a life of reaction to people, circumstances etc. They have no appreciation for the necessity of God's omnipotence.



The importance of the omnipotence of God:

1. Regarding the incarnation of Christ, the Omnipotence of the Spirit provided the 23 male chromosomes for the virgin conception. At the birth of the humanity of Jesus, the omnipotence of the Father created soul-life and imputed it to the humanity of Christ resulting in human life.
2. For the proto-type spiritual life of Christ, the omnipotence of the Father provided the proto-type spiritual life for the humanity of Christ while the Holy Spirit provided the enabling power that Jesus might put the Father's plan into operation.
3. On the cross, the Father used his omnipotence in judging Jesus for every sin of humanity. During this same time, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit sustained Him and was enabling Him to apply the Word of God during this period of unimaginable suffering.
4. At his resurrection, the omnipotence of the Father returned his human spirit to the body in the grave, and the omnipotence of the Spirit returned

his soul from Hades to the body in the grave. Both the omnipotence of the Father and of the Holy Spirit then provided the humanity of Christ with a resurrection body.

5. In the Christian way of life, the omnipotence of the Father is related to His word via the Portfolio of Invisible Assets and the omnipotence of the Spirit provides the enabling power to learn about these assets.

6. At the Rapture of the Church, the omnipotence of the Father provides the resurrection body of those in interim bodies (corruption becomes incorruption), and the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit provides the resurrection bodies of those who are in their mortal bodies (mortal becomes immortal).

7. In ignorance, these new believers think that they can somehow execute a supernatural way of life without God's omnipotence.

Distraction from the spiritual life can be caused by apathy, indifference and or wrong priorities etc. If one does establish correct priorities, he must organize his life around those priorities otherwise he will be distracted.

For example, to organize one's life around the learning of God's Word means that nothing takes priority over the intake of Bible doctrine. For example, if one is invited to a great party during the time in which he is to go to his Bible study, he turns down the party. If one's girlfriend calls just when it is time for Bible class, he reschedules the conversation etc. This is how one prioritizes the learning of God's word.

If a Christian does not have metabolized doctrine in his soul, he will react emotionally to difficulties, problems, pressures, calamities, disasters, and catastrophes. This means that he will have stress in his soul.

2. Frantic Search for Happiness

In this state of stress, the believer is unhappy. The unhappy believer will try to compensate for his unhappiness by pursuing some form of pseudo happiness. This pseudo happiness promised by the sin nature whether it be something innocuous like traveling or something more sinister like following one's lust pattern into sin cannot make the believer happy since the believer can only be happy in fellowship functioning under the power of God the Father's word and authority and the enabling power of God, the Holy Spirit.



3. Operation Boomerang

If the believer out of fellowship with God gets what he thinks will make him happy, the illusion of happiness, he will become

disillusioned because the illusion of happiness cannot make him happy. On the other hand, if he does not get what he thinks will make him happy, he will become frustrated, and he will assume that if he had gotten what he was pursuing for happiness that he would have become happy. There lies the frustration. Oh, if only Miss Universe would have said yes to my proposal, I would be so happy.

4. Emotional Revolt of the Soul

Emotional revolt means that emotion replaces thought as the criterion by which one makes judgments and decisions. The believer becomes irrational, egocentric, and unstable through emotion for emotion is an empty physiological response; it contains no doctrinal content, no mental function, no norms and standards, and no common sense.

I Corinthians 3:1-3,"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual persons [believers filled with the Spirit], but as unto carnal [fleshly, belonging to the sin nature], as childish ones in Christ. I gave you milk [basic doctrine] to drink, not solid food [advanced spiritual food], for you were not yet able [to receive it], moreover even now, you are still not able [to receive solid food]. For you are still carnal, for while [there is] jealousy and strife among you, are you not carnal and keep walking in conformity with men [unbelievers]?"[Expects a yes for an answer]

Κἀγώ, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἠδυνήθην λαλῆσαι ὑμῖν ὡς πνευματικοῖς ἀλλ' ὡς σαρκίνοις, ὡς νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ. 2 γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρῶμα, οὐπω γὰρ ἐδύνασθε. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἔτι νῦν δύνασθε, 3 ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε. ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε; "O, you Corinthians, our mouths [means of communication by Paul, Apollos, and Timothy] have been opened face to face with you; our right lobes have been enlarged [we were prepared]. Therefore, you have not been hindered by us [Paul, Apollos, Timothy], but you have been hindered by your emotions." (2 Corinthians 6:11-12).

Τὸ στόμα ἡμῶν ἀνέωγεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Κορίνθιοι, ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν πεπλάτυνται· 12 οὐ στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν, στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ὑμῶν·

“For many keep on walking [living out of fellowship] whom many times I kept on telling you and now even weeping I say [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ whose end is destruction [will die the sin unto death] whose god is their emotions and whose glory is in their shame [because they are not executing the spiritual life]. They who keep on concentrating on earthly things [while functioning in Satan’s cosmic system].” (Philippians 3:18, 19)

πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὓς πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίω λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 19 ὧν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια, ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία καὶ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν, οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες.



5. Locked-in Negative Volition

Once emotion becomes the criterion for one's life, the believer is no longer interested in learning God's word. Reality to this believer is his emotion, not divine thought. In effect, he locks himself into the closet of negative volition.

Once when I was living in South Korea, I had the opportunity to teach a class in a Presbyterian Seminary. I was explaining the Recovery Procedure, when a student, after requesting to speak made the following statement: Professor Max, I understand what you are saying regarding 1 John 1:9 and I am not trying to refute your teaching, but it just doesn't work for me for I must weep seriously for quite some time before I feel forgiven of my sins. You see for this young man's reality was not in what the Word teaches but in how he felt.

6. Black-out of the Soul

In demon influence, the soul of the unbeliever or reversionistic believer is infiltrated by false doctrine, called the "doctrine of demons" in 1 Timothy 4:1 which comes through the vacuum of the mind.

1 Timothy 4:1, "But the Spirit [the Holy Spirit is the teacher of Bible doctrine] explicitly teaches that in latter periods of time [between the 1st and 2nd Advents] some [believers] will withdraw from doctrine, concentrating on deceitful personalities [demon evangelism through false teachers] and doctrines from demons."

Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ῥητῶς λέγει ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως, προσέχοντες πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων,

Ephesians 4:17, "Therefore, I communicate this, and because of the Lord, I insist that you no longer walk as the Gentiles [unbelievers] walk in the vacuum of their mind [without truth, the mind sucks in Satanic thinking]."

Τοῦτο οὖν λέγω καὶ μαρτύρομαι ἐν κυρίῳ, μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν,

7. Scar Tissue of the Stream of Consciousness

Ephesians 4:18, "They are darkened in their way of thinking; they have been alienated from the life of God because of ignorance which is in them [in their souls], because of the scar tissue of their stream of consciousnesses."

ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ θεοῦ, διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς, διὰ τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν,

The believer is alienated from the spiritual life that is 'from the life of God' for two reasons namely ignorance of God's plan and hardness of the mentality of the soul. Ignorance begins the process; scar tissue or hardness of the mentality finishes the job. Blackout of the soul merely explains the mechanics of how the believer accumulates false ideas, concepts and doctrine when there is ignorance of God's plan.



8. Reverse Process Reversionism

This is the final stage of reversionism, a combination of the sixth and seventh stages. It is the antithesis of being an invisible hero. Everything that is worthwhile and valuable in life is rejected; everything that is useless and nonsensical is accepted. Prolonged residence out of fellowship causes a complete reversal of all mandates, all priorities, and all norms and standards related to the protocol plan of God.

2 Timothy 3:2-5 states, “For persons will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful ones and anti-establishment [totally irresponsible]. (3) Unloving [no capacity for love], implacable, malicious gossips, without self-control, violent and brutal [unreasonable in thinking and action], not lovers of intrinsic good [no spiritual values and skills]. (4).

Treacherous [disloyal], thoughtless types [insensitive], having become pumped up with arrogance [manifests itself in legalism, socialism, crusader arrogance, activism, and civil disobedience], lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God [false priorities]. (5) Holding to a superficial form [outward appearance] of the spiritual life, but they themselves have disregarded its power [the power of the Father and of the Holy Spirit]; avoid such ones as these.”

2 Timothy 3:2-5, ἔσονται γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι φίλαυτοι, φιλάργυροι, ἀλαζόνες, ὑπερήφανοι, βλάσφημοι, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, ἀχάριστοι, ἀνόσιοι, 3 ἄστοργοι, ἄσπονδοι, διάβολοι, ἀκρατεῖς, ἀνήμεροι, ἀφιλάγαθοι, 4 προδόται, προπετεῖς, τετυφωμένοι, φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι, 5 ἔχοντες μὴ μορφωσιν εὐσεβείας τὴν δὲ δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἠρνημένοι· καὶ τούτους ἀποτρέπου



“all the churches will know that . . .,” the deity and essence of our Lord Jesus Christ is infinite and eternal and in charge. The Lord Jesus Christ has two sources of authority namely He is eternal God, the creator and the sustainer of the universe and authority from having received the title at His session, ‘King over kings and Lord over lords (Revelation 17:14). Jeremiah 11:20 a, “But, O Lord of the armies who judges righteously who tests the kidneys [emotions] and the heart [right lobe].” Jeremiah 17:10, “I, the Lord, search the heart [right lobe], I test the kidneys [emotions], even to give every man according to his modus operandi” Psalm 7:9, “O let the evil of the wicked [the cosmic believer] come to an end but establish the righteous [mature believer]; for the righteous God tests the hearts [right lobes] and the kidneys [emotions].” Psalm 26:2, “Examine me [David], O Lord, and test me; test my emotions and my heart [right lobe].” The Lord judges from the facts regarding how you think and how you emote. So, our Lord never makes a mistake whether in blessing the believer or in executing any Christian under the sin unto death. The Lord investigates the emotions of a believer to see if they are subordinate to metabolized doctrine in the stream of consciousness. If the believer is ruled by his emotions whether good emotions or bad, he cannot be promoted by the Lord for he is too unstable and so cannot be trusted. Emotions must be subordinated to divine thought.

2:24. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching [the revival of the Baal cult], who have not known the deep things of Satan [sarcasm], as they call them—I place no other burden on you.

ὁμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς ἐν Θυατίροις, ὅσοι οὐκ ἔχουσιν τὴν διδαχὴν ταύτην, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βαθέα τοῦ Σατανᾶ, ὡς λέγουσιν, οὐ βάλλω ἐφί ὑμᾶς ἄλλο βάρος·

The indicative mood is declarative for the reality of doctrinal communication from the Lord Jesus Christ through a non-resident pastor. The dative of indirect object indicates the ones in whose interest the communication of doctrine is given. This indirect object is a Dative of

Advantage namely it was beneficial for them to receive Bible instruction from John, a non-face to face communicator who communicated through writing. In that way they would receive their doctrinal lesson. In some generations there is an abundance of pastors for teaching doctrine and a general state of prosperity. However, in other generations there is a lack of pastors and a general state of historical disaster. The issue is not which is the most advantageous face to face teaching or non-face to face teaching, but how can you get good Bible teaching.

In Pergamum we noted that believers were advancing to maturity right under the nose of Satan where Satan's headquarters was. Now in Thyatira we note that believers were advancing to maturity in spite of the distraction of the phallic cult. This advance to maturity took place in areas of special pressure and distraction. It makes no difference whether you live in a large city with many pressures or live in a quiet out-of-the-way place where pressures are relatively small and practically non-existent. You can advance to maturity as easily in a pressure context as you can in a quiet, pleasant country area. You can advance under good government or you can advance under evil government.

In 1 Chronicles 1:13 it says: "And Canaan became the father of Sidon [Phoenicia]." The demand for purple and crimson dye, plus the great maritime free enterprise system, made the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians (the Phoenicians colonized Carthage) a great power without a strong federal government. For over 1000 years they were a great people and a great power for they never went into debt and consequently had one of the most stable governments in the ancient world.

It was through the worship of Baal that the Omri dynasty of the northern kingdom of Israel, the great warrior dynasty namely Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram. Omri attempted to fuse the Phoenicians and the Jews into one powerful race. The Phoenicians were the greatest maritime power, and the Jews were the greatest military power at that time. Ahab and his father before him, Omri, were great soldiers, the greatest generals of their day. So, in order to fuse these two powers, the extremely beautiful, and

intelligent, but evil daughter of the King of Phoenicia, was married off to Ahab the son of King Omri. She brought the phallic cult to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Now, you know the rest of the story.

Believers living inside the divine power system and learning doctrine on a daily basis do not succumb to false teaching; they were not suckers for the phallic cult or any other pressure that came along. Those who did not adhere to this false doctrine were the mature believers who in eternity are going to wear the uniform of translucent light over their resurrection bodies for they have not soiled their clothes taught in Revelation 3. No additional burden or mandate is given to these mature believers who lived and functioned inside the divine system for it isn't necessary to emphasize the negatives with believers who are positive toward doctrine.

2:25. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come [the Rapture of the Church].

πλὴν ὃ ἔχετε κρατήσατε ἄχρις οὗ ἂν ἴξω.

You don't have to tell a positive believer, "Don't do this and Don't do that." Just give them the positive mandates and they will carry it out. However, great Christians need to be reminded that even though they may have reached the highest levels of spiritual growth, it is not over until it is over. The spiritual life continues until the Lord takes us out of this world.

2:26. He who is victorious [in the spiritual life] and keeps My assignments until the end [of his life], To him I will give authority over the nations, [as a blessing in the Millennium];

καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἄχρι τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν,

2:27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces [swift and just punishment of criminals], as I also have received authority from My Father;

καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ, ὡς τὰ σκεύη τὰ κεραμικὰ συντρίβεται,

2:28. Furthermore, I will give him [The Order of the] Morning Star.

ὡς κἀγὼ εἴληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωϊνόν.

“Furthermore, I will give to him [the mature believer, the winner in time] the order of the morning star,” the highest decoration for life on this earth, the highest decoration for historical impact and for glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. The uniform of glory worn over the resurrection body as per Revelation 3:4, 5 and the decoration which goes with it, the Order of the Morning Star, means that there will be a presentation in the court of heaven before the Father and his angels for a few believers out of every generation (Revelation 3:5), those who make the pivot, those who advance to maturity, and pass Evidence Testing.

But that is only a part of the story, because the person who is making the great contribution to history is the believer who advances to maturity. As goes the believer so goes the client nation to God, and the believer living in the divine power system contributes to the uptrend of the client nation, and the believer living in the cosmic system contributes to the downtrend of history. It is the historical impact of the unknown factor, the unknown factor being as goes the believer so goes the historical trends of any given generation. So, at the second advent logically there will be a presentation to the entire population of the world of every person who has the Order of the Morning Star and the Uniform of Glory. The authority of this particular decoration is phenomenal because for one thousand years of perfect environment on the earth namely the Millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Christians who have the Order of the Morning Star on their Uniforms of Glory will rule nations with a rod of iron (perfect justice). And then in eternal state there will obviously be many unique privileges which will belong to the believer who wears the Order of the Morning Star on his Uniform of Glory.

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

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

We learn God’s word by listening to and obeying God the Holy Spirit. The Christian can only advance and glorify the members of the Trinity by putting himself under the authority of the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

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Based on the scholarly work of R.B. Thieme Jr.

I recommend downloading 'THIEME'S BIBLE DOCTRINE DICTIONARY' from this website: rbthieme.org