Overcome*

Revelation 2:1-7 (1) Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;
(2) I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how 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:
(3) And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labou470red, and hast not fainted.
(4) Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.
(5) Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.
(6) But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
(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.
Paul spent over two years in Ephesus, longer than any other place after he started his missionary ministry. A strong church was established there, and Timothy evidently was in a leadership role there (I Timothy 1:3). According to early church fathers, the Apostle John served as senior pastor of the Ephesian church in his later years, while he wrote his five New Testament books. Jesus, however, had somewhat against them, they had left their first love. Evidently Paul had addressed that concern to Timothy, turn to;
1Timothy 1:3-6 (3) As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

(4) Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.
(5) Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:
(6) From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;
'Vain jangling' is descriptive unauthorized usage of God's word. Jesus said; If ye love me, keep my commandments (John14:15). *He also said;* He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). *Loving Him and keeping His commandments are synonymous, contrary wise;* If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha (1Corinthians 16:22).
What in the world is Anathema Maranatha? The word "anathema" means "cursed." The word "Maranatha" means "the Lord is coming." The Word of God is saying, if anyone does not want to get saved on His terms, or, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, then let him be cursed because the Lord is coming. You can warn people, but they ultimately must make the decision to accept or reject Jesus Christ. If they reject Him, then they are choosing to go to the burning domain by their own freewill. They will be cursed if they are not born-again by water and spirit in obedience to Jesus Christ, who out of love gave Himself a ransom for the lost. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. All we can do is witness to lost sinners the saving power of the gospel of Christ Jesus. We can preach to people the throne of grace, but we cannot make them accept it. Those that do accept the terms of the gospel must do so in spirit and in truth, for God seeks such to serve him. If a person is willing to hear the gospel...amen! If a person wants to obey the gospel...amen! amen! If a person will not obey the terms of the gospel,

then the Bible says let them be ANATHEMA MARANATHA!
Let them be cursed for the Lord cometh! Please turn to;
John 3:16-17 (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
(17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
This is love beyond measure in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. One cannot leave it or be separated from it without danger of damnation at judgment. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2Corinthians 5:10).
Let's move on to Sardis;
Revelation 3:1-5 (1) And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.
(2) Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.
(3) Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.
(4) Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.
(5) He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.
*But what is it they must overcome, so that they can receive these blessings. Apparently the central fault of the church in Sardis was, their works were not perfect before God. **Foul!**,*

cry some. Works are not necessary to inherit eternal life. All one has to do is believe! Listen, it is Jesus that said, I have not found thy works perfect before God. *Both Christ and His Father expect perfect works. Christ explained this very well in the parable of the talents. Two servants worked with the talents given to them and the Lord was satisfied. However one refused to work with the talent given him, he hid it and the Lord was not satisfied and took from him even that which he seemed to have. Why? The answer is in;*

James 2:17-20 (17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
(18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.
(19) Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.
(20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Is there any other way a dead faith can be expressed more deadly than the way James has explained? No! The servant that received one talent, he had faith he had one talent but that was not enough. James tells us why;

James 1:22-25 (22) But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
(23) For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:
(24) For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.
(25) But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Are there other ways the marriage of faith and works can be expressed more clearly? No, it is the doer by faith that shall be blessed. Not doing the work of the Lord will accomplish nothing worthwhile. The following quote from Alexander

Campbell conveys the idea of "the doer of the work" very well. {One of my "new edition of old errors" is found well expressed in the following sentence: "The Jews believed most firmly that all that Moses had said was true, but yet they did not believe what Moses said; for he spoke of Christ whom they continued to reject. So most men in a christian land believe that what the Bible says is true, but they do not believe the things which the Bible says, in the sense attached to them by the Spirit of God." This is just the fact. And it is the reason why most of the sectaries oppose the things taught in the Bible advocated by me. The Bible says, "He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved." How few believe it! The Bible says, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." How few believe it! The Bible says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I hope my friend of the Telegraph will not prove himself to be one of those who believe that what the Bible says is true, and yet reject the things which it most explicitly affirms!}
Jesus said, blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake (Matthew 5:11). *Listen to this;*
{BAPTISM: Churches of Christ teach that baptism by immersion for believers is essential for the remission of sins and is necessary for salvation. They interpret passages such as Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 to substantiate this teaching. Baptism has a threefold purpose (1) it is necessary for salvation; (2) it places one in Christ; and (3) it places one in the church.
RESPONSE: While baptism is important it is not necessary for salvation. The biblical passages quoted by the Churches of Christ to argue for the necessity of water baptism do not prove their point.
Mark 16:16 "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (NIV)
Contrary to the claims of the Churches of Christ this passage

does not prove the necessity of water baptism. *(Southern Baptist convention)*.} *Sounds like, Anathema Maranatha? To yield or concede to belligerent demands is not the Lord's way. After all, He died at the hands of belligerent people, encouraged by religious leaders at the time. They were wrong. The quote, "baptism is not necessary for salvation", was not spoken by the Saviour, but by those having swerved, turning aside unto vain jangling (1Tim 1:6). Many believe a person can be saved before and without being baptized in water. Altho they may be baptized later, they believe their baptism is not a necessary condition of their entering heaven. They believe baptism is only an acknowledgement of accepting Christ. Have they ever considered the consequence?*

If one can go to heaven without being baptized, one can go to heaven without being saved. However, being saved is contingent upon obedience to the ordinance of baptism, (Mark 16:16, Matt 28:19, Acts 2:38, 1Pet 3:21, Acts 22:16).

If one can go to heaven without being baptized, one can go to heaven without Christ. However being in Christ is contingent upon being obedient to the ordinance of baptism, (Galatians 3:27, Romans 6:1-6).

If one can go to heaven without being baptized, one can go to heaven in his sinful condition. However remission of sins is contingent upon being obedient to the ordinance of baptism, (Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16). (scriptures given are markers, read the complete passage)

Living forever is not an option at death, it is an eternal decision today! Salvation is a free gift. But inheriting the Kingdom requires lots of work. Just what did Jesus say was the cause for concern to the church in Sardis? " I have not found thy works perfect before God." *If Jesus gives such a warning to His own, the question is, where will they stand that are not doer's of the works ordained by God? Turn to;*

1Peter 4:17-18 (17) For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall

the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?
(18) And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?
Could the answer be; In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Thessalonians 1:8):
If one is unable to trust the words of Jesus, then one is surely doomed to wander in the ignorance of unbelief; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:7). *You can tell a great deal about people by who their friends are, but it is also true that you can tell just as much by who their enemies are. In fact, Jesus warned that if His disciples were living such unaffected lives that all men, regardless of their relationship to God, were speaking well of them, they would not be faithfully carrying out His mission. This is strange but true, Jesus said;* Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets (Luke 6:26).
I hate to tell you this, but people will not like us for what we represent spiritually, because there is a way that seemeth right unto them, but are the ways of death. To keep the 'way of death' at bay, God sent the Holy Ghost. Turn to;
John 14:24-26 (24) He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.
(25) These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.
(26) But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
It is impossible for the Saviour's words to have been quoted incorrectly by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul and Peter, under the guidance of the Spirit. Next is Smyrna, turn to;
Revelation 2:8-11 (8) And unto the angel of the church in

Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;
(9) I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.
(10) Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
(11) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.
The second death is the final doom, distinguished from physical death by an everlasting fire. Nothing will stand out so undesirable and remain so firmly fixed, as the second death. A description of the second death is in;
Revelation 20:12-14 (12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.
(13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.
(14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
This description of the second death is in preparation for the devil and his angels. Men must come out of spiritual Babel, out of the confusion and the many corrupt human doctrines of salvation. Is there a way? Yes, the way of the Comforter;
Romans 6:3-11 (3) Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
(4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

(5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the **likeness of his resurrection:**
(6) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
(7) For he that is dead is freed from sin.
(8) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:
(9) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.
(10) For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
(11) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Matthew 13:41-42 (41) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;
(42) And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.
How can this be if the second death hath no power over those that be in Christ, over those that have been translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, over those who hath part in the "likeness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? What shall be able to separate Christians from the love of the Father and the Son? The answer is in verse 41 that we just read, all things that offend and them which do iniquity. *It's the lack of justice or righteousness; it's wickedness; injustice, sin, evil or immorality. In other words, a departing from the living God because of an evil heart of unbelief (Heb 3:12).*
So as we make our way through this pilgrimage we call life, each of us faces opportunities and challenges that require not only forethought and decision, but commitment and dedication as well. At times we think carefully, choose wisely, and act forcefully. At times we do not. While it is true there exist scenarios in which a personal failure may be due to

circumstances beyond our control, most often the responsibility for failure rests solely with the individual. Nowhere is the truth of this adage more evident than in our relationship with our God. And nowhere is failure more tragic, or the results more permanent. The apostle Paul observed that Demas forsook, "having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). Regardless of how desperate, or how pitiful man's condition has become, one thing is for certain: God had no obligation to provide a means of salvation for the ungrateful creature who so haughtily turned away from Him. But God's intent was to extend grace and mercy freely—through the redemptive life and death of His Son. He has given each a way to overcome. Before He went back to the Father, Jesus established the ordinance of salvation in this, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16).

Because of the peerless value of the death of the Lord, God is offering to everyone the blessings of salvation on a grace basis. Grace not born of scorn, but of tears from heaven by faith in His Son. Faith in Christ is the effect of belief, and baptism is the effect of faith; only those who first believe the testimony of God, and by faith repent of their sins, and by faith confess Christ, and by faith are baptized into His death, have the full and explicit testimony of pardon. This is the gospel. It's invitation is open right now, also prayer requests for other reasons, in either case come while we persuade with song.

This message approved by
Jack Warford
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