

OVER COMERS IN CHRIST JESUS

PART # 8

9-27-26

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN "OVER COMMER" AND THE SEVEN PROMISES FROM GOD –
TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF "THE BOOK OF REVELATION"

THE CHURCH OF EPHEBUS

REVELATION 2, begins with a series of brief letters, to "The Seven Churches", that existed during the Apostle John's time, and of which he was the overseer of and knew the church well. This city is where Mary", the mother of Jesus, lived and died, and was buried at her passing. The city of Ephesus is mentioned 17 times in 17 verses, in the New Testament Bible. It was located in "Asia Minor" or in the modern-day country of "Turkey" today.

The Church of Ephesus was not one large church but a series of 200 plus home churches, each of these passages included information appropriate to each church and from these messages, we can draw lessons for ourselves and for our church today. The first letter, is to the Church of Ephesus, which means "DESIRABLE" and in many ways it was certainly a pleasant place to live. The Apostle Paul made a Journey to Ephesus, during his second missionary trip and stayed there for 2 years – so that all the Jews and Gentiles that lived in the city could hear "The Word of God" (ACTS 19: 10).

REVELATION 2: 1 – 7 - TEXT

The first thing to note, in this letter to the Ephesian Church, is that the message, is from the Lord Jesus Christ: "To the angel (Messenger) of the Church of Ephesus ... (REVELATION 2:1). This is not the Apostle John's message, to the Ephesian believers; it is a message from the Lord, the one "Who holds the "Seven Stars" in His right hand and walks among the "Seven Golden Lampstands". The "Lampstands", are the churches themselves – set as LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD; the Stars" are the pastors of the churches, held in God's hand.

JESUS NOTES THE GOOD WORKS OF THE CHURCH:

REVELATION 2: 2 – "I know THY WORKS, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou can't not bear them which are evil: and thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and has found them LIARS (That was probably a lot of "Spiritual Warfare)".

REVELATION 2: 3 – "And hast borne (To bear what is burdensome), and has patience, and for my namesake hast labored, and hast not fainted".

"I KNOW thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience (I know your hard work and perseverance). I KNOW, that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but

are not, and have found them false and "Liars". You have persevered and have endured hardships, for MY NAMESAKE, and have not grown weary (Fainted). The picture that the Lord portrays here, is that the Church of Ephesus, was a hard-working group of believers, full of fortitude. Also to their credit, they were "Gate-keepers", of the truth and did not compromise with evildoers, and they showed patient endurance in bearing up under hardship.

HOWEVER, JESUS ALSO NOTES THE CHURCH'S SHORTCOMING:

REVELATION 2: 4 – "NEVERTHELESS, I have somewhat against thee, because THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE".

However, Jesus notes their shortcoming: they were a hard-working group of believers but they had no longer had the same passion for Christ Jesus, as when they first believe. Their work, perhaps, was motivated by OBLIGATION, but was no longer truly motivated, solely by the LOVE, for Christ Jesus.

"SPIRITUAL DARKNESS", IS NEVER SO HEAVY, AS A REDEEMED SOUL, LONGING FOR HIS "FIRST LOVE – JESUS".

The Church of Ephesus, knew what this "DARK AND DESERT SEASON", felt like, because the Church of Ephesus had become so focused on being "A DOING CHURCH", that they had forgotten the immense blessing and empowerment, of what it means to "BE THE CHURCH"!

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THE "CHURCH" HAS LOST IT'S "FIRST LOVE" FOR GOD:, AND "THE HONEYMOON" BETWEEN GOD AND HIS "CHURCH" WAS LOST:

JEREMIAH 2: 1 – "Moreover the word of the Lord Came Upon came to me, saying,"

JEREMIAH 2: 2 – "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I REMEMBER THEE, THE KINDNESS OF THY YOUTH, THE LOVE OF THINE ESPOUSALS, WHEN THOU WENTEST AFTER ME IN THE WILDERNESS, IN THE LAND THAT WAS NOT SOWN".

THE "HONEYMOON" WAS LOST – BETWEEN GOD'S PEOPLE (THE CHURCH) AND GOD!

God reminds rebellious Israel, of the fervor, the warmth and the purity of the love, that the Hebrew people had, in the early days, for God. She (Israel) was desperately in love, with her lover (God) and the tender love, that the Hebrew people had for God, MADE LIFE FULL – A LIFE FULL OF MUSIC, AND JOY, AND HOPE. She (Israel), was pure and clean and holy. No disloyalty or unclean thoughts marred the beauty of her (Israel's) devotion to God. But now the picture is heart rendering. God's heart is crushed with grief and disappointment. Israel, now is living in open sin. She is unfaithful to the covenant vows. Other gods have stolen her affection. She has ceased to love "Yahweh" and her conduct is shameful to the extreme.

The "ESPOUSALS" (JEREMIAH 2:2), were the time periods, between God's betrothal to Israel, at "The Exodus" and the formal "Marriage ceremony", at Mount Sinai.

JEREMIAH 2: 5 – "Thus saith the Lord, what INIQUITY HAVE YOUR FATHER'S FOUND IN ME, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain"?

JEREMIAH 2: 6 – “NEITHER SAID THEY, WHERE IS THE LORD THAT BROUGHT US UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, THAT LED US THROUGH THE WILDERNESS, THROUGH A LAND OF DESERTS, AND OF PITS, THROUGH A LAND OF DROUGHT, WHERE NO MAN DWELT”?

JEREMIAH 2: 7 – And I (God) brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered (in), you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination”.

The review of God’s faithfulness to His people, is followed by an indictment of the nations apostasy. The Lord brought them into a “Plentiful Land” but they defiled it, with idolatry and with the sacrifices of their own children (PSALMS 106: 37). With this they made themselves (God’s heritage – DEUTERONOMY 32:9; 1 SAMUEL 10:1; 1 KINGS 8:51; PSALMS 28:9), into an abomination and JUDGMENT CAME UPON THEIR UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD!

JEREMIAH 2: 8 – “THE PRIEST SAID NOT, WHERE IS THE LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal,, and walked after things that do not profit”.

Even the three primary class of leaders, established by God, had turned away from God, as did the common people. The “Priests”, were to expound the Law of God (MALACHI 2:6,7), yet we’re silent. The “Pastors” (Shepherds or leaders) ,we’re not religious, but civil leaders (JEREMIAH 3:15). But under the theocracy, their duty was to lead the people in “The way of the Lord”, yet they themselves transgressed His way. The “Prophets”, were to reclaim the people from apostasy, yet they encouraged it, by pretending to have the oracles from “Baal”, the false Phoenician god.

The Book of Jeremiah, mentions the word “BACKSLIDING”, 9 times in the book, and may be considered the great book on “BACKSLIDING”, and the dangers of FALLING AWAY FROM YOUR FIRST LOVE OF GOD AND INTO APOSTASY. Apart from the Book of Jeremiah, the only other book, in “The King James Bible”, that mentions the word, “BACKSLIDING”, is in the Book of Hosea and mentions the word “BACKSLIDING”, 3 times but the results are the same – if you do not “REPENT”, then THE JUDGMENT OF GOD, will come upon you and there will be a “REMOVAL FROM THE PLACE OF BLESSING AND ETERNAL LIFE”!

THE “HONEYMOON” WAS LOST BUT NOT YET OVER, FOR THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – IF THEY WOULD DO THESE THREE THINGS:

REVELATION 2: 5 – “Remember therefore from whence THOU ART FALLEN, and REPENT, and DO THE FIRST WORKS; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and we’ll REMOVE THY CANDLESTICK out of his place, except our REPENT”.

CHRIST JESUS SAYS THAT THEIR “FIRST LOVE CAN BE RESTORED, IF THEY WILL DO THREE THINGS:

(1). YOU MUST “REMEMBER THEREFORE FROM WHENCE THOU ART FALLEN” – Literally, keep on REMEMBERING, what you have LOST AND YOU NEED TO CULTIVATE A DESIRE (DRIVE), TO REGAIN BACK THAT CLOSE COMMUNION WITH GOD, THAT YOU ONCE HAD.

(2). YOU MUST "REPENT" – CHANGE THEIR MINDS AND CONFESS YOUR SINS TO THE LORD (1 JOHN 1:9).

(3). YOU MUST "DO THE FIRST WORKS" AGAIN – KEEP ALWAYS IN MIND AND DO YOUR "WORKS AS UNTO THE LORD", WHEN YOU WERE TRULY, GRATEFUL FOR THE WORK OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE.

Keep the J.O.Y. acronym (JESUS, OTHERS, YOU) – when doing your "Good works". Christ Jesus was saying that you need to REORDER YOUR PRIORITIES – FOR WHY YOU DO "GOOD WORKS"! You must ALWAYS keep in mind, that your "GOOD WORKS" are done, for the "HONOR AND GLORY OF GOD".

LUKE 8: 14 – "And that which fell among thorns are THEY, which, when THEY HAVE HEARD (AND BELIEVED), GO FORTH, and are CHOKED WITH CARES AND RICHES AND PLEASURES OF THIS LIFE, AND BRING NO FRUIT TO: PERFECTION".

COLOSSIANS 1: 10 – "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful and in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God";

"THAT YE MIGHT WALK WORTHILY (LIKE WHEN YOU FIRST BELIEVED)" - That you might walk worthily, as when you first did, when when you first believed. This is the aim and the result of knowing God's will. Knowledge is not an end in itself, and is not given to satisfy curiosity.

"WALK", refers to the total conduct and course of life. RIGHT KNOWLEDGE issues RIGHT CONDUCT; RIGHT CONDUCT is never the product of wrong knowledge. God wants his children to walk worthily; to be a credit for Christ Jesus and to live in conformity, with our union with Christ, and in conformity with His purpose for our lives. Our lives should be "CHRIST CENTERED" (GALATIANS 2:20).

"UNTO ALL PLEASING" – Not pleasing everybody; but pleasing God and everything, in every way, and all the time.

"BEING FRUITFUL" – This modifies the word "WALK" and means to continually, be bearing fruit. Christians are to be perpetual fruit bearers.

"IN EVERY GOOD WORK" – The fruit of righteous relationship to Christ Jesus. This is an evidence of discipleship (JOHN 15:8).

"INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD" – This speaks of both the place spiritual growth takes place and also the means, of that spiritual growth (2 PETER 3:18). A fruit bearing tree grows, but one that does not "BEAR" fruit, ceases to grow and is pruned down and those branches are thrown into the fire (JOHN 15: 4 -6) .

REVELATION 2: 6 – "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes,, which I also hate".

The "Nicolaitians", which means the "Destruction of the people", were followers of "Nicolaus", a Genostic heretic and possibly, was one of the original seven deacons of the Church of Jerusalem (ACTS 6:5).

REVELATION 2: 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.

***THIS IS THE PROMISE FROM GOD – FOR THE “OVER COMER” IN CHRIST JESUS – ETERNAL LIFE!**

FOR IT IS BY “RIGHTEOUSNESS” AND THE WISDOM OF THE WORD OF GOD – THAT LIFE IS LIVED IN THE FULLEST!

“THE TREE OF LIFE”, originally stood in “The Garden of Eden (GENESIS 2:9). By partaking of its fruit, mankind had “ETERNAL LIFE”. But, through the “FALL OF MANKIND” – mankind lost it’s access to the TREE”(GENESIS 3: 22 – 24).

But, “THE TREE OF LIFE”, is commonly represented in the Bible, for “RIGHTEOUSNESS AND WISDOM IN THE SCRIPTURES” (PSALMS 1:3; PROVERBS 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4).

For this reason, the Jews were referred to “The Word of God” – as “The Tree of Life”. The “Torah Scrolls”, are written on parchment, sewn together, rolled unto wooden rollers, and called the “EY TZ CHAYEEM” (THE TREE OF LIFE) and is read regularly in the synagogues today.

During this present age, mankind is barred from “The Tree of Life”. God has provided ANOTHER “Tree of Life” – the “CROSS OF CHRIST JESUS”! Those who place their trust in the ATONING WORK, upon the cross and keep (Obey) the Commandments God – has ETERNAL LIFE (JOHN 3: 14 – 16; JOHN 15: 9 – 11). Even though, every person has been bitten, by the serpent (GENESIS 3:15) – by merely looking upon this “TREE” in faith and putting their trust in the Commandments of God they will be healed, both physically and spiritually.

The “PARADISE OF GOD”, express the blessings of being in the presence of God. Perhaps, the Church of Ephesus, had tried to make her paradise, here on earth and so allowed her love to grow cold (COLOSSIANS 3:1, 2).