

## **JESUS AND THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

All that John saw was written to the churches: “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” Rev. 1:20.

The angels are the angels of the seven churches. And the seven candlesticks *are* the seven churches. And where is Christ seen, and what is he doing?—Walking about in the midst of the candlesticks. But the candlesticks are the seven churches. Then do you not see, right on the face of the book of Revelation, that the book of Revelation is church history?

And, as with national history and the book of Daniel, so with church history and the book of Revelation: we can not correctly read church history until we can read the book of Revelation. We can not know church history until we know the book of Revelation. We may read the books that pretend to be, and are, in fact, that phase of, church history; but we do not get the history, the truth of history, until we read the book of Revelation. Then we have church history as it is in truth; even as in Daniel we have national history as it is in truth.

### **AGE OF APOSTOLIC PURITY 31-100 A. D.**

Revelation 2:1: “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. . . .”

As we go along, we remember that “seven” is a word that means complete, or perfect. Thus the seven churches represent the complete church, the church throughout its history from the time of the apostles down to the last days just before Jesus returns the second time. These seven messages apply to seven periods of the church through history.

The “angels” of the seven churches are the messengers, the human leadership of the church in each respective period. God speaks to His people through His ministers whom He has appointed.

The word “Ephesus” means “desirable.” It is a beautiful name for the church of the apostles. Impelled by the love of Christ, the early believers carried the Good News of salvation to the whole inhabited world in one single generation (see Colossians 1:23). The dates for

the church of Ephesus can be roughly considered as from the time of Christ through 100 A. D.

Christianity was preached in Ephesus by Paul in 52 A. D. He remained there three years, longer than at any other place on his recorded missionary journeys. His friends Aquila and Priscilla settled there along with an Alexandrian Jew named Apollos.

Paul returned there around 31-64 A.D. leaving Timothy in charge (1 Tim. 1:3). Ephesus must have been one of the leading centers of Christianity. Consequently it was fitting that Christ's first message by John should have been addressed to this church. Its central location with respect to the Christian world as a whole makes all the more understandable the fact that its spiritual condition could well be characteristic of the whole church during the apostolic period.

Revelation 2:2: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars."

Of each of the seven churches Christ declares, "I know thy works." He is in constant communication with His people. He knows their true state. He observes their order, their piety, their devotion. He is fully acquainted with problems of each church and is able to recommend an appropriate and effective solution.

Too often the church is prone to "bear," or endure, evil teachings and practices in its midst, supposedly in the name of peace. Ministers of Christ may find it easier to remain silent concerning the pet sins of their congregation than to take a bold stand for truth. The church at Ephesus was to be commended for making a clear distinction between truth and error, whether in doctrine or in the life, and for taking a firm stand against error.

Like a brilliant star shining in a dark sky, the story of the early church thrills hearts in all ages. The Good News triumphed everywhere. Hard, proud, world-loving hearts were subdued by its power. There was no need to urge the believers to work for their friends and neighbors. The love of Christ constrained them. They would not resist. Each saw in his brother a reflection of the beauty of Christ. Hearts were bound together as with a golden chain.

Revelation 2:3. "And you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary."

Revelation 2:4. "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

But gradually there came a change. Many lost that first love. They began to forget what it cost the Lord to save them. Mist and clouds covered the cross, obscuring its radiance. The church lost the very idea of what Christ's love means.

Love had been the power of the gospel. Just as an engine sputters and dies when the fuel is gone, so the soul-saving ministry of the early believers stopped when they left their first love.

The word John uses is *agape*, which is like sunshine in that it has within it all the colors of gospel truth. This love, which the early church "left," was new to the ancient world. It was something very unearthly which came from heaven.

The loss of first love results from embracing beliefs associated with the pagan notion of the immortality of the soul. This impacts one's understanding of Jesus' death on the cross. When there is no appreciation of the eternal death of Christ, then faith grows cold and works become laborious legalism.

The pagan Greeks thought they had discovered what love is when the beautiful Alcestis was willing to die for "a good man," her noble and handsome lover, Admetus. But the apostles said, No, that is not the real thing: "God shows His *agape* for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7, 8, RSV). This love for enemies turned the ancient world upside down (see Acts 17:6).

Leaving that first *agape* prepared the way for the corruption of Christianity. It was like substituting a candle for sunlight, the beginning of the "falling away" foretold by Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7). The Book of Revelation will lead us to the rediscovery of that *agape*. What can be more important than finding that which was left by the early church?

Revelation 1:5. "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent."

That which Jesus bids them do, "repent," He enables. It is the goodness of God that leads thee to repentance. Romans 2:4.

Revelation 2:6. "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

The Nicolaitans were a group within the church who claimed to be disciples of Nicolas of Antioch, one of the original seven deacons (Acts 6:5). However, Nicolas himself never taught the evil doctrines which this group believed. They taught that it was right and good to yield to evil lust and passion. The deeds of the flesh do not affect the

purity of the soul, and consequently have no bearing on salvation. This, of course, denied the gospel message. Such teaching is a deduction from the immortality of the soul. The body is evil and is separate from the eternal soul. The body will be stripped from the soul and laid to the dust. Therefore, whatever is done in the body cannot affect the soul.

“The doctrine is now largely taught that the gospel of Christ has made the law of God of no effect; that by ‘believing’ we are released from the necessity of being doers of the Word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned.” ST Jan. 2, 1912.

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

A man may have ears, and yet not listen. One of the first lessons a child should learn is to pay attention. Because human beings are usually too proud to listen, the Lord says, “Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise” (Proverbs 22:17). That wise one is none other than Jesus, “the faithful and true witness.” “It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:5).

Genesis tells us that the tree of life was originally placed in the garden of Eden. To eat of its fruit was to live forever. When our first parents sinned, they were shut out from the garden, lest they eat of the fruit and live a miserable life forever in the sorrow that sin brings. At the close of the thousand years (see Revelation 20), the tree of life will be replanted in the “new earth” where it will bear its “twelve fruits. . . . The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (see Revelation 22:2).

“Must we wait until we are translated before we eat of the leaves of the tree of life? He who receives into his heart the words of Christ knows what it means to eat the leaves of the tree of life.” 7BC 957.

What does it mean to “overcome”? Must we fight a battle?

If you saw a poisonous snake in your pathway, you could not say, “I don’t want to get involved in any conflict; I’ll just do nothing and be neutral.” You would fight the snake and kill it, knowing that if you did nothing, it would either kill you or somebody else.

Jesus does not invite us to fight the other person’s battle, only our own. Sin is worse than a poisonous snake, for it kills. Therefore everyone who has appreciated what Christ accomplished for him on

the cross will join the battle, and will overcome sin in his own life. Whatever your problem, remember that Jesus had the same struggle that you have. You are not asked to do anything He has not already done, for He says that you are overcome “even as I also overcame” (Revelation 3:21). Remembering Him, you cannot fail!

#### THE AGE OF MARTYRDOM 100-323 A. D.

Revelation 2:8: “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life.’”

“When John was called to Ephesus and Smyrna, he remembered the experience at Shechem.” DA 194. The word “Smyrna” means something that smells sweet. This second period of the church was one of persecution and suffering, extending from about A. D. 100 to about A. D. 313 when Constantine espoused the cause of the Christian church.

Revelation 2:9. “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

Intermittent persecution at the hands of various Roman emperors characterized the experience of the church during this period. Trajan (98-117), Hadrian (117-138), and Marcus Aurelius (161-180). Then systematic persecution of Christians was conducted by Decius (249-251) and Valerian (253-259). Political oppression reached a bloody climax under Diocletian (284-305) and his successors.

God does not enjoy seeing His people suffer, but their faithfulness and loyalty under trial honors the name of the Saviour who died for them. The early Christians were generally poor people. James says of them, “Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” (James 2:5.)

False brethren were a severe trial. The “Jews” mentioned here were members who professed to follow Christ, but who were in heart lovers of self and of the world. These insincere converts made trouble for those who chose to follow the footsteps of Christ. They continually sought to bring in heathen beliefs and customs to corrupt the faith. The book of Acts reveals that many of the troubles of the early church grew out of slanderous accusations hurled at them by Jews (see Acts 13:45; 14:2, 19; 17:5, 13; 18:5, 6, 12; 21:27). In the 2d century Jews

are said to have brought about the martyrdom of Polycarp, a bishop of Smyrna. During this time Tertullian speaks of the synagogues as “fountains of persecution” (*Scorpiace* 10; *ANF*, vol. 3, p. 643).

As a center of Jewish communal life the synagogue was the place where many an evil plot was formed against Christians. The name Satan means “accuser,” or “adversary” (Rev. 12:10). The Jewish centers became “synagogues of the accuser.”

“Satan has a church upon the earth which out-numbers the church of Christ. Christ calls it the “Synagogue of Satan,” because its members are the children of sin and transgression. They have ceased to honor God, they have cast his divine law aside, they have confounded the distinction between good and evil.” *GCB* Apr. 1, 1897.

Revelation 2:10. “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, *and* I will give you the crown of life.”

The “ten days” of tribulation are a prophetic period of time. Each day stands for a year (see Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6, “I have laid on you a day for each year”). The last and the most bloody pagan persecution was under the Emperor Diocletian between the years A.D. 303-313, which ten years are a remarkable fulfillment of these “ten days” of prophetic symbolic time. The Roman authorities concentrated their terrors on the Christian clergy, in the belief that if the shepherds were destroyed, the flock would scatter. The horrors of this persecution are vividly described by the church historian Theodoret (*Ecclesiastical History*, i. 6) who describes the gathering of the bishops of the church to the Council of Nicaea some years after the end of the persecution (A. D. 325). Some came without eyes, some without arms, which had been pulled from their sockets, others with their bodies horribly maimed in different ways. In 313, Constantine issued an edict that granted Christians full liberty to practice their religion.

Those who die for their faith in Christ need not fear. Smyrna proved to be a faithful church “up to and including death.” *Stephanos*, “garland, of victory,” used for the wreaths given to victors in Greek games. Here, it is a symbol of the reward given to the victor in the struggle with Satan. “The Lord will give them a “crown of life” which is to be given at Christ’s appearing when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise first (see 2

Timothy 4:8 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). Some of God's people today may suffer death. Let them not fear, but trust in this promise for it is but a "sleep."

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

"Do not fear those who kill the body but can not kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28). The "second death" is the one to be feared, for it is eternal and hopeless, without any resurrection. The "second death" is the final destruction of the lost after the "thousand years" (see Revelation 20).

#### THE CHURCH OF EXALTATION 323-538 A. D.

Revelation 2:12: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword.'"

The word "Pergamos" means "height, elevation," "citadel," or "acropolis." The original city was built on a high rocky hill rising a thousand feet above the valley. This city had been the capital of the Roman province of Asia for two centuries after its last king, Attalus III, bequeathed it, along with the kingdom of Pergamum, to Rome in 133 B. C.

The church between A.D. 313 and A.D. 538 was highly exalted before the world. From the status of a proscribed and persecuted sect it rose to a position of unchallenged popularity and power. It had become very obvious that the religion of Jesus was what the world needed, hence the great success in attracting converts. This was the time when persecution practically ceased and even the Emperor Constantine himself professed to be a Christian. Honored and praised by the world, the church entered a time of great danger! Satan had failed to destroy the church through persecution; now he began to corrupt the faith from within.

Revelation 2:13. "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells."

"Satan's seat" is the special place where he works. During this period, the "mystery of iniquity" was working to mislead the church, and Satan was laying the foundation of a great falling away from the truth.

The word “Nicolaitans” comes from the two words *nikao* and *laos*: *nikao* means “to conquer,” to get “the *upper hand*,” to have “the *ascendancy*, in all relations”; and *laos*—“the people at large” as distinguished from “the clergy.”

The word then signifies that conquering or conquest of “the people” of the churches by that mischievous insect of the *kleros* or “clergy” in the Christian beehive: that persistent spirit of the princedom of the Gentiles that must exercise among Christians dominion and authority.

In the Ephesus period of the churches where this thing was first manifested it was *hated*. But when we come only to the third period, that of Pergamos, it was actually *held*. “So hast thou also *them that hold* the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, *which thing I hate*.” Rev. 2:15.

The Pergamos period of the churches centered “where Satan’s seat is,” “where Satan dwelleth,” and where “Antipas” was Christ’s “faithful martyr.” Rev. 2:13.

The word “Antipas,” like the word “Nicolaitanes,” is a symbolical word. It comes from the two words *anti* and *pas*: *anti* signifying “against” or “opposed to,” and *pas* the plural of “pa,” which is the abbreviation of pa-pa, from which come the words “pa-pa-cy” and “pope.”

The Pergamos period of the churches, then, was the time of the rise and formation of the system of the pa-pa-cy. Those who opposed it are symbolized in the word “Antipas.” And to oppose it meant martyrdom *then*, as it did also in The Reformation, and as it always does.

These two statements made by the Lord Jesus show the growth of the clerical spirit and power in its conquest of the people. In the first period, it was *hated* in the churches. But in only the third period that pernicious “doctrine” was *held*.

Yet in the first period, in the third period, and in all periods, the divine Christ sets forever His holy word, “*which thing I hate*.” And let all people forever say, Amen.

Then, in the next stage of the church, the Lord commends his faithful ones who dwelt “where Satan’s seat is,” and who had held fast his name, and had not denied his faith, “even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr.” This word “Antipas” is not a person’s *name*, but is a *term* characteristic of the times. It is composed of two words,—*anti anti*, and *pappas pappas*. *Anti anti* signifies *against*, and *pappas pappas*, papa, which is our English, and

also the universal, word for “papa.” And this word “papa” is the original of the word “*pope*.”

Therefore this word “Antipas”—“against pappas”—shows the growth of the *papa-cy* in the period immediately following A.D. 312. This was the period of Constantine, and onward, in which the *papa-cy* itself was distinctly made, and began openly to assert its authority. And, in that time, the history records that while other principal bishops of the church bore the title of “patriarch,” “the bishop of Rome studiously avoided the title of ‘patriarch,’ as placing him on a level with other ‘patriarchs.’ He always preferred the title of ‘*papa*,’ or ‘*pope*’ (*Schaff*): and this, because ‘patriarch’ bespeaks an oligarchical church government, that is, government by a few; whereas ‘pope’ bespeaks a monarchical church government, that is, government by one.”—“*Two Republics*,” page 485.

Thus the history and the word of the counsel of Christ, unite in marking as the characteristic of that phase of the church the formation of the *papa-cy*, and the assertion of the authority of the pope.

History does not tell us about any single individual called “Antipas,” but it is understood that this name represents a group of people in the church who lost their lives because they defended God’s truth against the rising arrogance of the Roman popes.

“Anti” means opposed, and “Papās” means father, or pope. Thus the “Antipas” party were those who opposed the growing power and claims of the papacy. Christ commended Antipas!

Revelation 2:14. “But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.”

But some willingly denied God’s truth in order to reap the advantages of worldly wealth and honor just as Balaam was willing to curse Israel if paid a high enough price (see Numbers 22-25).

The two practices here mentioned had been expressly prohibited by the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:29); Rom. 14:1; 1 Cor. 8:1). Balaam influenced Israel to commit “whoredom with the daughters of Moab,” to sacrifice to Moabite gods, and to “eat,” meat sacrificed to these gods (Num. 25:1, 2; 31:16).

These two sins led to a mixture of paganism with true religion. Applied to Christian history, this portrayal is peculiarly appropriate to the situation in the church in the period following the legalization of

Christianity by Constantine in A. D. 313 and his nominal conversion ten years later. This emperor pursued a policy of blending paganism and Christianity at as many points as possible, in a studied attempt to unite the diverse elements with the empire and thus strengthen it. The favorable, even dominant, position he accorded the church made it a prey to the temptations that always accompany prosperity and popularity. Under Constantine and his successors, almost all of whom continued his favorable policy, the church rapidly became a politico-ecclesiastical institution and lost much of its former spirituality.

“Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. . . . As persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. . . . This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of the ‘man of sin’ foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. . . . To secure worldly gains and honors, the church was led to seek the favor and support of the great men of earth; and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance to the representative of Satan—the bishop of Rome.”<sup>1</sup>

Revelation 2:15. “Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.”

The word “Nicolaitans” comes from the two words *nikao* and *laos*: *nikao* means “to conquer,” to get “the *upper hand*,” to have “the *ascendancy*, in all relations”; and *laos*—“the people at large” as distinguished from “the clergy.”

The word then signifies that conquering or conquest of “the people” of the churches by that mischievous insect of the *kleros* or “clergy” in the Christian beehive: that persistent spirit of the princedom of the Gentiles that must exercise among Christians dominion and authority.

Revelation 2:16. “Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”

Revelation 2:17. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. 49, 50.

hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

Christ as Ruler comes out of Bethlehem. Bethlehem, literally, is the “House of Bread.” Out of the house of bread comes the Ruler, whose work is to feed the people. How significant! More than this, He Himself is the Bread of Life. In the house of God there is always an abundance of “the hidden manna,” enough and to spare. Here is a lesson for all who are in positions of authority in the church. Their work is to take the Bread of Life from the House of Bread, to feed upon it themselves, and then feed the people with it.

#### THE AGE OF ADVERSITY 538-1648 A. D.

Revelation 2:18: “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.’”

The church during the Dark Ages proved to be a time of surpassing difficulty for those who truly loved and served God. Because of persecution the flame of truth flickered and nearly went out. “In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the papacy. . . . And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7. Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman’s ax. . . . For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity.” GC 54, 55. The Scriptures not being available to the ordinary Christian, tradition was exalted in their place. Works came to be considered a means of attaining salvation. The Reformation consisted essentially in a revival and restoration of the great truths of the gospel. It proclaimed that men are saved by faith in Christ, that their only standard of faith and practice is Scripture, and that every man may appear on his own behalf before the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, without a human intercessor.

Revelation 2:19. “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.”

Galatians 5:6. "Faith which worketh by love." John 3:16.

Revelation 2:20. "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile My servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

Just as Antipas refers not to some individual but to a group of people, so Jezebel is the name God gave to a group in the church whose beliefs and character resembled that of the heathen queen of ancient Israel.

A prophetess of the heathen god Baal, Jezebel did all she could to seduce God's people in Elijah's day. God never called Jezebel to her work. An apostate king of Israel, Ahab, married her and brought her in to seduce Israel. Bitterly she persecuted those few Israelites who remained loyal to God (see 1 Kings 18:13; 19:2; 21:7-14).

We can hardly blame God's people in the Dark Ages for weakening a little now and then to permit the "Jezebel" of Roman apostasy "to teach and beguile" God's servants. Apostasy is very subtle and alluring. But Jesus rebuked His church in the Dark Ages for weakening even a little!

"To afford converts from heathenism a substitute for the worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship. The decree of a general council finally established this system of idolatry. To complete the sacrilegious work, Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment, forbidding image worship, and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number." GC 52.

"When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of 'heresy.'" GC 443.

Do not weaken your hold on the Lord and let the enemy discourage you. He will punish "Jezebel," and will honor all who have endured trial and suffering for His cause.

Revelation 2:21, 22. "And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed, I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great

tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death. And all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.”

Revelation 2:24: “But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they call them, I will put on you no other burden.”

These are the loyal believers in Thyatira. Historically, this refers to small groups throughout the Middle Ages that sought to remain loyal to apostolic Christianity. Such movements were found both within and without the formal framework of the Catholic Church. Particularly important were such groups as the Waldenses on the continent of Europe and the followers of Wyclif in England. Neither of these groups had the measure of evangelical truth that was proclaimed later in the Protestant Reformation, but the message “unto the rest in Thyatira” was appropriate to them. Upon them God put no further burden than to be faithful to the light that was theirs.

Revelation 2:25. “But hold fast what you have till I come.”

Hold fast to the comfort, the faith, the hope, that God has given you in His Word. Never be discouraged. A discouraged man can do nothing. Satan is seeking to discourage you, telling you it is of no use to serve God, that it does not pay, and that it is just as well to have pleasure and enjoyment in this world.

“The very existence of this people, holding the faith of the ancient church, was a constant testimony to Rome’s apostasy, and therefore excited the most bitter hatred and persecution. Their refusal to surrender the Scriptures was also an offense that Rome could not tolerate.” GC 76.

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

“Christ has pledged Himself to help all who join his army, to co-operate with Him in fighting against visible and invisible foes. He has promised that they shall be joint heirs with Him to an immortal inheritance, that they shall reign as kings and priests before God. Those who are willing to share in this life the humiliation of the Saviour, will share with Him in His glory. Those who choose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, will be given a place with Christ on His throne.” ST Nov. 14, 1890.

Not to the proud people of earth, but to the meek, will be given this “power over the nations” at the second coming of Christ. While some people use guns to obtain power in this sinful world, God’s people surrender even their lives for Christ’s sake. They dare to follow the footsteps of Him who was “meek and lowly in heart.” But they will be rewarded!

Revelation 2:27, 28. “He shall rule them with a rod of iron; As the potter’s vessels shall be broken to pieces’ as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.”

The “nations” who have despised them will be prostrate before them, and they will “rule them with a rod of iron” in judgment.

The passage is quoted from Ps. 2:9, cf. Rev. 19:15.

“Christ is the ‘bright and morning star.’ He is the Christian’s light.” RH Oct. 6, 1896. “Every true believer catches the beams from the Morning Star and transmits the light to those who sit in darkness. Not only do they shine amid the darkness of their own neighborhood, but as a church they shine forth to regions beyond.” TDG 327.

Revelation 2:29. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”