

## 01b REV

Let's pick up our study here looking in Revelation chapter 3 at the letter to the church in Sardis. We left off after our first lesson with the note that it is important to be alert. This is one of the hardest things.

Even when you are interested, even when you're motivated, even when you are dedicated, it just seems like it's really hard for us to keep our attention focused over a long period of time on any given goal. We just, we're easily distracted. It's part of our fallen nature.

But Jesus says, you've got to watch. If you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. What this tells me, if you look at verse 3 there, is if you do watch, Jesus will not come upon you as a thief, and you will know the hour.

He says, no man knows the day or the hour, but there are different, depending on context, there are different meanings of the word hour, just like there are different meanings of the word day. A day can be a thousand years, a day can be a period of time, a day can encompass the entire millennial kingdom. But here, he says, if you will not watch, you will not know what hour I come upon you.

But the implication is, those who are watchful are going to have a sense that it is near, that he's at the door, and so on. So that's our encouragement, is to be aware that the time is short. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white.

A lot of people think that all the saints, all the church, everybody is going to walk in white with the Lord Jesus, and it's not so. Those who do not soil their garments here will have the privilege of walking with white garments on with him, because they are worthy. So there is a distinction between the worthy and the not so worthy in the age to come.

So much of our modern church is just oblivious to these things, and it makes people complacent. It makes us kind of apathetic and indifferent, because everybody will be happy over there. But these are greatly to be desired.

We want to walk with the Lord in white, or we should. We should want to be found worthy. And you say, well, I thought it was all by grace, through faith.

It is, but we have control over our faith. We have control over our level of dedication and our level of enthusiasm. And what's the matter with us if we don't want to walk with Christ in white, if we don't want to be found worthy? This is the goal and the objective of God's plan for our life.

Do we not care enough about God to want His goal to be fulfilled? Do we not want to

accompany the Lord Jesus and be found worthy? If we do, we will be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot His name from the book of life, but I will confess His name before my Father and before His angels. Those whose names are in this book, the book of life, will be confessed before the Father and before His angels. We're going to see a little bit more about the angelic part of this a little bit later this evening.

But what is the whole idea of the name blotted or the name confessed? If you remember from our study a few years ago on this, we tend to think that there's only one big book in heaven, and it's the book of the saved. And your name is in there and you're saved, or your name is not there and you're lost. There are a lot of books in heaven.

The one who overcomes, his name is not blotted out from the book of life. Those who do not overcome, once again the implication is your name can be blotted out from the book of life. Well, what is the book of life? Well, there are lots of different kinds of life.

The Bible talks about, of course, physical life. You have spiritual life. You have life in the sense of fruitfulness and productivity.

You have a lack of life in terms of being dead in trespasses and sins, meaning incapable of producing righteousness by faith. But to have your name confessed, the word confessed here is exactly the same as the one in 1 John 1.9, homo logeo, to say the same thing. This name will be confessed before the Father and before His angels, His messengers.

The book of life, in this case, is life in the sense of production. It is akin to the picture that the Lord Jesus gave the disciples in the chapters of John, when you get to 14 and 15, and He talks about, Abide in me, let my words abide in you, and you will bear much fruit. I am the vine, you are the branches.

If you are fruitful, God will prune you so that you bear more fruit. You also have the apostle Paul talking in Romans about the dead branches of the unfaithful Israelites being broken out of the tree and wild branches being grafted in. This is life.

This is life in the sense of production. Even if you are a fruitful believer, the Father will prune what is dead, what is unfruitful, so that you can bear more fruit. The fruitless branch will also be pruned out because it is dead in the sense of fruitlessness.

So this is the book of life, not in the sense of Revelation chapter 20, as many as were not found written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire. This is life in the sense of production. We know this by context.

I will not blot out His name from the book of life. This would be a meaningless statement if there is never a name blotted out of the book of life. Some people have looked at this and they see everything in terms of salvation.

They say, well, you know, the human race, everybody is written in the book of life, but if you die without accepting Christ, then your name is blotted out. That is complete and total hogwash. There is not a shred of scripture anywhere to support that idea.

No one is written into God's books as saved until they express faith in Christ. We are born lost, hopeless, helpless, useless. We have to be transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

We have to be written into the book, so to speak, at the point of faith in Christ. So the idea of a name being blotted out from the book of life, it is difficult to get across. I won't spend a lot of time in Greek, but when you have a definite article in Greek, you have τῆς βιβλίου τῆς ζωῆς.

This is the book of the life. And typically it is the reverse in Greek as it is in English. When we say the book, we are talking about a specific book.

When we don't say the, we mean just a book. So when it says τῆς βιβλίου τῆς ζωῆς, this is the book of the life in Greek, which means a book of a life in Greek. In other words, there is a book of a kind of life.

This is just one of possibly many. That's not a hard and fast rule, but you tend to emphatically point out a particular thing by the Anarthurist construction where there is no article. Normally there is an article and it just has a generic use.

So this name being blotted out from the book of life, this is the life pertaining to fruit. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. Not all believers, in fact a relative minority, are going to have their name spoken by the Lord Jesus in the presence of the Father and in the presence of the angels.

He who has an ear here, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. We have Philadelphia and Laodicea next to go. I'm going to go through these rather quickly.

Church in Philadelphia. He who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, who opens and no one shuts, shuts and no one opens. I know your works.

I have set before you an open door. You have the church of the open door out there in California based on this verse. No one can shut the door that Christ opens.

You have a little strength. You have kept my word. You have not denied my name.

I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews or not, but lie. Make them come and worship before your feet and so on. You have kept my command to persevere.

Do you notice that in letter after letter, Jesus values and commends perseverance? It was true in the letter to the Ephesians. He says, I know your perseverance. He

commends the ones in Smyrna for suffering through persecution and poverty and persevering.

He commends the people in Pergamum for remaining true to Christ and not renouncing their faith. He commends the people in Thyatira specifically for their perseverance in deeds and love and faith and doing more than they did at first. Sardis is not commended for their perseverance.

They have a lot of problems there. Philadelphia is commended because they have endured patiently. Almost every church, there is some level of perseverance and sticking with it that is commended by Christ.

The next one, Laodicea, gets no commendation whatsoever. But this is the key to inheritance. This is the key to success in almost anything.

Whether you are working out or you are on a diet or you started a project or anything in life, sticking with it and seeing it through to completion and not flagging, not failing, not fainting, not wilting. There is nothing more pathetic than to see someone's life where they start many things and just don't finish them. I've got an unfinished project here.

I started this and I didn't finish. I started that and I didn't finish. You've just got all this unfinished business.

It would be better to only start a few things and finish them than to start many things and finish none of them. This is a spiritual attribute. Finish what you start.

Start a book study, finish it. Start reading through the Bible, finish it. Start memorizing scripture, finish it.

Remember in Ecclesiastes, one of my favorite sections of that study was when we got to the verse where Solomon talks about it is better to have a long spirit than a tall spirit. Standing tall at the beginning doesn't mean much. It's whether you endure to the end.

Hold fast. Because you have kept my command to persevere, he says in verse 10, I will keep you. You have kept something I gave you, so I'm going to keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.

Now, people have speculated, what does this mean? Does this mean that people will be kept from the tribulation? Is there some that will and some that won't? What if you weren't faithful and persevere in keeping Christ's commands? Are you not kept from the hour of trial? Are there some believers that won't go up in the rapture? The application of this is we can learn things the easy way or we can learn them the hard way. Why would God put someone through an hour of testing? Because you need it. You need the testing to solidify your faith, to strengthen and to cement in an attitude or a viewpoint or an understanding.

Now, my idea is if you learn it really well and demonstrate your knowledge and hold fast to that knowledge, God doesn't have to put you through a bunch of testing on that principle because you've got it. You learn it the easy way. You pay attention the first time and it really doesn't become a test.

Think about a math class. If you really are diligent, you pay attention and you ask questions from the teacher or the professor and you figure out exactly what's going on and you work your homework assignments and you really get a good grip on it, here comes the big exam. Here comes the midterm or the final.

And it's no big deal because it's second nature. You've done it. You know it.

You understand it conceptually and so it's no strain. If you just kind of slapdash, you've got a little mental fingertip hold on it just long enough to answer a few questions, but then the test comes and you really didn't understand it and you really didn't get it into your mind, well then the test is a horrible tribulation. So the idea here is if you hold fast to what you have, if you persevere, God says, I will keep you from the hour of trial.

God doesn't put us through trial normally. It's an extraordinary thing like Job. Job is the exception that proves the rule.

Very few believers go through a Job type of test. Why? Well, God has already done it with Job. Job was the special case.

Most believers, if we learn what we're supposed to do, if we persevere, if we're faithful, God doesn't have to put us through testing, doesn't have to put us through trial. If the Israelites who left the land of Egypt and went across the Red Sea had maintained their faith in God, the faith that got them out of Egypt and across the sea, if they'd maintained it when they got to the Jordan, they wouldn't have gone through 40 years of testing in the wilderness. Why did they go through the 40 years? They didn't persevere in their faith.

So I say, let's persevere and God will keep us from the hour of trial. And that's what the Lord Jesus says here, I will keep you from the hour of trial that comes upon the whole world. What normally is encountered will pass you by.

You will be reserved. You will be kept back. You will be kept safe.

You'll be sheltered. What does it say in Psalm 91? He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High abides under the shadow of the Almighty. You're covered with his feathers.

You have refuge under his wings. You're sheltered. Great hymn, we've got a shelter in the time of storm.

He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock. You can be out there in the dry weary land or you can be safe in the hands of God. I am coming quickly.

Hold fast what you have so that no one may take your crown. You can reach the place where there is a crown on its way. What does a crown represent? In the ancient world, the crown was a recognition of achievement.

You win a race. You win a battle. You get the laurel wreath.

It is the victor's crown. It represents having persevered, having conquered, having surpassed, having overcome. But it is possible for someone to take your crown.

Hold fast so that no one may take your crown. If you don't hold fast, somebody may take your crown. Remember what Jesus said to the church in Ephesus? If you don't do what you're supposed to, if you don't return to your first love, I'll move your lampstand out of its place.

Your stand is where it's supposed to be, but if you're not doing what you're supposed to do, if you're not shining, I'll pick you up and move you, put somebody else in your place. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. He shall go out no more.

I will write on him the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God. I will write on him my own new name. We'll talk about these a little bit more here in a few minutes, but let's finish up with the church, the Laodiceans.

These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God, I know your works, and there is no commendation. You're not hot and you're not cold. I wish that you were hot or cold.

Because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth. This is stated in terms of water, something that is taken into the mouth. I like hot coffee.

I like cold tea. I don't like room temperature beverage of almost any kind. There are a few fine wines that are best served at room temperature, but most of the time, if you're going to drink something, it's either cold and you want it hot, or it's hot and you want something cold.

Hot day, you want lemonade. On a cold day, you want a cup of hot cocoa or a cup of hot coffee. But lukewarm doesn't do anybody any good.

When you have an injury, sometimes they apply heat, sometimes they apply a cold compress, depending on the nature of it, whether it's a contusion or whatever. But they don't typically say, well, put a lukewarm compress on that wound. Heat has benefits,

cold has benefits.

Lukewarm doesn't do anything. So, this has been misinterpreted. People say, well, hot is best and cold is terrible.

And God's saying, well, I wish you were either really good or really bad, but because you're just kind of in the middle, I'm going to spew you out of my mouth. No, hot is good, cold is good, lukewarm is bad. God never wishes that somebody was just totally evil.

I wish you were totally cold and indifferent, rather than just being lukewarm. That's not what He's saying at all. This, of course, when we went through our detailed study of Laodicea, we know about the healing waters that are there.

You have hot springs where the water with the heat in it is supposed to have healing properties and so on. Cold, refreshing water is also great, but lukewarm doesn't do anybody any good. Because you're neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.

Because you say, I'm rich, I'm wealthy, I'm in need of nothing, you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich, and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed, and anoint your eyes with eyesalve that you may see. What's interesting to me in this description, they say they are rich, they say they're wealthy, they say they don't need anything, when Jesus says they are actually wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. But he does not say, receive by grace from me, receive a free handout from me of gold and white garments, and eyesalve.

He says, purchase these from me. I counsel you to buy. This is a very important principle from the word of God, because it doesn't matter what your status is, whether you are an unbeliever or a believer, whether you are an advanced believer, or you are a poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked believer, you have the capital, you have the wherewithal, to buy from the Lord Jesus, gold that's refined in the fire.

What is that gold refined in the fire? We know this from Corinthians, don't we? Gold, silver, precious stones that survives the fire of judgment is what? It's righteousness, it's divine good. And it is appropriated, it is attained how? What's the theme of the book of Romans? Righteousness by faith. Everyone has the ability to exercise faith.

This one verse puts the fatal stake through the heart of Reformed theology and Calvinism, because Jesus says, you poor, miserable, wretched, blind, naked people, buy from me gold refined in the fire. Buy from me white garments. Buy from me the eye-sab that will enable you to see.

Now, what do they buy it with? If you listen to a Calvinist, oh, we're dead in trespasses

and sins, we're like Lazarus in the tomb, and we can't do anything until God sovereignly gives us life, and sovereignly regenerates us, and gives us the gift of faith. Hogwash, if I may use a mild term. It's utter and total nonsense.

Every human being has the ability to believe. Everybody believes in all kinds of things. You believe in your car when you're flying down the road at 80 miles an hour, that the wheels aren't going to come off, that people in the other lane are not going to head on collide with you.

You trust your chair. You trust people. You trust that the sun is going to rise, and that the laws of physics are going to maintain so that you don't fly off the surface of the earth.

You trust when you turn on a faucet that clean potable water is going to come forth. You trust that the supermarket's been inspected, and that the food is not full of deadly bacteria. You trust, and your trust may be misplaced, but we trust.

We believe all kinds of things. People believe the promises of politicians. People believe all kinds of things.

It is not ability to believe that is impaired due to our lost and fallen condition. It is the fact that we are unable to please God as a depraved human being, as a fallen person. There is nothing you can do.

My most recent example of this, updated to reflect recent history. Remember the lady in Florida that was on life support, and her husband said, she doesn't want to live this way. I want to unplug the machine and let her die, which happened, and she did.

But her family was all up in arms, and the right-to-life people in a lot of the Christian community sided with the family. They said, oh, no, no, you should keep her plugged in and maintain her as a vegetable indefinitely, well, very quietly in the press. After they unplugged her, after she passed away, and they did an autopsy, they found that her brain was shrunken and gone.

She had no consciousness. She had no sense of anything. All of these films that she had been laughing and responding to people, it was just random impulses.

She had no perception of anything. They looked inside, and her brain was like a third of the size it was supposed to be. It was all shrunken up and dead.

The husband was correct in his determination that she wasn't there anymore, and it was pointless to keep her body going for no reason. After like an 11-year-long battle, they finally let him lay her to rest. But the family is just completely and totally put out with the husband, and they are on opposite ends of the spectrum.

There's no communication. There's no relationship there whatsoever. There's nothing but

hostility before, during, and after this whole episode on the part of the parents and the siblings of this poor lady and this hapless husband.

So now suppose this coming Christmas, he goes out and spends \$500 on Christmas gifts and sends them all to the Schindler family. I think the lady's name was Schindler before she married Schiavo, and Michael Schiavo was her husband. And so suppose Michael goes out and buys all these presents and sends them to his in-laws.

He might spend a lot of money. They might be really high-quality gifts, but how are they going to be received by people who have such a dim view of him? It wouldn't matter what he did. He could send them cards.

He could buy them expensive gifts. You'd find them all out in the alley in the trash the next day because there is nothing he can do to please them because there's a relationship problem. There are other issues that render anything he does as just putrid in their sight, as offensive and unacceptable.

Well, that's the way we are when we are lost and fallen. It isn't that we don't have the ability to believe in God. It's that we don't have the ability to please God.

When we express faith in the Son of God and trust Him as our Savior, then we are regenerated. Then we are sanctified. Then we are regenerated and are given life, given sanctification, given all of the things in redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation that make it possible for us to be made acceptable in the Beloved.

So the whole Reformed Calvinist idea that people just don't have the ability. You can believe in anything else, but for some weird reason you can't believe in Christ, it's complete nonsense. And it's demonstrated here.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire. It doesn't matter how bad off you are, you always have the ability to purchase. And this is the exercise of faith.

Gold refined in the fire, divine righteousness, white garments, the badge of the sanctified, the mark of those who have washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb. Now you have white garments. The shame of your nakedness is no longer revealed and anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see.

You get this corrected vision. You get this repair of the vision through faith. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Now, you're only rebuked. I mean, I love my daughters, but I don't just rebuke and chasten them every time instead of saying, well, I love you, I say, what's the matter with you? I rebuke and chasten them because I love them, but I only rebuke and chasten them when they need rebuke and when they need chasing. Ideally, you don't require rebuke and chastening that often.

But God says do not mistake rebuke and chastening for a lack of love. It is because of love that these things take place. Therefore, be full of zeal.

Be zealous. And change your mind. Have a changed mind.

Then you have the famous verse, Revelation 3.20, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice, opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with me. Once again, you do not see the weird, warped, strange, sovereign grace of God where Jesus walks up and kicks in the door and comes in and sits down and eats a meal with you.

This is the Calvinist Reformed view and it's utter nonsense. It's blasphemous. It presents a twisted, distorted view of God and it has seduced away hundreds of thousands of believers into a false view of God, a false system of Christianity where the traditions of men and the rationalizations of men are substituted for the pure milk of the word.

And those people cannot grow beyond a certain limited point because they are inside a glass box of human construction. Jesus says, I stand at the door and knock. You come and open the door when you hear my voice and I will come in.

To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Everyone with an ear should hear what is said to all seven churches.

Now, what I want to do is go back and kind of summarize all of these seven letters. If you have your chart, it will really help you because all of these things are related. Why is there a particular promise to the overcomers at these different churches? It all ties together.

Let's take a look at Ephesus first of all. I mentioned last time the description of Christ that John gives at the beginning when he first sees him and Jesus says, I am the one who has the seven stars and walks among the seven lampstands. You have all of this description and then elements from that are pulled in the description to each of the seven churches, but it's a different element.

Why is it he who holds the seven stars and walks among the seven golden lampstands to Ephesus rather than to Pergamum or Thyatira or Philadelphia? Well, that's what I'm going to try to point out here. So we take a look at Ephesus, chapter 2, verses 1 through 7. The description of Christ is the one who holds the seven stars and walks among the seven golden lampstands. What is that specifically a picture of? What aspect of Christ is represented by holding the stars and walking among the lampstands? There is a particular kind of power in view, right? And this is spiritual authority.

So if you have your chart there, what I did on my chart, I just wrote this out beside. Each

one of these is going to be an aspect of power, a particular kind of power that the Lord Jesus has. The power expressed in holding the seven stars in his right hand.

What does the right hand represent? I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will hold thee with what? The right hand of my righteousness. This is the powerful hand. This is the hand that gets things done.

He holds the seven stars in his right hand and he walks among the seven golden lampstands. So this is spiritual authority with an emphasis on oversight and his presence. He walks among the lampstands.

He is there with them. He is in their midst, right? So this has a view toward Christ's presence and oversight and authority when it comes to the churches. The corporate body of Christ as it exists in each generation and as it exists in each local assembly.

Where two or three are gathered in my name, what does he say? There am I in the midst. I am there. I am walking among the lampstands.

I've got the stars in my hand. The seven stars. What are the seven stars? Well, you have the angels of the churches.

You have seven angels that are before the throne of God. You have seven spirits that are before the throne of God. What are they? Well, for the purposes of this picture, it doesn't really matter.

He's got them in his right hand and that's authority. Whatever they are, they are under his control. And all of those things I've just mentioned are under his control.

So, spiritual authority in Ephesus. Oversight and presence. He says, you've lost your first love.

Remember where you came from. Change your mind. Go back to where you were at first.

He can say this, why? He's the authority. He's present. He knows their status.

Even though when people look at them, they say, boy, what a hard looking church. Look at those deeds. Look at how they're persevering.

They don't tolerate wicked men. This is all visible, but Jesus is in their midst and he knows their hearts. He says, you know, your love isn't what it was.

You need to go back to where you were at first. What is the promise? The promise relates to the picture of Christ's power. Because he says, to he who overcomes, I will grant.

Right? Well, if you're going to make a promise, you've got to have the ability to fulfill it. Right? So we're going to see in each of these churches that Christ's ability to grant the promise to the overcomer is a reflection of the power that introduced the letter. Spiritual authority, oversight, and presence.

To him that overcomes, I will grant to eat from the tree of life. I mentioned when we first reviewed this, the tree of life is in what kingdom? The kingdom of the Father. That's after earthly things are wrapped up.

And this is the, of the two kingdoms, the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the Father, which one is more spiritual in nature? New heavens and new earth, no more sea, no more sun and moon, because the lamb is the light. I mean, that's a spiritual kingdom. And to eat from the tree of life, that looks ahead to the kingdom of the Father.

And this is grantable. It is a promise from Christ, because he walks among the lampstands, he holds the stars in his hand. It is an expression of his spiritual authority.

He has the authority to grant that privilege in the kingdom of the Father. So those things are related. Take a look at the second church, Smyrna, chapter 2, verses 8 through 11.

The picture is Christ, the first and the last, who died and came to life again. What kind of power does that reflect? He's the first and the last. Talks about his eternality, doesn't it? His power over death.

He was before death, he's going to be after death. Death is subsumed under his eternal presence and power. He died and came to life again.

Death could not hold him. He has conquered death, just as he conquered sin. When you get over to the promise to the overcomers, these people in Smyrna are suffering persecution, poverty.

He says, be faithful even to the point of death. Don't worry about death. I've got death under control.

What is the promise? You receive a crown of what? A crown of life, because that's the kind of authority that is expressed in the one who is the first and the last, who died and came to life again. If he died and came to life, he can grant a crown of life. That's the area of authority and power that is in view.

And what else does he promise? They will not be hurt by the second death. Second death is the loss of reward, loss of blessing, loss of opportunity, loss of privilege, loss of all these potential things that are possible and potential for believers. It's a different kind of death.

It's not physical death. It's not spiritual death. It is that death of fruitlessness and that

death of being unable to reflect the glory of the Father, the glory of Christ.

All of that relates to his power over death and his eternality. If you're eternal, death isn't an issue. Death isn't a factor.

Pergamum, chapter 2, verses 12 through 17. What is the picture of Christ? He has the sharp two-edged sword. What does that represent right away? It's the Word of God.

The living, powerful Word of God. This is the Word of God in what sense? We know a lot about the Word of God. Why is it pictured as a sword? What else do we know about a sword? Is that a defensive weapon or an offensive weapon? It's offensive.

You've got a shield for defense. You've got a breastplate for defense. You've got a helmet for defense.

The sword is your offensive weapon. John sees Christ and the symbolic image is the sharp two-edged sword issuing forth from his mouth. This is the Word making things happen.

It's a weapon. Warfare is in view. There's a conflict.

My sword is a ceremonial sword. It hangs up over the mantelpiece. It doesn't have two edges.

Even its supposedly sharp edge is not sharp. It's a worthless sword. It's just a symbolic sword.

One of these days when I run out of other things to do, I'd like to get one of those real tempered steel Wilkinson swords. It's got an actual edge. Then, if worse comes to worse, you pull that thing down off and pull it out of the scabbard and you've got an actual useful weapon.

I saw him in shipment once with a similar ceremonial sword. He was a battalion officer of the watch. A couple of plebes had some fruit out in their room they weren't supposed to have.

They had an orange laying there on his desk. The battalion officer of the watch thought, I'll show these guys. He pulled his sword out and he chopped that orange.

His sword shattered into four pieces. It's kind of embarrassing when you're trying to make a point and you just break your sword. It's because they're worthless.

They're cheap pot metal imitation swords. This is a sharp two-edged sword. It's an offensive weapon.

It's designed to do damage. It's designed to accomplish things in the sense of warfare.

It's offensive.

It is the warlike and living and powerful Word of God issuing specifically from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is the promise here? To him that overcomes, doesn't give in to the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, that's departing from the Word of God, right? He will receive the hidden manna. What is the hidden manna a picture of? Additional truth.

Additional insight and understanding of the Word of God. It all relates to the Word when you get to Pergamum. Thyatira 2.18-29 The Son of God whose eyes are like a blazing fire, whose feet are like burnished brass.

This is power in judgment, right? The eyes are like a flame of fire. It burns away everything that's fruitless and immaterial and chaff. It's his eyes that burn.

It's discernment. He has the ability to see what's actually true. His feet are like burnished brass.

When people plead for mercy, what do they do? Fall at the feet. Does he have nice soft feet that are welcoming? No, you fall on the feet and you see the reflection of the eyes. They're burnished brass.

It doesn't matter from head to toe. This is Christ with his power of judgment. These brass feet, it's not like the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's vision that are iron mixed with clay that crumble and the whole thing comes crashing down.

Stability, firmness, unmovability. He's unmoved. This is not the merciful Christ.

This is not the compassionate Christ. This is not the child on the knee and walking through a field of daisies. This is Christ with eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished brass.

The power of judgment. What's the problem in Thyatira? They tolerate Jezebel with her immorality and idolatry. They are not discerning.

They are not judging. They are not purging out the leaven and getting rid of the unclean thing there. They're compromising.

They're tolerating. What is the reward for the overcomer? He will have authority over the nations. This is judging authority.

We talked about the kings who are going to rule and are going to extend that rod of iron from the Lord Jesus in Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom. This is judging authority. Delegated authority from Christ.

And has the order of the morning star. Another flaming, shining symbol. Just like the

eyes.

Just like the feet. Sardis, chapter 3, verses 1 through 6. Picture of Christ. He holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

What does that represent? Seven spirits of God. Seven stars. All of this is up in the heavens, isn't it? It's up above the earth.

It's heavenly power. But it's heavenly power related to the earth. He's not flying off in some far off galaxy long ago and far away.

This is heavenly power, but it's heavenly power as it influences the earth. What is the problem there? They're dead. They're not looking ahead to eternal things.

They're not looking ahead to the eternal future. What is the promise? Those who overcome will be dressed in white. They will be acknowledged before my Father and His angels.

Where does the Father reside? In heaven. Where are the angels? In heaven. Heavenly power.

Heavenly privilege for those who overcome. When you get to Philadelphia, Christ is pictured as He who is holy and true and holds the key of David. What does the key of David relate to? What's your first thought on the key of David? He's the King of Israel, isn't He? This is Messiah-ship.

This is the throne in Jerusalem. This relates to Israel. Kingdom authority.

Specifically related to Israel. And it also says He's holy and true. He's incorruptible.

Not touched by sin. Not deceitful. Not unfaithful.

The people in Philadelphia are encouraged to hold on to what they have. Those who overcome will be pillars in the temple. Where's the temple? Jerusalem.

Right? They will have the name of God and of the new Jerusalem written on them. New Jerusalem. Jerusalem is related to Israel.

All of this has to do with kingdom authority. Kingdom privilege. Christ's new name will be written on them.

And the new name of Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All of this relates to millennial kingdom privilege. For those in Philadelphia.

And finally you get to Laodicea. He is presented as the Amen. As the faithful and true witness.

The ruler of God's creation. This is power over creation. He is the faithful and true witness.

He is the image of the Father. In Him dwells all the fullness of God in bodily form. He is an accurate reflection of the Father.

And it is power over creation. He rules God's creation. What is the promise to the overcomers in Laodicea? Overcomers will sit down and eat with Christ.

And will rule with Christ. Christ rules God's creation. They will rule with Him.

And this is rule in the sense not just of a nation but of all creation. Creation extends beyond planet Earth, doesn't it? This goes into the universe. Everything in the universe is part of God's creation.

So this is even greater and grander than the type of ruling authority that you had in Thyatira. So all of these letters are consistent. They are facets and aspects of Christ and of the church.

It's one Christ in all seven letters. But different facets and different emphasis of His power and of His promise. And in the same way, these are facets and aspects of every generation in the church.

And of every believer in the church. We can see ourselves in these letters. We can see our strengths and our weaknesses and our opportunities.

Every one of these overcomer promises is available to you and available to me. It's all a matter of how badly we want to be pleasing to the Father and glorifying to Christ. Well, that completes our review.

We'll pick up in chapter 4 for sure next Friday night. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the wonderful picture that we see in these first three chapters of Revelation.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress it on our hearts. And may it be a source of motivation and encouragement to us in the days ahead. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.