

# Revelation

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[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the book of the Revelation, chapter 2, and verse 7.

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

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Chapter 2, the book of the Revelation, and the 7th verse.

This is a word which was penned to the angel of the church of Ephesus long ago. And you may wonder, some of you, as it was penned to the church of Ephesus, what it has got to do with us nowadays.

[ 1 : 24 ] It has got much to do with us. If you have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, you will notice the word churches is put in the plural.

And the word of God says, whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort in these scriptures might have hope.

And Godly John was inspired by the Spirit of God to record these epistles to the seven churches of Asia, of which the church of Ephesus was the one outstanding.

The one that was most important at the time of writing. And it might be, in the contemplation of it, there are some things which are especially applicable for any of us who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches to contemplate nowadays.

I have thought sometimes about this little epistle unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, right?

[ 3 : 00 ] That it is really the second epistle to the Ephesians. Although the Apostle Paul penned the big epistle to the Ephesians.

But Godly John was inspired to record this epistle also. And dear friends, if you contemplate the epistle to the Ephesians that Paul was inspired of God to record, you will find there is a great contrast between that epistle and this epistle which godly John was inspired of God to record.

And it is written, as I said, for our learning. And now, the church at Ephesus, I have told you, not once or twice in my long ministry about the church at Ephesus, it was an outstanding church.

And God added to it those who should be saved until it became an outstanding church. And it was outstanding for a long while for the knowledge of the deep things of God given to those who were in the church.

And also their godliness. And the Apostle Paul must have rejoiced often as he contemplated how he had been the means in the hand of God of that church at Ephesus being built up to the state it ultimately reached as the most important church of the churches in Asia.

[ 5 : 05 ] And now, I go back in approaching the subject to call to your minds what the Apostle Paul said when after he had labored three years and more at Ephesus and his labor so owned of God to the church being built up as it was, but the time came when he had to say to them farewell.

And in his farewell, he makes this statement, And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone, preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Wherefore, I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. This is a great statement.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. There was no compromising, no rounding the corners of doctrine, no temporising, no toning down.

No, it was just the gospel of the grace of God as the Holy Spirit gave him ability to proclaim it, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear.

[ 6 : 34 ] And he says, Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

And now, long years afterwards, there comes this epistle unto the angel of the church of Ephesus.

And as far as church history can make it plain, Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus.

And it gives you a great deal of searching of heart because the apostle Paul, as Paul the aged, was very attached to Timothy, who was young in the things of God and also in the ministry.

But the apostle Paul was inspired to pen to him epistles as to how he should behave. And sometimes, as you read down these epistles to these churches of Asia, I'm speaking now from a pastor's viewpoint, there is a feeling like priests, like people.

[ 8 : 00 ] And there must have been something that happened in this church at Ephesus whereby there was such a great decline.

And now, to come right down to our subject, let us look at the setting of it because it will help to give us a right understanding of what a church state really is.

And now, in the preceding chapter, this is the concluding word.

The mystery of the stars which thou sawest in my right hand. Jesus Christ is speaking. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Remember that. 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.

[ 9 : 08 ] And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. And now, that will help you to understand a little of the setting of the subject.

The angel means messenger, the pastor of the church. And Jesus Christ declares that such an one is a star to shine with that light that God, as the light of the world, is pleased to give to such an one where God, as ordained, is labours to be.

And so, the word goes on, unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand.

There I must pause. There is a comment needful to make. If there is a pastor ordained to be over the church, it is not by chance he is where he is.

He that holdeth the seven stars, he has got not only seven, but seven thousand, seven hundred thousand scattered about the world at large.

[ 10 : 35 ] And they are in his right hand to do that work which he has ordained for them to do wherever he has ordained their labours to be, whether it be long or short.

And it should never be forgotten that a God-given pastor is indeed one whom you should remember that Jesus Christ as the church's living head has that God-given pastor in his right hand to do that work which he purposes he shall do.

And then it goes on. These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

And now the seven golden candlesticks I have told you are the seven churches. And now every church which is formed aright built on that foundation which God has laid in Zion however small that church may be or large it matters not.

where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them. Mark that word in in the midst.

[ 12 : 09 ] And what does this word tell us? Who walketh present tense in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks so that Jesus Christ as the church's living head walks in our midst observes all that is happening whether it be to his honor and glory as we do desire it to be or if it be inimical to his honor and glory as we do not desire it ever should be who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

Now the thing I want to emphasize dear friends is this that a church state is of God and it is a wonderful mercy wherever a church is established wherever it may be and Jesus Christ as the church's living head ever has his eye upon that church and all who belong to it and he if there is a pastor whoever it may be the angel of the church it might do you good I'm not fitting any caps on this is a very solemn subject to me it might do you good I say if you keep in mind that Jesus Christ as the church's living head is ever present in the midst of wherever there is a golden candlestick and he marks the behavior of all who worship

God therein whether in the church or out but especially those in the church and so this word goes on I know I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience and thou thou canst not bear them which are evil and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not and hast found them liars and hast borne and hast patience and for my name's sake hast labored and not fainted and now as you read that down there is much in it that is commendable but there is something which has got to be attended to if the church at Ephesus is to continue as a church and not die out nevertheless

I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love and now here the spirit of God inspired godly John to pen this second epistle to the Ephesians to bring to their remembrance the contrast there was between what their church used to be in Paul's day and what it was at the time John was commanded to write there was a great contrast in the early history the church was eminent for godliness the unity of the spirit was known and felt therein the glory of god was the aim of those who carried on the church and worshipped god but now there is a difference

I said a contrast and I might bring this home at least I hope god would do it if you remember when you first of all joined our church I tell you I'm not fitting any caps on I'm just telling you the truth as it is unfolded here as I observe it if you remember when you first of all joined our church let us bring it right down home not just the church at Ephesus the church at Union Chapel Bethelstone can it not be said to you and to me nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou was left thy first love when you joined the church I remember how earnest you were and how urgent in the things of God how your heart was warm and your ear attent to hear whatever

[ 17 : 28 ] God the Lord would say to you and how ready you were every time the worship of God was being carried on to be there and share in the blessing of the Lord therein but many days have passed since then and nowadays you have the memory of what you used to be when first of all you followed me says Jesus but where are you in your soul's experience when you contrast how you used to feel and how you often feel nowadays you are still a chapel goer you still gather together in the worship of God and it may be here a little there a little you get some help but is it not your lamentation all for a closer walk with God a calm a heavenly frame a light to shine upon the road that leads me to the land all glad some of us would be if

God would only bring back again what we humbly hope we did feel in what is designated thy first love when when the things of God were indeed blessed realities in our soul's experience when we could say more often than we do nowadays it is good for me to draw near unto God when Jesus Christ was precious oh they were good days called to remembrance the former days and now this word somewhat is put in italics which means it is not in the original therefore you must not think it is just a little complaint Jesus Christ is making against the church of

Ephesus no no nevertheless although there are still good things which I am glad to record concerning you you are still following on to know me though too often you were following afar off you have not given up you have not gone back nevertheless I have this against thee because things are not with you nowadays as they used to be when first of all you were made one in the church fellowship preacher and people alike can all lay these things to heart if God would only make over again to you what you were helped to feel when first of all he dealt with you and you were found at

Calvary's cross and realized your interest in what was done thereon and how earnest and urgent you were then in following on to know the Lord you were not sidetracked then by radio and television and such like things to do with the world but your concern was to get in touch with God and to remember when on the bell rich fruit we see tis then we cry a goodly tree but now you have to ponder sometimes and think of the mercy that the woodman has not come along with his axe and the command gone forth cut it down why cumbereth it the ground have you not been glad to sing for sure of all the plants that bear the notice of the father's eye none proves less grateful for his care or yields him meaner fruit than

I dear friends do beyond the stretch as God shall help you and he will help you if so be you can get back your first love get back that early zeal and earnestness that you once enjoyed in the things of God before the world the flesh and the devil made such havoc with you as has been done alas do the first works

[ 23 : 12 ] I have heard people say some of you have said it and I have heard it up and down in our denominational life oh if I could only feel nowadays in the things of God like I used to this is the way to get somewhat at least if not more of the feeling back again in your soul's experience remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works and then there is this warning if you continue to go on as you are and get lower and lower and the church dies down ask to the first love being in evidence you will just become a church with a name to live but ultimately you will die out altogether and that is just what happened alas that it should be so to the church at

Ephesus I will come on to thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent and now you see dear friends there are just two things I want to emphasize and I want you to prayerfully consider them as the days go on and as long as you live a church state is God given and it is to be prized it is no small mercy to belong to the church of Christ where any part of it is set up as a local church it is a mercy to be prized and wherever there is a pastor he is to be acknowledged as one of the stars which Jesus Christ holds in his own hand and that

I will give you pastors after mine own heart the word of God says and wherever there is a church with a pastor set over it you should be ever saying thank you to God that you belong to the church where he is and to remember what the apostle Paul declared brethren pray for us and says Paul and for me also that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak and now that may seem a rather long leading up to our subject but it is to do with the subject and now it comes to this he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches what the spirit saith you see dear friend if a pastor is ordained to be over a church and the gift of God to that church then his great concern is in whatever he preaches to declare what the spirit saith unto the churches

I have so often admired that good Cornelius when he said to Peter we are all here present before God to hear the things commanded thee of God to tell us there may be something said sometimes which you do not understand fully what is their intent there will be some things it may be wherein you wonder if you will ever know what the pastor is setting for but at the same time the word of God encourages you he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches do you possess an ear and now that is the great essential he that hath an ear and you must not forget what the dear saviour said with regard to the parable of the sower there was the way side hearer the stony ground hearer and the thorny ground hearer and they were all hearers the seed was sown it was the same seed good seed was sown on that ground but there was no result which brought glory to

God but it does say and other fell on good ground and now that is what you and I must be concerned about as we journey on through life oh to have that good and honest heart where the word of God will fall a seed and spring up and bear fruit in our lips and lives the Savior said to his disciples blessed are your ears for they hear do you he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit said unto the churches and now I dare not take up time but I must just make a passing comment for you to prayerfully think about what the spirit said unto the churches is not always said from the pulpit it may be said in things that are happening in the churches when there are things manifest of which godly

[ 29 : 56 ] James would say my brethren these things ought not so to be and it bears corresponding fruit so that if there should be things that ought not to be dissension controversy division then there is a word which says is the spirit of the lord straightened are these his doings do not my words do good to them that walk uprightly he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit said unto the churches you see it means that you and I must be like little

Samuel oh give me Samuel's ear the open ear oh lord alive and quick to hear each whisper of thy word the hymn writer was rightly led when he said whisper god does not make a noise speaking with great reverence when he speaks to the churches no often he speaks to his dear people in the churches how glad you are to hear it too with a still small voice voice you remember Elijah of old there was the earthquake there was the wind and the lord was not in it nor in the fire but afterwards a still small voice and when

Elijah heard that he wrapped himself in his mantle and went and stood in the mouth of the cave to hear what god the lord had got to say to him in as much as he was where he was and now if you have something like that come into your life you will not forget it when the spirit deals with you and you hear what he has to say concerning you and maybe wherein you have heard and strayed like a lost sheep but while he may chasten you he will not cut you off nor as many as I love I rebuke and chasten be zealous therefore and repent and now in our subject here either athen ear let him hear what the spirit said unto the churches to him that overcometh will

I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God let us look at that viewpoint of it and dear friends oh that it may be our aim as grace is given to be him that overcometh I know in your mind you will react to the character and say alas I seem more often to be overcome and yet it may be you are still the character referred to you do desire to follow on to know the Lord and to have matters right between your soul and God and even though you do meet with setbacks and too often seem overcome yet you have not given up and gone back upon your profession like those disciples of old in the

Savior's time were left to do all when they heard the word of God preached as Jesus alone could preach it is the spirit that quickeneth the flesh profiteth nothing this is a hard saying who can hear it from that many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him there is this question then said Jesus will ye also go away and now what are you going to do about that are you going to give up and go back and live in the world and of it and have no more consideration of what it is to win

[ 35 : 21 ] Christ and be found in him and to ultimately dwell forever with him where he is oh very solemn thing when people who have been religious people make up their minds to have no more to do with it in any way whatever and go back to live just as they were born they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap life everlasting he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches as

I view our denominational life I believe the spirit is saying a great deal to our churches in the things that are happening and things which have happened and when I look back over my long ministerial life it just amazes me and I nearly said it terrifies me remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works or else I will come quickly unto thee and remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent scores and scores of candlesticks have been removed during my ministerial life where there were churches good congregations where

God was worshipped to right and in the early days of my ministry those in those causes of truth lived well died well but they died out something went wrong and now the great thing is to weigh these matters up to purpose and profit he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit said unto the churches and it means this he that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved oh very solemn to think of making shipwreck in our profession while in the site of the harbor that you have labored across the sea to attain unto and then to strike the rocks and go down a very solemn consideration you and

I may well sing lord hast thou made me know thy ways conduct me in thy fear and grant me such supplies of grace that I may persevere and now let us look at this character him that overcometh it is to make plain to us first of all that the life of the righteous means it is a life of conflict it is sometimes said to be a fight fight the good fight of faith sometimes it is likened to run in a race and says Paul so run that ye may obtain and sometimes it is illustrated by wrestling we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and against powers and against spiritual wickedness in high places have you ever thought of that illustration have you ever considered what is spiritual wickedness you see everyday wickedness to do with the flesh and the vice arising from what one is by nature as you look round the world and see the world doing wickedly but you have got to wrestle against spiritual wickedness to him that overcometh and now that means as long as you live you will be engaged in this business of overcoming however much you seem to fail and seem overcome you will have to rise up and go on again yes though the corruptions of thy heart daily new cause of grief impart still pray that all thy lust be slain nor shalt thou seek his face in vain no it is an everyday struggle the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and the one is contrary to the other so that ye cannot do the things that ye would to him that overcometh first of all and I might say last of all though I shall name some others in between there is self to be overcome dear friend

I have told you not once or twice you will remember it if I tell you again all the trouble that has ever arisen in any causes of truth in our denominational life and that which has rent churches asunder has arisen from what one is by nature not what one is by grace the thing is impossible if you are in your first love when you think of what that was and how you were in such earnestness of spirit to live the life of the righteous and to follow Jesus and to follow him with that feeling everything that's dear to him to me is also dear you never dreamed then that you would live to see things happen in churches that cause you sorrow of heart and that such things should ever be with those who were taught of

[ 43 : 01 ] God and yet they have not overcome one thing which is essential he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city one thing I have observed throughout my ministry and that is that men could contend for what they believe to be right things in a wrong spirit and the wrong spirit triumphed so that while what they contended for as they judged were right things yet the wrong spirit produced the bitterness and the dissension and rent the cause asunder and brought division and now these things are to be overcome ere it is too late ever on thy captain calling make thy worst condition known he shall hold thee up when falling or shall lift thee up when down dear friends that is what you and

I have got to be more in earnest about I know it is hard but you must come to it as grace is given oh crucify this self that is what is needed crucifixion of self to him that overcometh self to him that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches not what saith this individual or that as to what his thoughts about matters may be what saith the scriptures there is our standard and there alone we must stand for remember that to him that overcometh yes it means to not only self is to be overcome the great eye in you to be crucified there is to be the world overcome which means you are to live separated from it as regards the spirit of it in the world you must be and live and move therein to earn the bread which perisheth and live your everyday life but what you have got to learn is to overcome the world so that you are in it but not of it and that needs a great deal of grace having that feeling

I would rather be a door keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness oh how much there is to overcome it will come against us if we are indeed in the church of Christ a right we shall know these things coming into our lives arising from what one is by nature as I have said then there are temptations to be overcome this word is not written for nor resist the devil and he will flee from you so that even the devil can be overcome Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees then there are other things I can only give you hints for I must soon come to the amen to him that overcometh and now there is what one is by nature to be overcome it is very solemn when people say it is in my makeup it is my natural temperament

I cannot help it hey but if you listen to what the spirit saith unto the churches you must help it if you are in the church you are not allowed any excuses any palliation any extenuation concerning what you are by nature no there is a word which says where sin hath abounded grace shall much more abound to him that overcometh yes then there is formality in our profession to be overcome you may often be troubled by it when you come up to worship God and feel you have been so tossed about in everyday life that you are not in a fit frame of mind to worship God and get any good hey but you are not allowed to argue like that to him that overcometh whatever his frames of feelings may be there is help in

God and there is hope in God and remember where two or three are gathered together there am I in the midst of them and he who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks will discern you in your pew and not only you just sitting there he will discern you through and through and know what is going on inside and he will know if there are sighs and cries and groans and wishes and longings and hungerings and thirstings going up before the majesty of heaven that you may be helped to worship God aright and get some good for your soul yes to him that overcometh then there is much coldness often and there is this to overcome you might think this strange you dear young people but you will know something about it if

[ 49 : 32 ] God should be pleased to teach you as he is teaching some of you and I hope he would teach all of you but there is this to be overcome I say and that is what you will be surprised to feel an aversion to prayer what did the hymn writer say long we either slight or doubt him and so we do till when all the means we try find we cannot do without him then at last to him we cry alas to him that overcometh to him that stands at the foot of Jacob's ladder lord help me oh lord i am oppressed undertake for me say unto my soul i am thy salvation leave not my soul destitute then there is this to overcome and that is our inability to do good i have told you and i am bound to keep telling you these things for i do want them to be as nails fastened in sure places in your soul's experience i would do good but evil is present with me and now that evil is to be overcome that you might do good and not just settle down in a kind of fatalistic ease and think without me ye can do nothing and therefore you do nothing that is one of the most travestied scriptures in the word of god and how sometimes it has been quoted but what did the saviour mean without me severed from me as a branch from the vine ye can do nothing but with me i will make all grace abound toward you and says paul i can do all things through christ who strengthen me and now all to be him that overcometh like that and not just to settle down on the lease of a fatalistic outlook of a profession of the name of jesus and think you must wait till god is pleased to exercise you unto godliness but that is not how it is put in the word of god it is put as an injunction for you to do it exercise thyself unto godliness which means that you must hear what the spirit saith unto the churches and what does he say wait on the lord be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart wait I say on the lord yes he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches to him that overcometh will

I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of god I must look at that viewpoint of the subject when it is another sermon time as grace is given but meanwhile all that you might have this ear oh it is so essential to possess it either at an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches and he says this they that wait upon the lord shall renew their strength and he says this blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled to him that overcometh oh what a mercy to have that living faith and that grace to super abound over all that one is by nature to be such a character to him that overcometh will

I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God dear friends the Lord help you to weigh these things up and may something which has been said be helpful to you amen or for all Beyonce