

# **Run to Win**

**A Study About the  
Race of the Faith**

**Arlen L. Chitwood**

**Run to Win**

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain [the prize].

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

I therefore so run, not as uncretainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [‘be rejected’]” (I Cor. 9:24-27).

Cover Photograph: Manzano Mountains, New Mexico, Spring, 2005

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*By the Same Author —*

HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES  
THE MOST HIGH RULETH  
FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES  
IN THE LORD'S DAY  
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN  
LET US GO ON  
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE  
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST  
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM  
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS  
SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE  
SEVEN, TEN GENERATIONS  
GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS  
THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE  
SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH  
THE TIME OF THE END  
SO GREAT SALVATION  
THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE  
BROUGHT FORTH FROM ABOVE  
THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE  
SIGNS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL  
SALVATION OF THE SOUL  
JUDE  
RUTH  
ESTHER

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## FOREWORD

The race in which Christians presently find themselves is, in the light of Heb. 11:1ff and other related Scriptures, *a race of the faith* (cf. II Tim. 4:7). The “saving of the soul” is in view (Heb. 10:39), which is what Peter in his first epistle referred to as “the end [goal]” of the Christian’s faith as he runs the race — “Receiving the end [goal] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (I Peter 1:9). And the saving or losing of one’s soul has to do with occupying or being denied a position with Christ in His kingdom (cf. Matt. 16:24-17:5; 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27).

Thus, the race in which Christians are presently engaged is being run with *a kingdom in view*; and it is being run, more specifically, with a view *to proffered positions on the throne with God’s Son in that kingdom*.

*This is what is at stake.* And there can be no higher prize than that of one day being elevated from a servant in the Lord’s house on this earth to a co-regent with Christ on His throne in the heavens.

How many Christians though know these things? How many, for that matter, are even interested? Christians talk about being saved and going to heaven, though most don’t have the slightest idea concerning what is involved in saved man’s association with the heavens.

Being saved, with a corresponding assurance of heaven, is often looked upon as an end in itself. However, if such were the case, where would the race in which we are presently engaged fit in the Christian life? It couldn’t, for one’s eternal salvation and assurance of heaven are based entirely on Christ’s finished work, completely apart from the race.

One is saved with the race in view, and the race is for a revealed purpose. The teaching so prevalent today which views salvation *only*

in the light of eternal verities — *i.e.*, one's eternal destiny is either Heaven or Hell, depending on the person's saved or unsaved status, with that being the end of the matter — is a theology which completely ignores and obscures the Word of the Kingdom. Teachings concerning *the importance of salvation* have not been balanced with teachings concerning *the purpose for salvation*.

If ever there was a group of individuals on the earth with something to live for or something to die for, it is Christians. They are in possession of the highest of all possible callings. But in spite of this, the world has never seen a group quite like those comprising Christendom today — a group of individuals who *could profess so much* but *really profess so little*.

The message is there, but Where are the Christians who know and understand these things? The race is presently being run, but Where are the serious contenders? The offer to ascend the throne with Christ has been extended, but Where are those who have fixed their eyes on this goal?

# 1

## PREPARATION FOR THE RACE

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:1, 2).

The Epistle to the Hebrews is a book in which the author continually draws his spiritual lessons from the Old Testament Scriptures. And this is a book which deals primarily, not with the salvation which we presently possess, but with *the salvation of the soul*. The author of this book, rather than directing his main focus upon the events of Calvary, directs his attention instead to that which Calvary makes possible.

*Man has been saved for a purpose*, and this purpose is the same as the purpose for his creation almost 6,000 years ago. *Man was created* to “have dominion [Heb., *radah*, to ‘rule’]” (Gen. 1:26-28), and *man has been saved* with this same “dominion [this ‘rule’]” in view.

It is *this dominion, the coming rule of man*, rather than the message concerning eternal salvation itself, which forms the crux of that which the writer of Hebrews presents in his epistle. There is a repeated look back to Calvary (1:3; 2:9; 7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:12;

11:4, 17-19), for *everything* is based on the Son's finished work of redemption (cf. Gen. 3:15). But Calvary is not where the author of this epistle places the emphasis. He places the emphasis upon *the purpose for man's redemption*, which involves *man one day possessing dominion, in complete accord with the opening verses of Genesis*.

This is really what the whole of Scripture is about — God providing redemption for fallen man, *with a purpose in view*. This is why the writer of Hebrews could reach back into the Old Testament and call attention to numerous verses and sections of Scripture in order to teach deep spiritual truths surrounding the reason for man's redemption.

The matter could be looked upon within the same framework as Christ drawing from the Old Testament Scriptures in Luke 24:27-31 to reveal numerous truths surrounding His person and work to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Beginning "at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them *in all the scriptures the things concerning himself*" (v. 27; cf. vv. 44, 45). He could do this because all of the Old Testament Scriptures were about Him.

Christ was, remains today, and will remain throughout eternity a manifestation of "the Word" *in flesh*. He is the Old Testament Scriptures, the written Word (which is alive), manifested in the form of "flesh," the living Word (John 1:1, 2, 14; Heb. 4:12).

And since the Son is the "appointed heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2; cf. Gen. 24:36; 25:5; Ps. 2:8; 110:1ff; Dan. 7:13, 14; Luke 19:12), the Old Testament Scriptures, inseparably related to the Son in the preceding manner, could only, among all other things relating to the Son, deal with *the Son's inheritance*. This inheritance has to do with *dominion (rule) over the creation* (Heb. 1:5; cf. Ps. 2:7, 8); and, since Christians will inherit as co-heirs with Christ, the writer of Hebrews could readily derive teachings from the Old Testament pertaining to *the purpose for man's salvation*, which has to do with *Christ's co-heirs realizing this inheritance with Him, ruling over the domain with Him* (cf. Heb. 1:9; 3:14).

Whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, it is all about the Son and about God arranging the ages around the pre-planned activity of His Son within these ages (Heb. 1:2).

A number of Messianic passages are quoted in Hebrews chap-

ter one, and the writer then immediately leads into the thought of an inheritance set before Christians (1:14). This is called “so great salvation” in Heb. 2:3 and is connected in verses five and ten with dominion over the earth as “sons,” exercising the rights of primogeniture.

The main purpose for the present dispensation is given in what could be looked upon as the key verse in the Book of Hebrews:

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect [‘complete’] through sufferings” (2:10).

The great burden of Hebrews is not that of rescuing the unsaved from the lake of fire but that of delivering the ones already so rescued (John 3:18) safely through their present pilgrim journey to *the goal of their calling*.

Rather than the book being a call unto salvation for the unsaved, it is a call unto Christ’s “kingdom and glory” for the saved (*cf.* I Thess. 2:12). The message of Hebrews is directed to those who are already the “children of God,” those being dealt with as “sons,” with a view to their one day being adopted as *firstborn sons* (Rom. 8:13-15, 23; Heb. 12:5-8).

The message of Hebrews, built around five major warnings, centers around the Christians’ present pilgrim journey in view of the coming manifestation of the “sons of God” (Rom. 8:19), when Christ will bring the “many sons” of Heb. 2:10 “unto glory” with Him (*cf.* Rom. 8:18, 23; Heb. 2:5). And these “many sons” will exercise *the rights of the firstborn* as co-heirs with Christ during the coming Messianic Era.

(Note that Christ’s co-heirs, forming His bride, will be taken from His body, a part of His very being — *bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh* [*cf.* Gen. 2:23; Eph. 5:30-32]. God will form His Son’s bride from *a part of His Son’s very being*, exactly as He did when he formed a bride for the first man, the first Adam. And, as the bride presented back to the first man, the first Adam completed Adam, so will it be with the second Man, the last Adam. That’s what the latter part of Heb. 2:10 is about — Christ’s bride, a part of His very being, completing the Son

in that coming day.

For more information on this overall subject, refer to the author's book, *THE BRIDE IN GENESIS*, Chapter I, "Adam and Eve".)

Beyond chapter two, the Book of Hebrews continues its teaching, as before, through constant reference to the Old Testament Scriptures. Chapter three begins by referring to the Christians' calling, which is "heavenly"; and the author takes all of chapter three and part of chapter four to call attention to the journey of the Israelites as they left Egypt under Moses and headed toward *an inheritance reserved for them in another land*. And this is set forth as a type of the Christians' present journey toward *an inheritance reserved for them in another land* (cf. I Peter 1:4).

For the Israelites, *an earthly inheritance* was in view; for Christians, *a heavenly inheritance* is in view. And that which befell the Israelites on their pilgrim journey (*i.e.*, falling short of the goal of their calling) can also befall Christians on their pilgrim journey. This is the warning which the Spirit of God goes to great lengths to clearly set forth through the author of the Book of Hebrews, not only in chapters three and four but also in chapters six (vv. 4-9) and ten (vv. 23ff).

The latter part of chapter four moves into teachings concerning the present high priestly ministry of Christ (which is patterned after the order of Aaron), and then in chapter five the book moves into a discussion of things concerning the future ministry of Christ when He will come forth as *the great King-Priest* "after the order of Melchizedek."

Then, in chapters six through ten both the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods are in view, placing the emphasis not only upon Christ's present ministry on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary (patterned after the order of Aaron in the earthly sanctuary) but also upon His future ministry when the results of His present ministry will be realized — that day when He will rule the earth as *the great King-Priest* "after the order of Melchizedek."

This entire section in Hebrews terminates with a warning concerning the "wilful sin" (10:26). There is *no sacrifice* for a wilful sin. Instead, only *judgment* awaits the perpetrators.

Contextually (Heb. 10:19-22), one might think that the wilful sin in verse twenty-six (for which there is no sacrifice) would be a Christian's refusal to avail himself of Christ's present high priestly ministry. Within this line of thinking, though the sacrifice exists, there would be no sacrifice for his unconfessed sins (for a Christian refusing to confess his sins would be refusing the provided sacrifice).

But Christians harboring sins of the flesh and refusing to confess these sins *cannot possibly* be that which they are warned against in Heb. 10:26. This verse continues the thought from the immediately preceding verses (vv. 23-25), and the thought has nothing whatsoever to do with Christians confessing (or not confessing) their sins.

Nor can the wilful sin in this verse be thought of in the broad sense of sins committed by Christians in a wilful, a deliberate, or a knowing manner. If the truth were known, it could probably easily be shown that most sins committed by Christians would fall into a singular category — things which Christians knew were sins before they committed them, knew were sins during the time in which they were committing them, and knew were sins after they had committed them.

The only possible way to properly understand the wilful sin in Heb. 10:26, for which there is no sacrifice, is to view this sin, *contextually, within the Book of Hebrews where it is found*. And, *contextually, within this book*, only one thing awaits Christians who sin wilfully — “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (v. 27).

(Christians sinning wilfully in Heb. 10:26 is simply another facet of exactly the same thing seen in the previous two major warnings in the book [in chs. 3, 4 and 6]. For additional information on the wilful sin, refer to Appendix III in this book.)

Then, closing out chapter ten, the converse of that seen in the wilful sin is dealt with. Attention is called to the “great recompense of reward,” “the promise,” Christ's return, the necessity of Christians living “by faith,” and “the saving of the soul” (10:35-39).

This then leads naturally into chapter eleven, which records numerous accounts of faithful servants of the Lord in the Old Tes-

tament. Over and over these individuals are said to have acted, “By faith.” That is, they believed that which God had to say about the matter, resulting in their acting accordingly.

Chapter eleven forms a climax to all which has preceded. Individuals in the Old Testament pleased God one way — “By faith.” And the necessity of exercising faith in order to please God is just as true today as it was then. An individual coming to God “must believe [exercise faith] that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (11:6). *There is no other way.*

Individuals in chapter eleven were moved to do certain things because of their faith, because they believed God. Such actions (works) emanated out of faith and brought faith to its proper goal, which is spoken of in I Peter 1:9 as the salvation of one’s soul (*cf.* Eph. 2:10).

And this is the same salvation upon which the author of Hebrews focuses his readers’ attention. Works emanating out of faith which, in turn, result in faith being brought to its proper goal — the salvation of one’s soul — is exactly what is in view in Hebrews chapter eleven. The verses leading into this chapter refer to the saving of the soul (10:35-39), and then, beginning in chapter eleven, the same thing is taught as in I Peter 1:4-9.

(In the light of the verses leading into chapter eleven, along with the overall message of the book, chapter eleven should be understood to begin by simply continuing with the closing thought in chapter ten — *the saving of the soul*:

“Now faith [to the saving of the soul] is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” [v. 1].

And “faith,” as it is seen throughout the chapter, should be understood in the light of the manner in which the chapter is introduced. That is, “By faith [to the saving of the soul], Abel...Enoch...Noah... Abraham...” [vv. 4, 5, 7, 8].)

Chapter twelve then forms the capstone to the whole matter. The writer’s exhortations and instructions in the first two verses reflect, in a broad sense, back on everything which he had previously stated. Christians are in a race (*cf.* I Cor. 9:24-27; II Tim.

4:7, 8); and the writer's exhortations and instructions, based on that which had previously been stated, outline for Christians *exactly how to run the race after the fashion necessary to win the prize.*

### The Great Cloud of Witnesses

Chapter twelve begins with "Wherefore" in the English text ("Therefore" in a number of translations), which is the translation of a Greek inferential particle (*Toigaroun*), pointing to the logical conclusion of a matter. The word could perhaps be better translated in this instance, "For that very reason then..." The reference is a continuation of the thought in the immediately preceding verse, which sums up that which is taught throughout these verses in chapter eleven — certain Old Testament and New Testament saints being "made perfect [brought to the goal of their calling]" *together through faith* (11:40).

The word "perfect" in this verse is from the same word in the Greek text translated "perfect" in Heb. 2:10 and James 2:22 (*teleioo*). In James, "faith" is said to be made perfect through "works," which is the identical concept taught throughout Hebrews chapter eleven. In fact, the two examples used in James to illustrate how faith is made perfect through works (brought to completion, brought to its proper goal [as in I Peter 1:9]) are also listed in Hebrews (*cf.* James 2:21-25; Heb. 11:17-19, 31).

Some Old Testament saints, *through faith*,

"...subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises,  
stopped the mouths of lions,

Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out  
of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight  
the armies of the aliens.

Women received their dead raised to life again..." (Heb. 11:33-35a).

Others though had opposite experiences. They, *through faith*,

"...were tortured, not accepting deliverance...

...others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover  
of bonds and imprisonment:

(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. 11:35b-38).

Regardless of the experiences which these Old Testament saints were called to enter into, each "obtained a good report through faith [*lit.*, 'bore a favorable witness through faith']. The point of the matter though is the fact that not a single one received "the promise" (v. 39). "The recompense of the reward," the reception of "the promise" (*cf.* vv. 26, 39), awaited a future day.

The day when Old Testament saints will receive "the promise" is the same day Christians will also receive "the promise," which is *Messianic* in its scope of fulfillment. And "the promise" is *heavenly*, not earthly (Heb. 3:1; 11:10-16). The realization of this promise by Old Testament and New Testament saints has to do with both groups being brought to the goal of their calling, *i.e.*, both groups occupying positions in the kingdom of the heavens as co-heirs with Christ during the coming age.

The nation of Israel was made the repository for both *heavenly and earthly promises and blessings* during Old Testament times (Gen. 14:18, 19; 22:17, 18); and certain Old Testament saints had a proper respect for the "recompense of the reward" in connection with *heavenly promises and blessings* (Heb. 11:8-16), governing their lives accordingly. And even though the nation of Israel rejected the proffered kingdom of the heavens at Christ's first coming, resulting in the heavenly portion of the kingdom being taken from the nation (Matt. 21:43), Old Testament saints who qualified to occupy positions in the kingdom of the heavens will still realize these positions when the promise is received.

The fact that the nation of Israel rejected the proffered kingdom at Christ's first coming cannot nullify that which had occurred, "by faith," in the lives of numerous Israelites prior to that time. And, according to Hebrews chapter eleven, this entire line of thought — certain Old Testament saints acting by faith in relation to *the saving of the soul* — extends all the way back to

the beginning of the human race, going all the way back to the time of Abel (vv. 4-7).

Thus, it is apparent that those from Old Testament days who occupy positions with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens will include not only certain individuals from the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob but certain individuals from the two-thousand-year period preceding Abraham as well (cf. Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28, 29).

The thought in Heb. 11:40, concluding the chapter dealing with *the faith* exhibited by numerous Old Testament saints and leading into chapter twelve, is often misunderstood. The thought in this verse is not at all that God has provided something better for Christians than He has for the Old Testament saints previously mentioned. This verse, in order to properly continue the thought from the preceding verse (concerning Old Testament saints not having received the promise), could perhaps be better translated,

“God has foreseen something better [for them], which concerns us, that apart from us they might not be made perfect [that apart from us they might not be brought to the goal of their calling].”

Certain saints from both Old Testament days and New Testament days, *through faith*, will inherit the promises *together, at the same time and place*. The faith of both will have been made perfect, brought to its proper goal, through works (works emanating out of their faith), and this will result in the salvation of their souls. They will be brought to this goal *together*, which is what God in His sovereign control of all things will bring to pass.

(The rulers in the kingdom of the heavens who will exercise power with Christ from His throne will be comprised of saints from more than just the present dispensation. Even Tribulation martyrs will be included in this group [Rev. 20:4-6]. There, thus, seems to be a *first-fruits, harvest, and gleanings* aspect to the matter. If so, it would appear that *the first-fruits* would be comprised of individuals from the Old Testament, *the main harvest* would be comprised of individuals from the present dispensation, and *the gleanings* would be comprised of individuals coming out of the Great Tribulation.

However, those occupying positions as *co-heirs with Christ in that coming day, forming His bride, will be taken from the saved during the present dispensation alone*. Saved individuals comprising the body of Christ is a position peculiar to saints during the present dispensation, allowing the Spirit of God, throughout the dispensation, *to call out a bride from those forming the body of Christ, from whence the bride must be taken* [cf. Gen. 2:21-24; Eph. 5:28-32.)

The great “cloud of witnesses” presently surrounding Christians (Heb. 12:1), forming an example and encouragement for Christians to exercise faith in their present pilgrim journey, as they exercised faith in their past pilgrim journey, can only be the saints mentioned in the previous chapter. These “witnesses” are not to be thought of as presently viewing Christians as spectators, but rather as ones who bore witness, through faith, at times in the past.

Rather than these witnesses viewing Christians, the thought is actually the opposite. Christians are the ones who view them, through that which has been recorded about their lives in Scripture. And through viewing their walk “by faith” during times past, Christians can derive instruction and encouragement for their own walk “by faith” today.

The word in the Greek text translated “witnesses” is the noun form of the participle translated “having obtained a good report” in Heb. 11:39. In this verse, those previously mentioned obtained a good report through their actions. That is, they bore witness *through faith, which resulted in works*. And the same thought is set forth two verses later, at the beginning of the next chapter, in Heb. 12:1.

The great “cloud of witnesses” in Heb. 12:1 is comprised of those in chapter eleven, set forth as an example for Christians today. Faith resulted in their entering into numerous experiences at different times in the past, being victorious; and faith will result in the same for Christians today. Then, in that future day, all those in view (faithful Old Testament and faithful New Testament saints alike) will be brought *to the goal of faith and obtain “the promise” together*.

## Weights Which Can Hinder

The great cloud of witnesses surrounding us finished their pilgrim journey in a victorious manner, and we are exhorted to finish our pilgrim journey after the same fashion. Paul, during the course of his pilgrim journey, said,

“But none of these things move me [bonds, afflictions, other things which should befall him], neither count I my life dear unto myself [*cf.* Phil. 1:21], so that I might finish my course with joy...” (Acts 20:24a).

And Christians are to exhibit the same attitude toward their present pilgrim journey, knowing that a “just recompense of reward” awaits (Heb. 2:2; 11:26).

Paul pictured himself as being in a race (I Cor. 9:24-27), which is the thought Heb. 12:1, 2 presents. The pilgrim walk is a race which is to be run “by faith”; and Paul’s burning desire was to finish the race in a victorious manner. He didn’t want to find himself having to drop out along the way because of exhaustion, or find himself disqualified at the end by not having observed the rules (II Tim. 2:5).

And we’re told that Paul succeeded in victoriously finishing the race which he had set out to run. Near the end of his life, in II Tim. 4:7, 8, he wrote,

“I have fought a [‘the’] good fight, I have finished my course [Acts 20:24], I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Numerous things can hinder a runner in a race, and these things are referred to in Heb. 12:1 as *weights*. The thought is taken from practices of athletes preparing for races during Paul’s day, such as athletes preparing for the ancient Olympic games. Participants training for a race, would wear weights around their ankles, waist, and wrists in order to help build their muscles and endurance; then “every weight” would be removed prior to actu-

ally running the race.

This type conditioning is a common practice in athletic events today. A baseball player, for example, often swings his bat with weights affixed immediately prior to taking his turn at bat. But no baseball player steps up to the plate with the weights still affixed to his bat.

Roger Bannister, the first man to run a mile in less than four minutes, tells how he trained by running in the sand and running uphill to condition himself. But when it came time to run the race and go for the record, the surface upon which he ran was hard, and the race was run on level ground.

The thought though is not that we are to wear weights as we train for the race, for no Christian trains for the race after this fashion. Every Christian is *presently in the race*, not training for a race which lies ahead. A Christian cannot choose whether or not he wants to enter the race. Every Christian has already been entered. He was entered at the time of his salvation. And, because of this, he is exhorted to lay aside every weight which could impede his successfully running and completing the race.

The Lord brings us through various trials, testings, experiences as we study the Word and run the race, allowing us to progressively grow from immaturity to maturity (James 1:2-4). This is the only counterpart to the conditioning and training process which an athlete undergoes prior to the race. For Christians, this training and conditioning process occurs during the course of the race; and the better equipped Christians are spiritually (the more they have grown from immaturity to maturity), the better equipped they will be to run the race in a satisfactory manner.

Weights which Christians are to lay aside as they run the race are not necessarily things sinful in and of themselves. One's appetite for spiritual things may have the edge removed by indulgence in any number of things, and what may be a weight for one Christian in this realm may not necessarily be a weight for another.

A "weight" is simply *anything which can impede one's progress in the race of the faith*. Anything which deadens or dulls one's sensitivity to spiritual things can only hinder his maximum efficiency and thus impede his progress in the race, being a weight.

No serious runner in the ancient Olympic games would ever have given any thought at all to running while carrying something which could impede his movement or ability to run. His training weights were put aside, and his long-flowing garment which he normally wore on the street was removed. He, as runners in athletic contests today, wore only that which was absolutely necessary.

(Participants in the original Olympic games actually ran naked, with men being the only spectators present [reflecting on these early games, our word “gymnasium” comes from the Greek word *gymnos*, meaning “naked”].)

A runner in the ancient Olympic games ran after a fashion which would provide him with the best opportunity to win. And any Christian, serious about also running to win, must run after the same fashion. He must lay aside any encumbrance which could hinder his progress.

In the course of the parable of the Sower in Matt. 13:3-8 and the explanation which follows (vv. 18-23), the Lord mentioned several weights which could hinder one in the race. In the third part of the parable (vv. 7, 22), the individual sown among thorns (v. 22 should literally read, “He also that was sown among thorns...”) allowed three things to “choke the word [*i.e.*, to choke ‘the word of the kingdom’ (v. 19)]” and cause him to become “unfruitful”:

- 1) The “care of this world [‘age’].”
- 2) The “deceitfulness of riches.”
- 3) The “pleasures of this life” (see Luke 8:14).

The person sown among thorns was in a position to bring forth fruit, which indicates that the Lord was referring to His dealings with the saved, not the unsaved. Only the saved are in a position to bring forth fruit, or, as the rich young ruler in Matt. 19:16ff, in a position to accumulate “treasure in heaven.” But the cares of this present age, accumulated wealth, and pleasures which the present life afford (all interrelated) *can and will* — if one does not properly conduct himself within the framework of each — produce a barren life, resulting in no accumulated treasure in heaven.

Christians today, as possibly never before, are faced with problems in this whole overall realm. The commercial world has been busy providing man with every pleasure and convenience which he can afford, and man has set his sights on monetary gain so that he can live “the good life.” This is the direction which the world has gone, and too often Christians have allowed themselves to be caught up in many of the ways and practices of the world.

The end result of the whole matter can be easily seen throughout practically any Church across the country today. The Word of the Kingdom is not being taught from the pulpit, those in the pew know little to nothing about this message, and Christians are so weighed down with encumbrances that many of them have never been able to even get off the starting blocks in the race of the faith.

It is simply the Laodicean Church, prophesied to exist at the end of the present dispensation — a Church so overcome by the ways and practices of the world that it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell where the world ends and Christianity begins.

Any Christian *serious* about the race in which he finds himself will run after a manner which will allow him to win. The first order of business is the putting aside of any encumbrance which would impede his progress. A Christian must not allow himself to be caught up in any of the ways and practices of the world after a fashion which could be considered as weights in the race.

There’s nothing whatsoever wrong with certain activities in the world, the possession of wealth, etc. The problem comes when a Christian becomes involved in these areas, or any other area, to the extent that these things become encumbrances and impede his progress in the race. They would then be considered “weights,” necessitating corrective action, for “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23).

### The Besetting Sin

The sin “which doth so easily beset [‘ensnare,’ ‘encircle’] us” as we run the race is not a reference to different sins for different Christians, depending on what may be thought of as a particular Christian’s weakness in a certain realm. This sin is *the same* for

every Christian, and the realm of weakness is also *the same* for every Christian.

Any Christian's weakness in any realm can always be traced back to *the same central weakness* — a weakness really in only *one realm*. The sin which “doth so easily beset” Christians is a reference to this central weakness. The word “sin” is articular in the Greek text, referring to a specific sin; and, contextually (ch. 11), this sin can only be understood as one thing — *a lack of faith*.

*A lack of faith* is responsible for the multitude of problems which surface in the lives of Christians. Spiritual weakness produced by a lack of faith will manifest itself numerous ways, causing Christians to view certain weaknesses after different fashions. One may see himself as being weak in one realm and view something connected with that realm as his besetting sin; another may see himself as being weak in a different realm and view something connected with that realm as his besetting sin. Such though is not the case at all. Problems in both realms stem from the same central problem — a lack of faith on the part of both individuals.

The question, simply put, is, “What has happened to cause you to lose confidence in God?” Or “Why have you chosen not to believe God about this matter?”

God has made the necessary provision for equipping and training Christians in the race (*cf.* Eph. 4:11-13; James 1:2-4), He has made certain promises concerning that which He will do for Christians as they run the race of the faith (*e.g.*, I Cor. 10:13), and He has provided instructions on how to successfully run the race (Heb. 12:1, 2). God is *very interested* in seeing every Christian run in a successful manner.

*No Christian has been enrolled in the race to fail.*

Though all of this is true, numerous Christians pay little attention to that which God has stated in this realm. Their interest lies elsewhere, and spiritual matters connected with the race are of little moment to them.

Such Christians will ultimately fall along the pilgrim pathway, as the Israelites under Moses fell in the wilderness. They, as the Israelites who fell under Moses, will fall on the right side of the blood but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling.

On the other hand, numerous other Christians heed that which God has said. They have a proper respect for “the recompense of reward.” They exercise faith and run the race in a manner which will provide victory.

Such Christians, rather than falling along the pilgrim pathway, as the Israelites under Moses fell in the wilderness, will ultimately realize the goal of their calling. They, as Caleb and Joshua, will have believed God, gained the victory, and be allowed to enter into the land of their inheritance. They will come into possession of “so great salvation,” *the salvation of their souls* (Heb. 2:3; 10:39).

## 2

### **PARTICIPATION IN THE RACE**

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:1, 2).

Christians are in *a race*, and *the highest of all possible prizes* is being extended as an encouragement for them to run the race after a manner which will result in *victory*. In Heb. 12:1, 2, the Spirit of God has provided Christians with instructions concerning how this race is to be run, and any Christian running the race after the revealed fashion can be assured that he will finish the contest in a satisfactory manner. On the other hand though, any Christian not so following these provided instructions can, under no circumstances, expect victory in the contest.

If ever there was a group of individuals who should be preparing themselves for that which lies ahead, it is Christians. God has set aside an entire dispensation lasting 2,000 years to acquire a bride for His Son, who will rule the earth during the coming age as co-regent with Him. Positions among those who will form the bride are to be earned, not entered into strictly on the basis of

one's eternal salvation. And even among those who eventually enter into these positions, there will be no equality. Rather, there will be numerous gradations of positions held by those occupying the throne as co-regents with Christ in that day.

Christians will receive positions in Christ's kingdom *exactly commensurate with their performance in the race*. That is to say, positions with Christ in the coming age will be assigned to household servants in perfect keeping with their faithfulness to delegated responsibility during the present dispensation, for faithfulness after this fashion is how Christians run the race.

There will be "a just recompense of reward" for each and every Christian after the race has been run (Heb. 2:2; 11:26), which is the Biblical way of saying that *exact payment will be given for services rendered*. And such payment will be dispensed at the judgment seat following an evaluation of the services rendered in the house.

The one thing which consumed Paul, governing his every move following the point of his salvation, was being able to successfully complete the race in which he had been entered. Paul knew that he was saved and that he would go to be with the Lord when he died (II Cor. 5:6-8; I Tim. 1:15, 16). He spent no time rethinking circumstances surrounding his salvation experience to make certain that he was really saved; nor did he live after a certain fashion out of fear that he could possibly one day lose his salvation — something which Paul knew to be an impossibility (Rom. 8:35-39; I Thess. 5:10). Rather, Paul set his eyes on *a goal out ahead, a goal which salvation made possible* (Phil. 3:7-14).

The race in which Christians presently find themselves is, in the light of Heb. 11:1ff and other related Scriptures, *a race of the faith* (cf. II Tim. 4:7). The "saving of the soul" is in view (Heb. 10:39), which is what Peter in his first epistle referred to as "the end [goal]" of the Christian's faith as he runs the race — "Receiving the end [goal] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (I Peter 1:9). And the saving or losing of one's soul has to do with *occupying or being denied a position with Christ in His kingdom* (cf. Matt. 16:24-17:5; 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27).

Thus, the race in which Christians are presently engaged is

being run with *a kingdom in view*; and it is being run, more specifically, with a view to *proffered positions on the throne with God's Son in that kingdom*.

*This is what is at stake.* And there can be no higher prize than that of one day being elevated from a servant in the Lord's house on this earth to a co-regent with Christ on His throne in the heavens.

How many Christians though know these things? How many, for that matter, are even interested? Christians talk about being saved and going to heaven, though most don't have the slightest idea concerning what is involved in saved man's association with the heavens.

Being saved, with a corresponding assurance of heaven, is often looked upon as an end in itself. However, if such were the case, where would the race in which we are presently engaged fit in the Christian life? It couldn't, for one's eternal salvation and assurance of heaven are based entirely on Christ's finished work, completely apart from the race.

One is saved with *the race in view*, and the race is for *a revealed purpose*. The teaching so prevalent today which views salvation *only* in the light of eternal verities — *i.e.*, one's eternal destiny is either Heaven or Hell, depending on the person's saved or unsaved status, with that being the end of the matter — is a theology which completely ignores and obscures the Word of the Kingdom.

Teachings concerning *the importance of salvation* have not been balanced with teachings concerning *the purpose for salvation*.

If ever there was a group of individuals on the earth with something to live for or something to die for, it is Christians. They are in possession of *the highest of all possible callings*. But in spite of this, the world has never seen a group quite like those comprising Christendom today — a group of individuals *who could profess so much but really profess so little*.

*The message is there*, but where are the Christians who know and understand these things?

*The race is presently being run*, but where are the serious contenders?

*The offer to ascend the throne with Christ has been extended*, but where are those who have fixed their eyes on this goal?

## Run with Patience

After one lays aside “every weight” (any encumbrance which could prevent maximum efficiency in the race) and “the sin which doth so easily beset us” (lack of faith [*ref. ch. 11*]), he is then to run the race “with patience.”

“Patience” is a translation of the Greek word *hupomone*, which could perhaps be better translated, “patient endurance.” The thought has to do with patiently enduring whatever may come your way (trials, testings) as you run the race and keep your eyes fixed on the goal.

*Hupomone* is the word used in James 1:3, 4:

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience [‘patient endurance’].

But let patience [‘patient endurance’] have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

*Trials and testings* are a means which God uses to work *patient endurance* in the lives of His people; and a person, in turn, is to patiently endure through whatever trials and testings the Lord may send his way. Patient endurance is to be exercised at all times, and patient endurance through trials and testings of this nature will gradually result in the person reaching the desired goal in the race of the faith.

One is to allow *patient endurance* to “have her perfect [end-time] work.” This is *not* something which occurs overnight or in a short period of time, but this is something which progressively occurs during the entire course of the race.

And, with respect to the preceding, as seen in Rom. 8:28, “all things [trials, testings, patient endurance]” *are working together for good* in the lives of those called according to God’s purpose. Nothing happens by accident within God’s sovereign control of all things relating to His will and purpose for an individual; everything occurs by Divine design. Man can see only the present while patiently undergoing trials and testings (except that part of the future revealed in God’s Word, which he sees “by faith”).

But God sees the complete future, along with the present. He sees the complete outcome of that which is presently occurring, from the present time forward.

(Note, for example, men such as Joseph and Moses. Joseph couldn't see the end result of God working in his life while in an Egyptian prison; nor could Moses see the end of the matter while herding sheep in Midian. God though ultimately exalted Joseph to a position on the throne in Egypt, and He later used Moses to lead His people out of Egypt.)

And God is working after a similar fashion in the lives of Christians today, calling upon them to patiently endure trials and testings, *all for a revealed purpose, both present and future, but to culminate in the future.*)

Patient endurance being allowed to have its end-time work will result in the individual being "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." That is, it will result in the individual being brought to the desired goal through the progressive working of the transformation (the metamorphosis) in Rom. 12:2 (a work of the Spirit of God within the life of a Christian as he patiently endures through trials and testings, bringing about a progression from immaturity to maturity). The goal of the Spirit of God working in the life of a believer after this fashion is to ultimately produce a mature Christian, who lacks nothing.

Thus "patience" and "endurance" are the two inseparable key words in this respect. A Christian is to always exercise *patience*, and he is to always exercise *endurance* with his patience. The race in which we are engaged is not one to be run over a short period of time but one to be run over the long haul. It is not a race for sprinters, though one may be called upon to sprint at times in the race. Rather, it is a race for marathon runners, set over a long-distance course. This is the reason *one must run with patient endurance*.

Sprinting doesn't really require patience of this nature; nor does it require one to pace himself after the fashion required to be successful in a long-distance race. In sprinting, one exerts a maximum burst of speed over a short distance, knowing that his body can endure for the short time required to run the race. However, one has to properly pace himself in the long-distance race in order

to endure, exercising patience throughout the course of the race.

If he allows himself to drop below his pace, he will not be continuing to exert the maximum effort his body can endure for the distance required, possibly resulting in defeat in the race. He may come in second or third rather than first, or he may not come in high enough to win a prize at all. Or, on the other hand, if he pushes himself above his pace, he will be placing a strain on his body beyond what it can endure for the distance required, possibly resulting in his having to drop out along the way and not finish the race at all.

The statement is sometimes heard in Christian circles, "I would rather burn out than rust out." This, of course, is an allusion to how one paces himself in the race of the faith; and those making this statement usually look upon "burn out" as something to be desired.

However, there's a problem with the pace which would be exhibited by either "burn out" or "rust out." "Burn out" is something which a person would experience who tried sprinting the long-distance race, and "rust out" is something which a person barely running would experience. Neither would allow the runner to reach the goal.

This whole overall thought is alluded to by Paul in II Tim. 2:12 where he sets forth one requirement for reigning with Christ: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him..." The word "suffer" in the Greek text is the verb form of the same word translated "patience ['patient endurance']" in James 1:3, 4 and Heb. 12:1 — *hupomeno*.

Thus, II Tim. 2:12 should literally read,

"If we suffer ['patiently endure'], we shall also reign with him: if we deny him [not deny Christ per se but refuse to patiently endure], he also will deny us [refuse us a position with Him in the kingdom]" (II Tim. 2:12).

(The word translated "deny" in II Tim. 2:12 is *arneomai* in the Greek text, which could, as well, be understood and translated in the sense of "refuse," which would be more in keeping with the overall thought in this verse. That set forth in the verse has nothing to do with eternal salvation. Rather, the subject, both

textually and contextually, has to do with *patiently enduring under trials and testings, with a view to reigning with Christ.*

The thought in the latter part of the verse is not refusing or denying Christ, for the word “him” is not in the Greek text. It is refusing or denying that previously seen in the text.

Following the thought, “If we patiently endure, we shall reign with him,” *the remainder of the verse parallels the first part of the verse.* The continued text, as previously seen, reads, “if we refuse,” not “if we refuse him.” Refusing, contextually, *can only have to do with refusing to patiently endure.* And as well, by the same token, Christ refusing the one who does not patiently endure *can only have to do with refusing that person for a regal position with Him in His kingdom.*)

Understanding that which the writer of Hebrews teaches about the race in Heb. 12:1 and that which James teaches about progression in growth from immaturity to maturity in James 1:2-4, one can easily see what Paul had in mind when he used the verb form of this same word in II Tim. 2:12. It’s very simple. As noted in the previous comments within the verse, if we patiently endure in the race of the faith, we’ll be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ, for the one patiently enduring will have run the race after the correct fashion and will have finished his course in a satisfactory manner.

The same word translated “patience” in James 1:3, 4 also appears in its verb form in James 1:12 (same as II Tim. 2:12):

“Blessed is the man that endureth [‘patiently endureth’] temptation: for when he is tried [‘approved’], he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.”

Thus, patient endurance in the race of the faith during the present time, allowing the runner to complete the race after the correct fashion and in a satisfactory manner, will result not only in the runner being approved before the judgment seat but also in his receiving the crown of life.

And the Book of James, as all other New Testament epistles, deals centrally with the salvation of the soul. In James 1:21, after the author has dealt with patient endurance and the end result of

such endurance — *i.e.*, has dealt with how the race is to be run, along with the outcome of satisfactorily running the race — he then refers to “the engrafted word [that Word which is compatible with and natural for the new nature, the living Word of God]” as that “which is able to save your souls.”

The reception of the Word of God is able to bring about the salvation of one’s soul because it is this Word which the Spirit of God uses as He effects the metamorphosis of Rom. 12:2. And in association with this metamorphosis, the trying of one’s faith in James 1:3 cannot be done apart from a reception of the Word of God.

*Faith* “cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). A Christian receives that which is compatible with and natural for his new nature. He receives the living Word of God into his saved human spirit. The indwelling Spirit of God then takes this living Word and progressively works the metamorphosis in the Christian’s life, progressively moving him from immaturity to maturity. And a Christian passing through this experience correspondingly exercises patient endurance in the trials and testings of his faith, which is the manner in which he is to run and properly pace himself in the race of the faith.

*The Christian life, the race in which we are presently engaged, progression from immaturity to maturity, and the goal of faith, are all inseparably linked together after this fashion.*

(For a more detailed discussion of *the metamorphosis*, refer to the author’s book, SALVATION OF THE SOUL, Chapters III-V.)

### Looking unto Jesus

The writer of Hebrews instructs Christians, during the course of the race, to keep their eyes fixed *on Jesus*. The Greek text though is much more explicit than the English translation. There are two prepositions used in the writer’s instructions concerning “Looking unto Jesus”; and the first preposition, prefixed to the word “Looking,” has not been translated at all. The literal word-for-word rendering from the Greek text reads, “Looking *from unto* Jesus.” The person *looking unto Jesus* is to correspondingly *look away from*

anything which could, at any time, result in distraction.

Jesus referred to this same truth when He said,

“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

Such an individual would have begun after the correct fashion by putting his hand to the plow. He would be looking straight ahead to a point at the end of the row he was plowing, which, in the light of Heb. 12:2, would presuppose that he had looked away from surrounding things. Should he though, during the course of plowing a row in the field, begin to look around or look back, he would be taking his eyes off the point toward which he was moving at the end of the row. He would no longer be *looking away from* anything which could distract and be *looking toward* the goal.

The distraction away from the goal would invariably result in the person straying off the course leading toward the goal. And Jesus said that a man who could not keep his eyes fixed on the goal was not fit for the kingdom of God.

Paul stated the matter in these words in Phil. 3:13, 14:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting *those things which are behind*, and reaching forth unto *those things which are before*,

I press *toward the mark* for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

And Paul, within this same framework in I Cor. 9:26, said, “I therefore so run [run to obtain an incorruptible crown (vv. 24, 25)], *not as uncertainly...*” That is, he didn’t run aimlessly; he didn’t wander back and forth from lane to lane on the track. Rather, he had his eyes fixed on a goal, and he strained every muscle of his being as he moved straight ahead toward this goal. His every action centered around one thing: completing the race in a manner which would allow him to win the prize.

The race of the faith in which Christians are presently engaged is thus not only to be run with “patient endurance” but the runners are to keep their eyes fixed on the goal out ahead. And the

manner in which the runners are to do this is *to look away from* anything which could distract as *they look unto* Jesus, as *they keep their eyes fixed on Jesus*.

### 1) *Knowing Christ*

In Phil. 3:10 Paul wrote, “That I may know him...” Paul, of course, “knew” Christ insofar as his eternal salvation was concerned. Thus, he had to be referencing something beyond that which he had already experienced. The remainder of the verse, along with the context, shows that Paul had in mind a progression in spiritual growth from initially knowing Christ to that of coming into possession of a knowledge which afforded him an intimate relationship with Christ; and he counted *all things in his life* “but loss” to accomplish this goal (v. 8).

One comes into a knowledge of and begins to understand different things in life by spending time in the realm where he desires familiarity. And knowledge gained is invariably commensurate with the time invested. This is true in any aspect of life.

Christians come into *a knowledge of Christ* through time invested in studying God’s Word, through time invested in studying *the written Word (which is alive)*, which reveals *the living Word (the Word which became “flesh”* [John 1:1, 2, 14; Heb. 4:12]). Thus, Christians can only begin to understand more and more about Christ, about God’s plans and purposes surrounding His Son, through gaining a knowledge of that which God has revealed in His written Word about the Word which became “flesh.”

There is a rudimentary knowledge of things, gained by investing a limited amount of time; and there are varying degrees of knowledge beyond that, gained by investing varying amounts of time.

A Christian cannot “know” Christ without spending time in *the written Word*, which reveals *the living Word*. Such would be impossible, for the latter is simply a manifestation in “flesh” of the former. And, accordingly, the more time one spends in God’s written revelation of His Son, the more that person will move toward the intimate relationship which Paul, above everything else, sought. This is the reason Christians are to *look away from* anything which could prove to be a distraction as they *look unto* Jesus.

Paul sought to know Christ after this fashion in three realms:

- 1) "The power of his resurrection."
- 2) "The fellowship of his sufferings."
- 3) "Being made conformable unto his death."

#### A) *The Power of His Resurrection*

Death could not hold the One Who had come to accomplish the will of the Father (John 4:34; 6:38). This was the Father's "beloved Son [the One Who would one day exercise the rights of the firstborn]," in whom the Father was "well pleased" (Matt. 3:17; cf. Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33, 34). And this was the One Who, at the end of His earthly ministry, could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

God raised Him from the dead (Acts 13:30), *the Spirit* raised Him from the dead (Rom. 8:11), and *Christ* raised Himself from the dead (John 10:17, 18; 11:25). He then sat down at the Father's right hand awaiting a future day — that day when His enemies would be made His "footstool" and He would rule the earth with "a rod of iron" (Ps. 2:6-9; 110:1ff; Heb. 1:13-2:10).

According to Acts 13:30-34, Christ's resurrection is inseparably connected with that future day when He will rule and reign. The quotation in verse thirty-three, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," refers, not to Christ's resurrection per se, but to the *purpose* for His resurrection. This is a quotation from the second Psalm, which is clearly Messianic (cf. Ps. 2:6-9); and Christ was raised from the dead in order that God might fulfill *His promise to His people* (v. 33) by giving to Christ "the sure mercies of David [*lit.*, 'the holy things of David']" (v. 34). That is, Christ was raised from the dead in order that God might fulfill His promise concerning a coming Redeemer Who would ascend "the throne of his father David" and "reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1:32, 33; cf. II Sam. 7:12-16).

(The fulfillment of the quotation from Ps. 2:7 in Acts 13:33 — "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" — is *future in its entirety*. The entirety of the matter [Christ exercising His Sonship (which portends

*rulership*) and Christ being begotten] are, in the second Psalm, to be fulfilled in that coming day when God places His Son as “King” upon His “holy hill of Zion [*i.e.*, in Jerusalem].” The Son being “begotten” in this verse has to do with God bringing His Son forth, in that future day, in the manner seen in the second Psalm, or as seen in Acts 13:33, 34 as well.

For additional information on God bringing forth in this manner, refer to the author’s book, BROUGHT FORTH FROM ABOVE.)

“All power” has been delivered into the hands of the Son (Matt. 28:18), and He has been raised from the dead and positioned at God’s right hand, the hand of power. And in this *position*, with His Son in possession of *all power*, God has clearly stated to His Son:

“Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool...” (Ps. 110:1ff).

The Son seated at His Father’s right hand is not presently exercising the power which has been delivered into His hands; nor is He presently fulfilling the purpose for His resurrection as given in the second and one hundred tenth Psalms. *But one day this will all change.*

A day is coming when the Son will take possession of the kingdom which He has gone away to receive (Luke 19:12, 15). The Father will give the kingdom to His Son (Dan. 7:9-14; *cf.* Rev. 11:15), and the Son will then come forth as *the great King-Priest* “after the order of Melchizedek,” exercising power and authority as He sits upon His Own throne (Ps. 110:2-4; *cf.* Heb. 5:6-10; 6:20-7:21; Rev. 3:21).

It was these things which Paul had in mind when he said that he wanted to know Christ in “the power of his resurrection.” As Christ was (and still is) seated with His Father on a throne from which power and authority emanates, awaiting the day of His Own power on His Own throne, Paul wanted to be among those who would one day be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ and have a part in the exercise of that power.

## B) *The Fellowship of His Sufferings*

Sufferings followed in the wake of Christ’s ministry, and they

followed in the wake of Paul's ministry as well. And sufferings will follow in the wake of anyone's ministry who seeks to come into an intimate knowledge of Christ.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall [not might, but 'shall'] suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12).

*Persecution is the natural outcome of godly living.* And the "fellowship" of Christ's sufferings has to do with possessing the mind of Christ concerning His and our sufferings (the word "fellowship," from the Greek word *koinonia*, means to be "like-minded") It is looking upon our sufferings the same way Christ looked upon His sufferings.

And how did Christ look upon His sufferings? Note Heb. 12:2. Christ, relative to His sufferings,

"...for the joy that was set before him [the day when He would rule and reign] endured the cross, despising the shame [considering it to be a thing of little consequence in comparison]..." (Heb. 12:2).

The apostles in the early Church rejoiced that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame" for Christ's name. Why? Because they knew what lay beyond the sufferings.

Three things constitute an unchangeable order in this respect:

- 1) *Godliness.*
- 2) *Sufferings.*
- 3) *Glory*

This was true in the life of Christ (Luke 24:25, 26; John 17:4, 5); and it will be equally true in the lives of His followers (Matt. 10:24; Acts 14:22; I Peter 4:12, 13), for He has left us "an example" that we "should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21).

### C) *Being Made Conformable Unto His Death*

The Greek word which Jesus used relative to laying down His life (John 10:15, 17) is *psuche* in the Greek text. This is the same word translated "soul" numerous places throughout the New Testament. This is the word used in Matt. 16:25, 26, translated "life" twice in

verse twenty-five and “soul” twice in verse twenty-six. “Soul” and “life” are used interchangeably in this respect. Christ *laid his life down* in order that He might “take it again” (cf. John 10:17; Isa. 53:12), which is essentially the same truth taught in Matt. 16:25, 26:

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

“Conformable” in Phil. 3:10 is the translation of a Greek word which means *to take on the same form*. A Christian is to conduct his life after the same fashion that Christ conducted His life, which moves toward *death* rather than life, *for a revealed purpose* (cf. John 12:24).

He is to take the same form as Christ in this respect in order that through losing his life during the present day he might gain his life during that coming day. And the entire matter is in connection with Christ *coming* “in the glory of his Father with his angels,” *rewarding* “every man according to his works,” and *reigning* in the “kingdom” which follows (Matt. 16:27-17:5).

## 2) *Attaining to the Goal*

Paul sought to “know” Christ in “the power of his resurrection,” “the fellowship of his sufferings,” and through conformity to “his death” *for a revealed purpose*, expressed in verse eleven:

“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection [‘out-resurrection’] of the dead.”

And this out-resurrection to which Paul sought to attain had to do with “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (v. 14).

The word “resurrection” in verse eleven is a translation of the Greek word, *exanastasis*. This is the same word used in the preceding verse concerning Christ’s resurrection, but without the preposition *ek* prefixed to the word, as in verse eleven (*ex* is the form this preposition takes when prefixed to words beginning with a vowel — thus, *exanastasis*).

The preposition *ek* means “out of,” and when prefixed to *an-*

*astasis*, as in Phil 3:11 (the only occurrence in the N.T.), the word should properly be translated “out-resurrection.”

(For a correct translation of *exanastasis* in a New Testament text, refer to THE NEW TESTAMENT, *an Expanded Translation*, by Kenneth Wuest [former Greek professor at Moody Bible Institute], or to THE NEW TESTAMENT, *From the Greek Text*, by Ivan Panin.)

The compound word, *anastasis* (“resurrection” [v. 10]), literally means “to stand up” (*ana* means “up,” and *stasis* means “to stand”). When referring to the dead, it means “to stand up” from the place of death (“to be resurrected”). *Exanastasis*, on the other hand, means “to stand up out of”; and if a deceased person were in view, the word would have to refer to that person *standing up out* (“being resurrected out,” an “out-resurrection”) from among others (others not raised from the dead at this time).

The word *exanastasis* though is *not* used referring to bodily resurrection in verse eleven, for there is no such thing in Scripture as selective resurrection among Christians. Rather it is used referring to certain Christians being allowed “to stand up out of” (*i.e.*, being elevated above) other Christians. This is something which will occur as a result of decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat. This is where the separation of Christians will occur (set forth by the word *exanastasis*), not at the time of the previous bodily resurrection of Christians.

### The Author and Finisher of the Faith

“Faith” in Heb. 12:2 is not “our faith,” as in the English translation, but “the faith” (note that “our” is in italics [KJV], indicating that it has been supplied by the translators). The word is articular in the Greek text and is a reference to the same faith seen in both I Tim. 6:12 and Jude 3.

I Tim. 6:12 reads,

“Fight the good fight of [the] faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

This verse could be better translated,

“Strive [‘Strain every muscle in your being’] in the good contest [the race] of the faith; lay hold on life for the age, whereunto thou art also called...”

The word “strive” in the latter rendering is a translation of the Greek word, *agonizomai*, from which we derive our English word, “agonize”; and the word “contest” is from the Greek word *agon*, the noun form of the verb *agonizomai*.

Then Jude 3 reads,

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

The words “earnestly contend” are a translation of the Greek word *epagonizomai*, an intensified form of the word *agonizomai* used in I Tim. 6:12. This part of the verse could be better translated, “earnestly strive [‘earnestly strain every muscle of your being’] for the faith.” And understanding this passage in the light of I Tim. 6:12, earnestly striving for the faith is not defending the faith, as some expositors suggest, but a striving *with respect to the faith*. Such a striving has to do with remaining faithful to one’s calling within the house, properly running the race, *i.e.*, earnestly striving in the race of the faith.

(*Ref.* the author’s book, JUDE, Chapter II, “Contending for the Faith.”)

Christ is both the “author [the Originator, Founder]” and “finisher [the One Who carries through to completion]” of “the faith.” He is the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...” (Rev. 1:8a). And we are to fix our eyes upon Him, as we look away from anything which could distract, and run the race with patient endurance.

# 3

## GOAL OF THE RACE

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:1, 2).

The race in which Christians find themselves is not something optional in the Christian life. Rather, it is a race in which all Christians have been automatically enrolled. Individuals enter the race at the moment of belief, at the moment of salvation, at the moment they become Christians.

Thus, there is nothing which a Christian can do about entering or not entering the race. He has no choice concerning the matter. He has been entered in the race, with an ultimate God-ordained goal in view.

He does have a choice though concerning *how he runs the race*. He can follow the instructions which God has provided and run the race after a fashion which will allow him to win, or he can ignore the instructions which God has provided and run the race after a different fashion, one which can only result in loss.

And not only are instructions given for properly running the race, but information is also given concerning why the race is being run and exactly what awaits all Christians, all runners, after the race is over.

The race is being run in order to afford Christians the highest of all possible privileges — *that of occupying positions on the throne as co-heirs with Christ during the coming age*. Awards having to do with positions of honor and glory in the Son's kingdom await the successful competitors; and the denial of awards, resulting in shame and disgrace in relation to the Son's kingdom, awaits the unsuccessful competitors.

Understanding these things will allow an individual to view both *his presently possessed salvation* and *the Christian life* within a proper interrelated Biblical perspective.

Man has been saved *for a purpose*, which has to do with the coming kingdom of Christ. He has been saved, he has "passed from death unto life," he has come into possession of eternal life, in order that he might be able to participate in the race of the faith and be provided an opportunity to win one of the numerous proffered positions in the Son's kingdom.

God is taking an entire dispensation, lasting approximately 2,000 years, to acquire the rulers who will ascend the throne and rule in the numerous positions of power and authority as co-heirs with His Son. These individuals will form the bride who will reign as consort queen with God's Son. And the numerous rulers, forming the bride, will be those having run and having finished the race in a satisfactory manner.

(Refer to the author's book, REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE, for details concerning the work of the Spirit in the preceding respect during the present dispensation.)

Salvation removes man from one realm (one in which he cannot run the race) and places him in another (one in which he automatically finds himself in the race). Redeemed man has been removed from a realm associated with *darkness* (one in which he was alienated from God), and he has been placed in a realm as-

sociated with *light* (one in which he now has an association and relationship with God). And he finds himself in the race *only after* this transference has occurred, for the revealed purpose surrounding God's reason for the present dispensation.

The opening chapter of Colossians touches upon this overall matter, though from a different perspective. This chapter reveals the Christians' transference *from a realm of darkness to one of light*. And this transference is dealt with in a context which centers around *the reason* that God has brought this change about.

*Because* one has been saved (with his eternal destiny now a settled matter), *because* he has been removed from one realm and placed in another, a "hope" and an "inheritance" come into view (cf. vv. 5, 12, 23, 27). And Colossians chapter one concerns itself primarily with this hope and inheritance, which are in connection with the present race of the faith and have to do with positions of honor and glory in the future kingdom of Christ.

The Christians' removal from one realm and placement in another is spoken of in verse thirteen:

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

The words "hath translated" are from a word in the Greek text which means *to be removed from one place and positioned in another*; or the word can refer to *a change in one's point of view*.

Regardless though of how the word is understood, the verse *cannot* refer to being removed from the kingdom of Satan and being placed in the kingdom of Christ. And this would be easy to understand, for such an act would not be possible during the present day and time.

Satan is God's appointed ruler over the present "kingdom of the world" (though a rebel ruler), and both Christians and non-Christians alike reside in this kingdom. And there is no present existing kingdom of Christ into which Christians can be translated. The present kingdom under Satan is to one day become "the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15, ASV); but that day will not, it cannot, arrive until the present age has

been completed, at which time the Father will remove Satan from the throne and place His Son on the throne (*cf.* Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 19:11ff).

The thought in Col. 1:13 would, contextually have to be understood along the lines that God has brought about a change of sides with respect to *the present-existing kingdom*. “The power of darkness” (*cf.* Eph. 6:12) and “the kingdom of his dear Son” in Col. 1:13 point to places diametrically opposed to one another; but these places, in another respect, must be looked upon in the sense that both have to do with the same thing. Both are *regal* and have to do with “a kingdom” — *a kingdom presently under Satan’s rule but to one day be under Christ’s rule*.

Satan is the present world ruler, and “the whole world lieth in wickedness [‘in the wicked one’],” *i.e.*, in the kingdom of Satan (I John 5:19; *cf.* Luke 4:5, 6).

Christ, on the other hand, is the coming World Ruler; and Christians, “not of the world” as Christ is “not of the world” (John 17:14), have changed sides with respect to the existing kingdom.

Viewing matters in this respect, redeemed man, at any point in his existence, has never been removed from the existing kingdom, the kingdom in which he is destined to one day exercise regal power and authority (though, in that coming day, under a different Ruler than presently holds the sceptre [*cf.* Rev. 11:15]). Redeemed man *can’t* be removed from this kingdom as long as he resides upon the earth during the present age, in this “body of death.” But he *can* be placed in a position where his allegiance is to the Ruler of the future form of this kingdom, *which is exactly what has occurred*.

(This can be graphically seen in the Books of I, II Samuel, with Saul and David in the Old Testament theocracy, foreshadowing Satan and Christ in the present and future theocracy.

Saul was anointed king in Israel, as Satan was anointed ruler over the earth; Saul rebelled against the Lord, as Satan rebelled against the Lord; Saul was disqualified to continue on the throne, as Satan was disqualified to continue on the throne; but Saul continued to reign until the one whom God had chosen to replace him both appeared and was ready to ascend the throne, as Satan continues to reign until the One

Whom God has chosen to replace him will both appear and be ready to ascend the throne.

[A principle of Biblical government, seen in this type, necessitates that even though an incumbent ruler disqualifies himself (as Saul), he must remain on the throne until the one whom God has chosen to replace him (as David) is both on the scene and ready to ascend the throne.]

David was anointed king while Saul was still in power, as Christ was born King while Satan was still in power; but David didn't immediately take the sceptre and ascend the throne, as Christ didn't immediately take the sceptre and ascend the throne; David subsequently found himself out in the hills, separated from the kingdom, as Christ subsequently found Himself in heaven, separated from the kingdom; certain faithful individuals then joined themselves to David, with a view to his one day occupying the throne [as seen in I Sam. 22:1, 2], as certain faithful individuals presently join themselves to Christ, with a view to His one day occupying the throne [as seen in Col. 1:5-12].

That is to say, certain Israelites during David's day in the type changed sides with respect to the kingdom, and certain Christians in the antitype today have done exactly the same thing. In the type, the Israelites during David's day still resided in the kingdom of Saul, but their allegiance was to David, with a view to that day when Saul would be put down and David would take the kingdom. And exactly the same thing is seen in the antitype. The Christians in view still reside in the kingdom under Satan, but their allegiance is to Christ, with a view to that day when Satan will be put down and Christ will take the kingdom.

It was during this time that David acquired the rulers who were to occupy positions of power and authority with him when he ascended the throne. And exactly the same thing is seen in the antitype. It is during this time [during the present dispensation] that Christ is acquiring the rulers who are to occupy positions of power and authority with Him when He ascends the throne.

Only at the end of this time in the type was David ready to ascend the throne; and only at the end of this time in the antitype, at the end of the present dispensation, will Christ be ready to ascend the throne. Until that time arrived, in the type, Saul remained on the throne; and until that time arrives, in the antitype, Satan will remain on the throne.

Then, to complete the picture in the type, the day came when Saul was put down, his crown taken, and given to David; then David and

his faithful men moved in and took over the government [the same kingdom which Saul had ruled].

And the day is coming when exactly the same thing is going to occur in the antitype. It has to occur, for it is seen in the type, among numerous other places in Scripture. Satan will ultimately be put down, his crown taken, and given to Christ; then Christ and His faithful followers will move in and take over the government of the kingdom [the same kingdom which Satan had ruled].)

Thus, the “kingdom of his dear Son” in Col. 1:13 should not, it cannot, be thought of in either a present sense or in some spiritual sense. The kingdom in view is presently ruled by Satan, and this kingdom is a very literal, tangible kingdom. And the coming kingdom of Christ can only be viewed in exactly the same manner — a future, literal, tangible kingdom, with Christ as the Ruler. It has to be viewed in this manner, for the coming kingdom of Christ will be *the same presently-existing kingdom, though under a new Ruler*.

The whole of the matter should be understood in the same framework as Christians being *raised up together and made to sit together* “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” in the Book of Ephesians (1:3; 2:6). Note that Ephesians and Colossians are companion epistles and parallel one another in a number of places. Ephesians deals with one facet of the matter and Colossians with another.

In Ephesians, positionally, we are *in the heavenlies* “in Christ,” completely separated from Satan’s kingdom, even though actually here and now we still reside in this body of death in Satan’s kingdom.

In Colossians, a transference from the present form of the kingdom to the future form is in view. Spiritual values are involved throughout, but these spiritual values cannot ignore a literal fact: We reside exactly where Eph. 1:3; 2:6 and Col. 1:13 state that we reside. We have been moved from *one realm* and placed in another, but not moved from *one kingdom* and placed in another. *A change of sides has occurred with respect to the existing kingdom, which is presently under Satan but will one day be under Christ.*

Not only would the first part of Col. 1:13 necessitate that “the kingdom of his dear Son” be looked upon as a present reference

to the *literal coming kingdom of Christ* but the context of the verse would demand this as well. Within the context, there is a “hope” laid up for Christians in heaven (vv. 5, 23, 27), which has to do with an “inheritance” (v. 12) and the “mystery” revealed to Paul (vv. 26-29); and these things have to do with that day when Christ takes the kingdom. The simple fact is that a change of sides relative to the kingdom has occurred among Christians, with a view to “the hope of glory” (v. 27), which has to do with an “inheritance” *as co-heirs with Christ in that kingdom*.

This involves a transference from one realm into another in relation to the kingdom, which has to do with *the purpose for our salvation*. It involves the transference of power in the kingdom, looking forward to that day when the Father removes the sceptre from Satan’s hand and places it in His Son’s hand.

And, as seen within a different frame of reference in Col. 1:13, the race in which Christians are presently engaged is, in like manner, associated with *the future state of the kingdom*, not with the present state. Christians are presently running to win awards, and these awards all have to do with the same thing — positions of honor and glory in “the kingdom of his dear Son” in that future day when Christ and His co-heirs ascend the throne together.

(Viewing matters relative to the place Christians reside in relation to “the kingdom of the world” will settle the matter once and for all as to what part, if any, Christians should have in the political structure of the present world system. In the light of Col. 1:13 and related Scripture, the matter can be viewed only one way: Christians involving themselves, after any fashion, on any level, in the politics of the present world system [in the politics of world government as it presently exists, under Satan] are delving into the affairs of a kingdom from which they have been delivered.

Refer to the author’s book, *THE MOST HIGH RULETH*, for more details concerning the preceding.)

### **The Joy Set Before Him**

The “author and finisher of our faith [*lit.*, ‘the faith’],” the One we are to *look unto* as we *look away* from anything which could

cause distraction, is described in Heb. 12:2 as One Who had His eyes fixed on “the joy that was set before him” as He bore “our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). *Christ viewed Calvary within the framework of that which lay beyond Calvary.*

The ignominious shame and indescribable sufferings of Calvary had to come first. There was no other way. But beyond Calvary lay something else, described as “the joy that was set before him.”

Following His resurrection, when Christ confronted the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and other disciples later in Jerusalem, He called attention to a constant theme throughout the Old Testament Scriptures: Israel’s Messiah was going to *first suffer these things* [events surrounding Calvary] and *then enter into His glory* (Luke 24:25-27, 44, 45).

Joseph, a type of Christ, first suffered prior to finding himself seated on Pharaoh’s throne ruling “over all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 37:20ff; 39:20ff; 41:40ff). Moses, another type of Christ, first suffered rejection at the hands of his people before being accepted by them. Rejection was followed by his experiences in Midian, and acceptance was followed by the people of Israel being led out of Egypt to be established in a theocracy in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 2:11ff; 3:1ff; 12:40, 41).

Passages such as Ps. 22-24 or Isa. 53:1ff (Israel’s future confession concerning what had happened to the nation’s Messiah *before* He entered into His glory [Isa. 52]) present the same order — *sufferings*, and then *glory*. This is *the only order* one finds in Scripture, and enough is stated about Christ’s sufferings preceding His glory in the Old Testament that He could say to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus,

“O fools, and slow of heart to believe *all that the prophets have spoken:*

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25, 26).

Peter, James, and John on the Mount with Christ during the time of His earthly ministry “saw his glory” (Luke 9:32), and Peter, years later, associated the “glory” which they had seen at

this time with “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:16-18). Christ’s “glory” thus has to do with that day when He will occupy the throne and rule the earth (as Joseph on the throne ruling Egypt [always a type of the world in Scripture]).

In Heb. 12:2, the wording is slightly different. In this passage we’re told that Christ’s “sufferings” preceded “the joy [rather than ‘the glory’]” set before Him. This though, in complete keeping with Old Testament prophecy, is clearly a reference to “sufferings” preceding Christ’s “glory” and to Christ looking beyond the sufferings to the time when he would enter into His glory.

In the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14ff, Christ referred to individuals who would enter into positions of power and authority with Him as entering “into *the joy* of thy Lord” (vv. 21, 23; cf. Luke 19:16-19). Thus, the “sufferings” and “joy” of Heb. 12:2 follow the same order and refer to the same two things as the “sufferings” and “glory” found elsewhere in Scripture.

In keeping with the theme of Hebrews though, there’s really more to the expression, “the joy that was set before him,” than just a general foreview of Christ’s coming glory. The thought here is much more specific. Note in the parable of the talents that “the joy of thy Lord” is associated with Christ’s co-heirs entering into positions on the throne with him; and the key thought throughout Hebrews, stating the matter another way, is that of Christ “bringing many sons unto glory” with Him (2:10).

This is what Christ had His eyes fixed upon when He endured the humiliation, shame, and sufferings of Calvary (cf. Heb. 1:9). Christ, at Calvary, fixing His attention on “the joy that was set before him,” fixed His attention on that day when *He and His co-heirs, firstborn sons in that day, would ascend the throne together in His kingdom.*

### 1) Endured the Cross

Note something, and note it well. It is *because* of Calvary that unredeemed man, “dead in trespasses and sins,” can be “quickenened” (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13). It is *because* of Calvary that unredeemed man can be eternally saved, changing once and for all his eternal destiny. *But Christ looked beyond Calvary.* He looked

at *the purpose* for man's redemption, a *purpose* which would allow redeemed man to realize the highest of all possible callings.

Christ viewed the events surrounding Calvary more in the light of Col. 1:13. Christ's finished work on Calvary allows God to take fallen man and bring about a change in sides with respect to the kingdom. This allows God to take a man who is "dead in trespasses and sins," produce life in that individual, and place him in the very sphere for which he had been created in the beginning.

And being more specific, Christ, through His work at Calvary, provided redemption for His bride, the one who would reign as consort queen with Him. Christ's finished work at Calvary (Gen. 22) allows the Holy Spirit to presently call out a bride for the Son (Gen. 24). "Sufferings" *must* come first, but the "joy" toward which Christ looked *must* follow the sufferings.

Christ "endured the cross," knowing these things, with His eyes accordingly fixed on "the joy that was set before him." And man today, viewing Calvary apart from also looking ahead to this same "joy," is not looking upon Christ's redemptive work the same way Christ viewed it at all.

## 2) *Despised the Shame*

Christ, "for the joy that was set before him," not only *endured the Cross* but *He despised the shame*. The word "for" in this verse — "*for* the joy" — is a translation of the Greek word *anti*, which refers to setting one thing over against another. The "joy" was set over against the "shame." Christ considered the ignominious "shame" associated with Calvary a thing of little consequence compared to the "joy" which lay ahead. The ignominious "shame" was no small thing, but the "joy" was so much greater that, comparatively, Christ could only look upon the former as of little consequence.

Events of that coming day when He and His bride would ascend the throne together so far outweighed events of the present day that Christ considered being spat upon, beaten, and humiliated to the point of being arrayed as a mock King as things of comparatively little consequence. He then went to Calvary, paying the price for man's redemption, so that even the very ones carrying out His persecution and crucifixion could one day (through

believing on Him) find themselves in a position to participate in the “joy” set before Him.

And a Christian should view present persecution, humiliation, and shame after the same fashion Christ viewed these things at Calvary. This is what Peter had in mind when he penned the words, “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (I Peter 2:21).

The Epistles of I, II Peter have been written to encourage Christians who are being tested and tried; and this encouragement is accomplished through offering compensation for the sufferings which one endures during the present time. And this compensation — rewards having to do with positions of honor and glory in the Son’s kingdom — will be exactly commensurate with present sufferings (I Peter 1:6, 7; 4:12, 13; cf. Matt. 16:27).

(Note that the “sufferings” in I, II Peter, resulting in future rewards, appear in connection with *an inheritance* “reserved in heaven” and *a salvation* “ready to be revealed in the last time,” which is “the salvation of your souls” [I Peter 1:4, 5, 9].)

Following the example which Christ set at Calvary, a Christian should place the *coming* “joy” over against the *present* “sufferings” and consider the sufferings of little consequence compared to “the just recompense of the reward” which lies ahead. And he should not think it strange when he finds himself suffering for Christ’s sake, for “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (cf. II Tim. 3:12; I Peter 4:12). This is the norm for the Christian life. Rather, he should rejoice, knowing that as *a partaker of Christ’s sufferings*, he is also going to be *a partaker of Christ’s glory* (I Peter 4:13).

### Sat Down at God’s Right Hand

Following His death and subsequent resurrection, Christ spent forty days with His followers, presenting “many infallible proofs” concerning His resurrection and instructing them in “things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3; cf. Luke 24:25-48; I Cor. 15:3-7). He was then taken up into heaven. With His arms

outstretched, blessing His disciples, “a cloud,” the Shekinah Glory, received Him out of their sight (*cf.* Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9; I Tim. 3:16).

Then, even before the disciples had removed their eyes from that point in the heavens where Christ disappeared from their sight, two messengers who had been dispatched from heaven stood by them and said,

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Two things are certain from the words of these messengers:

- 1) Christ will one day return.
- 2) His return will be in the same manner as His departure.

Christ ascended in a body of flesh and bones, and He will return in this same body (Zech. 12:10; 13:6).

Christ ascended from the land of Israel, from the midst of His people, and He will return to this same land, to His people (Zech. 14:4).

Christ was blessing those in His midst at the time He was taken into heaven, and Christ will bless Israel at the time of His return (Joel 2:23-27; *cf.* Gen. 14:18, 19; Matt. 26:26-29).

Christ was “received up into glory,” and He will return “in the glory of his Father with his angels” (Matt. 16:27; I Tim. 3:16).

During the time between His ascension and His return — a period lasting approximately 2,000 years — Christ has been invited to sit at His Father’s right hand, upon His Father’s throne, until a particular time (Ps. 110:1; Rev. 3:21).

The Father has told His Son,

“Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Ps. 110:1).

The “right hand” points to *the hand of power*, and *universal rule* emanates from this throne. Though the Son occupies a position denoting *power* and is seated upon a throne from which *universal*

rule emanates, the Son is not exercising power and authority after a kingly fashion with His Father today. Rather, He is occupying the office of *Priest*, awaiting the day of His power as *King*.

He is to sit on His Father's throne until that day when the Father will cause all things to be brought in subjection to the Son. Then, and only then, will Christ leave His Father's throne and come forth to reign upon His Own throne as the great King-Priest "after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:2-4).

### 1) My Throne, My Father's Throne

In Revelation chapters two and three, there are seven short epistles directed to seven Churches, and each of the seven epistles contains an overcomer's promise. These are promises to overcoming Christians, and all seven are millennial in their scope of fulfillment. All seven will be realized during the one-thousand-year period when Christ and His co-heirs rule the earth.

The last of the overcomer's promises has to do with Christians one day being allowed to ascend the throne with Christ, and this forms the pinnacle toward which all of the overcomer's promises move.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

The analogy in this verse has to do with Christians patterning their lives after Christ's life, with *overcoming* and *the throne* in view. Christ overcame and is presently occupying a position with the Father on His throne, and Christians who overcome are to one day occupy a position with the Son on His throne.

Note the exact wording of the text: "...to him that overcometh... even as I also overcame..." A *conflict ending in victory* is in view first, and then *the throne* comes into view. The latter cannot be attained without the former.

Christ's *overcoming* is associated with *His sufferings* during the time of His shame, reproach, and rejection; and Scripture makes it very clear that *overcoming for Christians* is to be no different. Christ has "suffered for us, leaving us an example..." (1 Peter 2:21).

But beyond *the sufferings* lies *the glory*, as *the night* in the Biblical reckoning of time is always followed by *the day* (cf. Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).

In Revelation chapters two and three, *overcoming* is with a view to the *throne*; and in portions of Scripture such as the Books of I, II Peter, *suffering* is with a view to *glory*. In this respect, *overcoming* is inseparably associated with *suffering*, as *the throne* is inseparably associated with *glory*.

## 2) A Rule with a Rod of Iron

The Father has not only invited the Son to sit at His right hand, awaiting the day of His power on His Own throne, but He has told the Son certain things about that coming day, things which He has seen fit to reveal to man in His Word. Portions of the second Psalm provide one example of this:

“Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen [Gentiles] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (vv. 8, 9).

Then a portion of these words of the Father to the Son have been repeated by the Son in His words to the Church in Thyatira, forming the fourth of the seven overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three:

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev. 2:26, 27).

For one thousand years Christ and His co-heirs are going to rule the earth with a rod of iron. They are going to rule the earth after this fashion to produce perfect order where disorder had previously existed, to produce a cosmos where a chaos had previously existed. And at the end of the thousand years, after perfect order has been restored, the kingdom will be turned back

over to God the Father so that “God may be all in all [i.e., that ‘God may be all things in all of these things’]” (I Cor. 15:24-28).

Co-heirship with God’s Son, participation in the activities attendant the bride, being seated on the throne with Christ for one thousand years, ruling the earth with a rod of iron — events which will occur once, never to be repeated — await those who run the present race of the faith after a manner which will allow them to win.

(For additional information on the messages to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3, refer to the author’s book, JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, Chapters IV-XI.)

### *Concluding Remarks:*

This is what lies ahead for those who, as Moses, possess a proper respect for “the recompense of the reward.” Moses looked beyond present circumstances and, “by faith,” considered “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Heb. 11:26). And Christians in the present race of the faith in which they find themselves must view matters after exactly the same fashion.

*Christians must look away from anything which could distract as they look unto Jesus, “the author and finisher of our [‘the’] faith.” Christians must keep their eyes fixed on the goal, looking beyond present circumstances to that which lies ahead. Christians must center their attention on the “joy” which lies ahead rather than upon present “sufferings,” viewing both the “joy” and “sufferings” within the same framework which Christ viewed them at Calvary.*

Runners who heed Christ’s instructions and follow the example which He has set will succeed in the race. They will win the race, and, as a consequence, they will realize the goal of their calling.

Runners who fail to heed Christ’s instructions and fail to follow the example which He has set can only fail in the race. They can only fall by the wayside, short of the goal of their calling.

“So run, that ye may obtain” (I Cor. 9:24b).



# Appendix I

## PREPARATION FOR MEETING THE BRIDEGROOM

All Christians will one day go forth to meet the Bridegroom, subsequently appearing before Christ at His judgment seat (*cf.* Matt. 25:1ff). And prior preparation will be required if the ones appearing are to hear the Lord, in that day, say, “Well done, good and faithful servant...” (*cf.* Matt. 25:19-23; Luke 19:15-19).

John the Baptist, during the course of his ministry, referred to Christ’s future dealings with Christians, at His judgment seat; and, in so doing, he drew from events occurring on a threshing floor at the end of the harvest:

“I indeed baptize you with [‘in’] water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with [‘in’] the Holy Spirit, and with [‘in’] fire:

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:11, 12).

The threshing floor was the place where the sheaves of grain were brought to be threshed, followed by winnowing to separate the grain from the chaff. That is, the sheaves of grain were brought to this place and beaten to loosen the grain. The mixture of grain, straw, and chaff was then thrown against the wind to separate the grain from the chaff and stubble. And the grain was then stored on the threshing floor and normally guarded during the ensuing night by someone sleeping at the site.

On the threshing floor, *that of value* (the grain) was separated from *that of no value* (the chaff), which is exactly what will occur at Christ's judgment seat. The Christians' works will be tried "in fire," and a separation will occur. Works comparable to "gold, silver, precious stones" will *endure* the fire; but works comparable to "wood, hay, stubble" will be *burned* by the fire (I Cor. 3:11-15).

This is what was foreshadowed by John's reference to a separation of the wheat from the chaff, *with the wheat being gathered into the granary and the chaff being burned*.

The whole of the matter — *preparation, events on the threshing floor, and that which follows* — is outlined in a typical manner in the Book of Ruth. Ruth prepared herself in a *threefold manner* for meeting Boaz on his threshing floor at the end of the harvest. Ruth *washed herself, anointed herself, and clothed herself with proper garments* before going forth to meet Boaz (Ruth 3:3). And meeting Boaz in this manner, on his threshing floor, was with a view to two things (vv. 9ff):

- 1) *The redemption of an inheritance.*
- 2) *Ruth becoming Boaz's wife.*

This meeting also occurred at "midnight" (v. 8), foreshadowing, typically, a time of *judgment* (in complete keeping with both the first mention of "midnight" in Scripture [used in connection with *judgment* — Ex. 11:4] and with the overall type in the light of Matt. 3:11, 12).

Ruth's preparation in the type is the same preparation which Christian's must make in the antitype. Ruth prepared herself, after a certain fashion, to meet Boaz on his threshing floor, at midnight, *with a view to a redeemed inheritance and becoming his wife*; and Christians must likewise prepare themselves, after the same fashion, to meet Christ on His threshing floor, at midnight, *with a view to a redeemed inheritance and becoming His wife*.

### **"Wash Thyself"**

"Washing" has to do with a *cleansing from present defilement*. Within the scope of the ministry of priests in the Old Testament,

a complete washing of the body occurred at the entrance to the courtyard of the tabernacle at the time one entered into the priesthood, never to be repeated (Ex. 29:4; 40:12-15). Subsequent washings of parts of the body then occurred at the brazen laver in the courtyard of the tabernacle as the priests ministered between the brazen altar and the Holy Place (Ex. 30:19-21). Their hands and feet became soiled as they carried out their ministry, and the brazen laver had upper and lower basins for washing these soiled parts of the body.

Washings in the Old Testament were thus looked upon in two senses — a washing of the complete body (a one-time initial cleansing), followed by washings of parts of the body (numerous subsequent cleansings). It was these two types of cleansings which Jesus referred to when speaking to Peter in John 13:8, 10:

“If I wash [Gk., *nipto*, referring to a part of the body (the Septuagint uses this same word in Ex. 30:19, 21)] thee not, thou hast no part with me [note: ‘with me,’ not ‘in me’].

...He that is washed [Gk., *louo*, referring to the entire body (the Septuagint uses this word in Ex. 29:4; 40:12)] needeth not save to wash [*nipto*] his feet...”

Peter had been washed once (described by the word *louo* [his complete body]); now he needed continued washings (described by the word *nipto* [parts of the body]). And, apart from these continued washings, he could have no part “with” Christ (contextually, the kingdom and positions with Christ therein were in view).

Bringing the typological teachings of the Old Testament and Christ’s statement to Peter over into the lives of Christians today, the matter would be thus:

Christians, part of a New Testament priesthood (I Peter 2:5), received a complete washing (*louo*, the entire body) at the time they entered this priesthood, at the time they were saved. Now, as priests ministering for their Lord, because of defilement through contact with the world, they need continued partial washings (*nipto*, parts of the body). And, apart from these continued washings, Christians can have no part with Christ in His future kingdom.

*All cleansing is accomplished on the basis of shed blood, in relation*

to Christ's past and present work.

Christ died at Calvary, shedding His blood, to effect our redemption. Those appropriating the blood have been washed (*louo*) and have entered into the priesthood (corresponding in the parallel type to the death of the paschal lambs and the application of the blood in Ex. 12:1ff).

And Christ's blood is today on the mercy seat of the heavenly tabernacle, with Christ ministering, on the basis of His shed blood, on our behalf, in the Holy of Holies, to effect a continued cleansing (*nipito*) for the "kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6; 5:10) which He is about to bring forth.

Thus, the Lord has set apart *a cleansed (louo)* people through whom He is accomplishing His plans and purposes. And He has provided a means whereby He can keep those whom He has set apart *clean (nipito)*.

Cleansing through the work of Christ as High Priest though is not something which occurs automatically. Ruth had to act herself. She had to prepare herself for the impending meeting with Boaz on his threshing floor. And Christians must likewise prepare themselves for an impending meeting with Christ on His threshing floor.

In Ruth's case, she washed herself. Today, Christ does the washing, but Christians, as Ruth, must act. It is only as we "confess our sins," judging ourselves (I Cor. 11:31, 32), that Christ effects cleansing on our behalf.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

### **"Anoint Thee"**

"Oil" was used in the Old Testament Scriptures to anoint prophets, priests, and kings; and there was a connection between the use of oil after this fashion and the Holy Spirit coming upon an individual to empower him for service in the office to which he was being consecrated.

For example, Saul was anointed the first king over Israel (I

Sam. 10:1, 6); and, following Saul's refusal to do that which God had commanded concerning Amalek, David was anointed king in Saul's stead (I Sam. 16:13). And, as clearly shown, "oil" is used in both of these passages to symbolize *God's Spirit*. The Spirit came upon both Saul and David following their anointing, and the Spirit empowered both for the tasks which they were to perform.

The parable of the ten virgins in Matt. 25:1-13 deals centrally with this same overall issue, with "oil" used symbolically in the parable in exactly the same manner as it is used in the Old Testament. All of the virgins possessed oil, but only the five wise virgins possessed an extra supply of oil. And when they were called to an accounting — at "midnight," — only the five wise virgins were allowed to enter into the marriage festivities with the Bridegroom (vv. 6ff).

That would be to say, in the antitype, all Christians possess the Holy Spirit. He *indwells* every Christian. But not every Christian has the extra supply of Oil. Not every Christian is *filled* with the Holy Spirit. And when Christians are called to an accounting — at "midnight" — only those filled with the Spirit will be allowed to enter into the marriage festivities with the Bridegroom.

This is what is involved within the symbolism of the second part of Ruth's preparation for meeting Boaz on his threshing floor at midnight.

Ruth could not have been properly prepared for meeting Boaz apart from anointing herself.

The ten virgins, in like fashion, could not have been properly prepared for meeting the Bridegroom at midnight apart from possessing an extra supply of oil.

And Christians today cannot be properly prepared for meeting their Lord at midnight apart from being filled with the Spirit.

This will all become evident when the third and last part of Ruth's preparation is viewed, for *an inseparable connection* exists between all three parts.

### **"Put Thy Raiment Upon Thee"**

Not only was Ruth to be clean and to be anointed with oil but

she was also to be properly arrayed. *Ruth was going forth to meet the bridegroom.* Naomi's words, "put thy raiment upon thee," in the light of that which was involved (events expected to culminate in Ruth's marriage to Boaz), can only refer to *special apparel* for the occasion. Ruth's apparel, in which she was to clothe herself, would reflect the occasion at hand.

This facet of Ruth's preparation, pointing to present preparation which Christians are to make, is seen in the parable of the marriage feast in Matt. 22:1-14.

In this parable, a man appeared, improperly clothed, at the festivities surrounding the marriage of "a certain" King's Son. This man appeared *without a wedding garment*; and he was not only denied entrance into the festivities but he was cast into the darkness outside.

(A reference to the darkness outside [*the outer darkness*] also appears in the parable of the talents [Matt. 25:30]. And this parable deals with exactly the same thing as the previous parable [the ten virgins (vv. 1-13)], though from a different perspective.)

The "certain king" and "his son" in Matt. 22:2 can refer to none other than *God the Father* and *His Son*, with the festivities surrounding the "marriage of the Lamb" in view. In Rev. 19:7, 8, the bride is said to *have made herself ready by having arrayed herself* ("array herself" rather than "be arrayed" is the correct rendering in v. 8) in "fine linen"; and this "fine linen" is specifically said to be "the righteousness [*lit.*, 'righteous acts'] of the saints."

Christians, as Ruth, must *array themselves* in the proper apparel for their future meeting with the Bridegroom. Righteous acts, forming the wedding garment, emanate out of faithfulness to one's calling.

Works emanate out of faithfulness; and works, in turn, bring faith to its proper goal, while the wedding garment is being formed (cf. Heb. 11:17-19, 31; James 2:14-26; I Peter 1:9).

And it is evident that a Christian not filled with the Spirit — typified by the second part of Ruth's preparation, anointing herself — is in no position to perform righteous acts (works) which make up the wedding garment.

Scripture clearly reveals that Christians will appear in the presence of Christ in *one of two ways*. Some will possess wedding garments, and others will not. The words “clothed” and “naked” are used in Scripture to distinguish between the appearance of individuals in these two different manners (Rev. 3:17, 18; *cf.* Rom. 8:35); and Christians within both groups will be dealt with in accordance with Matt. 22:10-13.

Those Christians properly clothed (possessing wedding garments) will be dealt with after one fashion, and those improperly clothed (lacking wedding garments, naked) will be dealt with after an entirely different fashion.

Those in the former group will be allowed to enter into the marriage festivities, with a view to their subsequently occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom, as the wife of the Lamb, forming His consort queen.

Those in the latter group though will be denied entrance into the marriage festivities and will consequently not be among those forming the wife of the Lamb, His consort queen, and all that appertains therein.

*Accordingly, they will have no part with Christ in His reign over the earth.*



## Appendix II

### WHEN HE IS APPROVED

**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried [approved], he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him (James 1:12).**

The Epistle of James — as all epistles in the New Testament — centers its teaching around different facets of *the salvation of the soul* (1:21; 5:19, 20), which is with a view to *an inheritance in Christ's coming kingdom* (2:5). This epistle opens by pointing to the fact that the various trials, testings in one's life (the trying of one's faith) result in "patience ['patient endurance']"; and a Christian is to patiently endure under these trials and testings, allowing the Lord to progressively lead him from immaturity to maturity in the faith.

He is to let "patience have her perfect work ['patient endurance have her end-time work']" in order that he might be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing ['mature and complete, lacking nothing']" (James 1:2-4).

Christians are not brought from immaturity to maturity in the faith overnight. Maturity in the faith is *a lifelong process*. When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham had numerous things to learn about how the Lord works patient endurance and brings about maturity in one's life.

Abraham failed many times (*e.g.*, not leaving his kindred behind in Ur, going down to Egypt for help, seeking to help God fulfill His promise concerning a son, etc. [Gen. 12:1-3, 10; 16:1ff]); but God continued to work in Abraham's life until he had been brought to the place of unquestioned obedience, to the place where there was complete reliance upon the Lord.

It was not until some sixty years beyond the time Abraham had left Ur that he is seen being brought into a state where he was ready to undergo the supreme trial, the supreme test, in his life. God, at this time, instructed Abraham to offer His son “for a burnt offering,” at a particular place (Gen. 22:1ff); and Abraham simply set about to do exactly what God had told him to do. There was no remonstrance, no delay, and no questions were asked; instead, *there was perfect obedience and complete reliance upon the Lord to bring matters to pass* (cf. Ps. 37:5).

Abraham had been brought into this mature state in the true sense of James 1:2-4. He had learned *patient endurance* through his faith being tested. He had *patiently endured* under various trials and testings over a period of about six decades (though failure had occurred at times); and the Lord had, through this process, brought him into that mature state where he was “complete, lacking nothing.”

And Christians today are to be brought into a mature state through this same process (though failure, as it did with Abraham, may occur at times). Abraham’s faith (a belief in that which God had said) was tested, and a Christian’s faith (a belief in that which God has said) is to be tested.

(Note that there is an inseparable connection between a person being led from immaturity to maturity and that person receiving the Word of God into his saved human spirit. There can be no growth from immaturity to maturity apart from a reception of the word, for *faith* — believing God, the one thing pervading the whole of the matter — “cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” [Rom. 10:17].

In James, Christians are to “receive with meekness the engrafted [‘implanted’] word” [1:21]. *They are to study the Word, meditate upon the Word, allow the Word to flow into their saved human spirits.* The indwelling Holy Spirit then takes this Word and leads Christians “into all truth” [John 16:13-15]. Thus, it is this “implanted word” which lies at the heart of all activity surrounding *the testing of one’s faith, which brings about patient endurance.*

The continued reception of the Word can only be *that seen as central* in the entire process. There can be no *testing of one’s faith* apart from “the implanted word,” and there can be no *patient endurance and progressive growth toward maturity in the faith* apart from such testings.)

## Approval

In James 1:3, the trials and testings of one's faith bring about patient endurance. Then, in verse four, as in verse twelve, the individual is to continue to patiently endure under continued trials and testings which the Lord brings to pass in his life. A continued refining process after this fashion, progressively working *maturity*, is for a *revealed purpose*.

According to verse twelve, the man who patiently endures temptation in the manner set forth in these verses will be "*blessed*" of the Lord, he will be "*tried* [*'approved'*]" by the Lord, and he will then "*receive the crown of life*" from the Lord.

Thus, the entire matter is with an ultimate view to issues of the judgment seat of Christ and the Messianic Era to follow. "Approval" or "disapproval" in connection with *blessings* and *crowns* will occur at the judgment seat; and the reason for approval, blessings, and crowns will be realized in the era beyond the present, during the Messianic Era.

In this respect, the revealed purpose for the present patient endurance of Christians, leading to maturity, is in order that *they might one day realize the purpose for their calling*. This maturing process, for those allowing it to occur in their lives, will result in their one day being *approved* for positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.

(The word translated "tried" in verse twelve is from *dokimos* in the Greek text, meaning "approved [through testing]." This same word, with the prefix "*a*," appears in I Cor. 9:27 [*adokimos*]. The letter "*a*" negates the word, making it mean exactly the opposite. The context of I Cor. 9:27 has to do with running the present race of the faith, with a crown in view [vv. 24-26], which is the identical thought in James 1:12. Paul sought to always keep his body under subjection (in reality, a patient endurance under trials and testings), lest after instructing others concerning this very thing, he himself could be "a castaway [*'be disapproved'* (or, *'be rejected'*).]"

*Dokimos* in its verb form [*dokimazo*], with the preposition *apo* prefixed to the word [*apodokimazo*], appears in Heb. 12:17, where Esau was *rejected* for inherited blessings associated with the birthright. The

preposition *apo* means “from”; and, prefixed to *dokimazo*, the word, for all practical purposes, means the same as *dokimos* with an “a” prefixed, as in I Cor. 9:27.)

In relation to the preceding, an object is in view — *the birthright*. Esau, although he was the firstborn, had sold his birthright; and, relative to *the inheritance*, he was now “rejected ” (*apodokimazo*).

Esau was rejected immediately after his younger brother, Jacob, had received the blessing belonging to the firstborn. Prior to this time, Esau had *made light of* his birthright, considering it to be *of little value* (“Esau despised his birthright” [Gen. 25:34]. The Hebrew word translated “despised” means *to hold in contempt, to make light of*. The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament uses a word which means *to consider of little value*).

Esau did not come into a realization of the true value of the birthright until *after* Isaac had bestowed the blessing belonging to the firstborn upon Jacob. It was *only then* that Esau realized what he had forfeited and sought to retrieve the rights belonging to the firstborn.

Esau, at this time, “cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.” But it was *too late*. The birthright had been forfeited, the blessing belonging to the firstborn had been bestowed upon another, and no reversal of the forfeiture and blessing could occur. The birthright, with its attendant blessing, was now beyond Esau’s grasp forever.

Esau, after realizing that the birthright was no longer his and was beyond his grasp forever, referred to the forfeited rights of the firstborn after this manner:

“Hast though but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father” (Gen. 27:38; *cf.* vv. 34-37).

And it is recorded that Esau then “lifted up his voice, and wept.”

This is seen within another frame of reference in Matthew’s gospel where individuals are seen *weeping and gnashing their teeth* (Matt. 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). This is an Eastern expression showing *deep grief*; and the contexts of these passages clearly

show that things relating to *the rights of the firstborn*, not eternal life, are in view.

The rejection experienced by Esau is the last of five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews, and this rejection constitutes an Old Testament type of that rejection which Paul referred to in I Cor. 9:27. The reference is to Christians who will have forfeited the rights of primogeniture, appearing in Christ's presence at His judgment seat.

Many Christians are presently following the same path which Esau took (considering the birthright to be of little value), and such Christians will one day come to the end of the matter in exactly the same way as seen in Esau's life. They, although presently in line to be blessed as the firstborn — Christians are presently being dealt with as "sons," with a view to one day being adopted as *firstborn sons* (Heb. 12:5-8) — will have forfeited this right; and they will be rejected for the blessing.

The rights of the firstborn must be retained or there can be no blessing belonging to the firstborn. The "spiritual blessings" associated with *the heavenlies* in Eph. 1:3 cannot be appropriated by Christians who forfeit the rights of primogeniture, for these blessings are inseparably connected with *the inheritance belonging to the firstborn* (1:10-18). These blessings are reserved for those who overcome the inhabitants of that heavenly land *during the present age*, who will be shown qualified to enter that land as *Sovereigns during the coming age*.

Christ is presently in the process of "bringing many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10). He, through the things which He suffered, has become the "captain ['Originator,' 'Founder']" of a *salvation* associated with *sonship* — the "so great salvation" of Heb. 2:3.

In I Peter 1:9-11, suffering with respect to Christ's sufferings is connected with both *the salvation of the soul* and *the glory to be revealed* ("sufferings of Christ" [v. 11] should literally be translated, "sufferings with respect to [or 'on behalf of'] Christ"). The reference is not to Christ's sufferings but to Christians entering into these sufferings.

In I Peter 4:12, 13, such sufferings are connected with the trials and testings in James chapter one. *The trying of one's faith*

(working patient endurance) and *the sufferings with respect to Christ's sufferings* (suffering through trials and testings) cannot be separated one from the other. That which is in view has to do with *patient endurance under trials and testings*, and the end of the matter in both James and I Peter is the salvation of one's soul. It is being *approved* (as in James 1:12) and being *placed in the position of a son* (as in Heb. 2:10), *realizing the rights of primogeniture* during the coming age.

### Sovereignty

To exercise sovereignty during the coming age, *one must possess a crown*; and to possess a crown *one must first be approved* for the crown. Approval will occur at the judgment seat, and approval at this time will be based on *works which endure the fire* (I Cor. 3:11-15).

The "trying of one's faith," working *patient endurance*, is inseparably associated with "works" in James. Comparing Gen. 22:1ff with James 2:21 (along with the text leading into the passage in James) reveals that a servant's works emanate out of his patient endurance under trials and testings; and viewing James 2:14-26 as a whole, works are seen to emanate out of faith. It is faithfulness under trials and testings, resulting in works. Such works are those which God would have the one being tried and tested to carry out; and these are the type works which will endure the fire at the judgment seat.

The trial of "every man's work" *in fire* at the judgment seat will be with *a view to approval or disapproval* — *approval if found worthy, disapproval if not found worthy*. This approval or disapproval will occur through testing, and the method of testing will be "by ['in'] fire":

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by ['in'] fire; and the fire shall try [test, with a view to approval] every man's work of what sort it is" (I Cor. 3:13).

*Approval* at the judgment seat will be for a prior revealed purpose. God's purpose in working patient endurance in a Christian's

life through trials and testings (progressively effecting maturity) is the corresponding issuance of works in his life, *the heart* of that which this entire process leads into in the Epistle of James. *Approval* follows Christians allowing the Lord to work patient endurance in their lives; and *approval* will, in turn, be followed by *sovereignty* during the coming age (Rev. 3:21).

### 1) *To Receive a Kingdom, and to Return*

During His earthly ministry, Christ delivered two companion parables to His disciples to graphically illustrate various aspects of the matter at hand — the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), and the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27). The “man” or “nobleman” in the two parables called “his own servants,” delivered unto them “his goods,” commanded them to “occupy till I come,” and then departed “into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.”

The “man” or “nobleman” is *Christ*, the “servants” are *Christians*, “his goods” have to do with *His business*, and the “far country” is *heaven*. Christ has departed into heaven to receive a kingdom from His Father, with a view to returning for His servants (to reckon with them) following the reception of this kingdom (*cf.* Dan. 7:9-14; Rev. 11:15; 19:11ff).

During the time of the Lord’s absence, His servants are to “occupy” themselves with that entrusted to their care. *The “ten servants”* and *“ten pounds”* in Luke’s gospel, showing *ordinal completion* in both instances, reveal that *all of His servants* and *all of His business* are in view. Christ called *all of His servants* and left them in charge of *all of His business* during the time of His absence.

While the parable of the pounds in Luke’s gospel reveals the overall scope of both the Lord’s servants and the Lord’s business (“ten servants,” “ten pounds”), the parable of the talents in Matthew’s gospel reveals the different portions of this business delivered to different servants within the overall scope of His dealings with His servants (“unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability”).

Simple teachings derived from comparing the two parables point to the fact that *every servant* of the Lord has been entrusted

with some facet of the Lord's business during the time of His absence. No servant has been overlooked; nor has any portion of *the Lord's business* been withheld from His servants.

The one thing above all else required of servants is *faithfulness* (I Cor. 4:2; cf. Luke 12:42-46). Servants of the Lord *must exercise faithfulness in carrying out that portion of the Lord's business with which they have been entrusted*. "Success" is an entirely different matter. No servant has ever been called to be successful, only *faithful*. Success though will always follow faithfulness, whether man so recognizes that which the Lord deems as success or not.

Placing the entire matter over into the framework of the Epistles of James and I Peter, it seems apparent that God brings about the necessary trials and testings in a Christian's life which will move that Christian into that area of work (that portion of the Lord's business) which has been outlined for his life (delivered unto him by the Lord). The individual is to exercise faithfulness as he patiently endures trials and testings; and as he progressively matures in the faith after this fashion, the Lord brings about an outworking in his life of that facet of the Lord's business entrusted to him (cf. Phil. 1:6). Thus, such works, in reality, are those done under the direction and leadership of the Lord as the Christian exercises faithfulness to his calling.

All of this occurs for *a purpose*. In the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, the day eventually came when the "man" or "nobleman" returned to reckon with His servants — pointing to the return of Christ "in the air" for His servants and the subsequent reckoning "at the judgment seat" with His servants.

The *only concern at hand* in this reckoning in both Matthew's and Luke's accounts was *that which the servants had done with the Lord's possessions which had been entrusted to their care during the time of their Lord's absence, and the only matter in view beyond this reckoning was that of occupying positions of sovereignty in the kingdom*.

## 2) Thou Good and Faithful Servant

According to both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, hearing a "Well done..." from the Lord at the time He reckons with His servants will be contingent on the servants

having brought forth an increase through the use of the talents and/or pounds. The increase not only had to come from within the scope of that which the Lord had left in charge of *all His servants (the ten pounds)* but it also had to come from within the scope of that which the Lord had entrusted *individually to each servant (the various talents)*.

In the parable of the pounds, the servants were judged strictly on the basis of their use of the pounds during the time of their Lord's absence. *Nothing else was in view.*

The increase was wrought *only through the use of that which the Lord had entrusted to their care:*

"Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds."

"And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds" (Luke 19:16, 18).

And the revealed reward for faithfulness therein was *completely commensurate with the increase:*

"And he said unto him [the first servant], Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."

"And he said likewise to him [the second servant], Be thou also over five cities" (vv. 17, 19).

In the parable of the talents, a slightly different facet of the picture is presented. Judgment in this parable is based strictly on *the increase of that delivered to individual servants within the scope of their calling*, and an increase of the same proportion percentage-wise (though not necessarily in quantity) brought about identical commendations and rewards:

"And so he that had received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more."

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them" (Matt. 25:20, 22).

The increase in each instance was one hundred percent, and the response of the Lord to both servants was identical:

“His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (vv. 21, 23).

The thought is not necessarily *how hard* or *how long* one works, but *how faithful one is in carrying out the task which the Lord has delivered into his hands during the time allotted* (cf. Matt. 20:1-16). Through comparing the parable of the talents with the parable of the pounds, faithfulness among Christians to the task at hand is not always the same.

Thus, it would seem apparent that there could be increases of less than or more than one hundred percent, allowing a two-talent Christian to realize an increase above that of a five-talent Christian, or vice versa. *The number of talents* is not really the issue. *Faithfulness to the task at hand* is that which God looks upon and requires.

And *a person always reaps that which he sows*, whether faithfulness or unfaithfulness is manifested (Gal. 6:7-9).

*Blessings, rewards, and crowns* are for those exercising *faithfulness* in the proper use of the talents/pounds entrusted to them. A commendation of “Well done...” from the Lord awaits Christians exhibiting faithfulness after this fashion. But, a task “well done” is just that — *one well done*.

“Jesus will never say ‘Well done’ to anyone *unless it has been well done*.”

— G. Campbell Morgan

### 3) *Thou Wicked and Slothful Servant*

In both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, *unfaithfulness* on the part of the Lord’s servants and *the end result of unfaithfulness* are shown in the latter part of each parable. Such unfaithfulness resulted in rebuke and loss in each instance; and also in each instance, the unfaithful servant was not associated in any manner whatsoever with positions of power and authority in the kingdom.

These things can be clearly seen through the Lord's actions in both parables. That which the unfaithful servants possessed (the talents and pounds) was taken from them; and in the parable of the talents, the unfaithful servant was cast into "outer darkness."

In the parable of the talents, one talent had been delivered to the servant who proved unfaithful. He was just as much a servant of the Lord and just as much in a position to bring forth an increase as the servants to whom five and two talents had been delivered; and, had this unfaithful servant brought forth an additional talent, which would have been an increase of one hundred percent, it is apparent that he would have received *the identical commendation* which the others received.

However, he hid his talent; it remained unused. He did not exercise faithfulness in that realm of service which the Lord had entrusted to him; and at the time when the Lord called all His servants before Him to ascertain how much each had gained through trading and trafficking in the Lord's business (through each servant exercising faithfulness to that entrusted to his care), the unfaithful servant experienced *rebuke* and *loss*.

The case of the unfaithful servant in the parable of the pounds is very similar. He, as the other servants, could have received *authority* over one or more cities had he brought forth an increase; but he kept the pound "laid up in a napkin" (v. 20). He didn't use the pound. He didn't involve himself in the Lord's business during the time of his Lord's absence. He proved unfaithful concerning that which the Lord had left in his care, during His time of absence. And, following the Lord's return, at the time when the Lord called His servants before Him to ascertain how much each had gained through trading and trafficking (through each servant exercising faithfulness to that entrusted to his care), the unfaithful servant — as the unfaithful servant in the parable of the talents — experienced *rebuke* and *loss*.

## The Kingdom

Two great mountain peaks dominate the whole of Scripture — *Calvary*, and *the Kingdom*.

Events depicted by the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds both pick up at a point *beyond the events of Calvary*. It was at this time that the “man” or “nobleman” — Christ — called “his own servants [*all of His servants*],” delivered unto them “his goods [*all of His goods*],” commanded them to “occupy until I come,” and then departed “into a far country to receive for himself *a kingdom*, and to return.”

Then, the matter at hand, as is evident in both parables, has *one goal* in view — *the kingdom*. And the focal point in both centers around *the present activity of the Lord’s servants, in view of the coming kingdom of Christ*.

(Note that “the kingdom” is not *the main thing in view toward which everything moves* in these parables; rather, it is the *ONLY thing in view toward which everything moves in these parables*. And the present activity of the Lord’s servants, in view of the coming kingdom of Christ, is not *the main activity, with a view to a particular, revealed goal*; rather, it is the *ONLY activity, with a view to a particular, revealed goal*.

Attempting to read eternal verities [eternal salvation or eternal damnation] into these parables is to *completely misunderstand, misinterpret, and misrepresent that which the Lord has set forth*. And, beyond that, it *completely hides the truth of the matter taught in these parables*. It *does away with that taught in these parables*. And, beyond that, such a teaching can only present the salvation message to be carried to unsaved man in a *corrupted respect*, bringing works into a realm where works cannot exist.

It is plain that the servants in these two parables are those who had already availed themselves of the free gift of eternal salvation, wrought through Christ’s sacrificial death at Calvary. Such is evident from several observations:

*First*, these were the Lord’s “own servants.”

*Second*, they were the ones left in possession of the Lord’s “goods” during His time of absence.

*Third*, at the time of the Lord’s return, *all of the servants were called together at the same time and place to give an account*. If the unfaithful servants represent the unsaved, as some contend, these two parables teach a general judgment of saved and unsaved — something completely foreign to Scripture. Also, the fact that *all of the Lord’s servants were called to an accounting at the same time*

*and place* leaves no possible room for that which is widely taught in many circles today — a selective resurrection and rapture of Christians at the end of the present dispensation.

*Fourth*, the issue at hand in the reckoning was “faithfulness,” “fruit-bearing,” with a view to occupying or being denied positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom [and no unsaved person can ever enter into such a judgment].)

The present activity of the Lord’s servants is made possible *only* because of the finished work of Christ on Calvary’s Cross at His first coming; but, as is evident in both parables, this work of Christ — providing a propitiatory, vicarious sacrifice, effecting man’s redemption — was only an essential part of a much broader purpose.

In His Own words, Christ revealed that His first coming involved two central issues: *His sufferings*, to be followed by *His glory* (cf. John 3:14-16; 18:37; Luke 24:25, 26).

Christ was born “King of the Jews”; and the turmoil caused by His birth (emanating from Satan through Herod) involved *His Kingship*, not things having to do with His also being “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (cf. Matt. 2:1ff; John 1:29).

Simeon at the temple in Jerusalem, shortly after the birth of Jesus, saw “the Lord’s Christ,” the One Who would effect “the consolation of Israel.” Simeon’s words, “...mine eyes have seen thy salvation...A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel,” refer to national blessings wrought through Israel’s Messiah — redeemed Israel occupying the nation’s proper place with respect to all of the surrounding Gentile nations (Luke 2:25-32; cf. vv. 36-38). Such cannot exist apart from a restoration of the theocracy to Israel and God’s Son exercising His position as “King of the Jews” within this theocracy.

Before Christ began His public ministry, He met Satan face to face in the wilderness. The first man, the first Adam, through Satan’s confrontation with Eve, had been defeated; and it was necessary that the second Man, the last Adam, experience a similar confrontation Himself to show that He was fully qualified to redeem that which the first Adam forfeited in the fall.

The first Adam had been created to rule the earth in the stead of Satan, who had previously disqualified himself. However, through sin, the first Adam was also disqualified, allowing Satan to continue as ruler over the earth. The confrontation between Satan and the last Adam was with the same objective in view — *rulership over the earth, preceded by Calvary* (cf. Gen. 1:26-28; Luke 4:5, 6; 24:21-27).

Christ's appearance in the presence of Satan, showing that He was fully qualified to redeem that which the first Adam had forfeited in the fall, anticipated not only Calvary but also events beyond Calvary. It was at Calvary that Christ paid the price for man's redemption, making it possible for man to ultimately be brought back into the position for which he had been created.

The entire earthly ministry of Christ centered around *His coming kingdom*, and His present ministry in the sanctuary centers around *the kingdom* as well. Then, when Christ comes forth from the sanctuary, all activity will continue to be with a view to *the kingdom, which will ultimately be realized*.

Christ's message to Israel during His earthly ministry had to do with *the kingdom*. His ministry centered around *an offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel*. There was a call for national repentance, *for the kingdom of the heavens was at hand* (Matt. 3:1-12; 4:17-25).

However, Israel spurned the offer, *the kingdom* (that facet of the kingdom proclaimed, *the kingdom of the heavens*, not the kingdom covenanted to David) was taken from Israel, and a new nation — *the one new man* "in Christ," the Church — was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected. Thus, the Church, as Israel, was called into existence *for purposes surrounding this kingdom* (Matt. 21:43; Eph. 2:11-15; I Peter 2:9, 10).

But Christ, following His first coming, didn't immediately ascend the throne (His Own throne and David's throne, not His Father's throne where He is presently seated, awaiting that coming day). An entire dispensation has been set aside, during which the Spirit of God has been sent into the world to procure a bride for God's Son (to reign as consort queen with the Son in His

kingdom). And while the Spirit is in the world searching for the bride throughout the present dispensation, Christ is ministering on the Christians' behalf in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly tabernacle (on the basis of His shed blood, shed at Calvary), *with the kingdom in view* (Heb. 4:11-16; 9:11, 12; 10:19ff).

The birth from above, imparting spiritual life, is made possible through Christ's finished work at Calvary. And the same One Who died at Calvary is presently ministering, as High Priest, in the heavenly sanctuary. He is presently ministering after this fashion in order to provide a present cleansing (from defilement through contact with the world) for those having availed themselves of His past work at Calvary — *those destined to be "kings and priests," the new order of "sons" about to be brought forth to rule in the coming kingdom* (cf. John 13:8; Heb. 2:10; I John 1:6-2:2; Rev. 5:10).

Thus, everything in Scripture moves toward *that coming day when the kingdom will be realized*. This teaching begins in the first chapter of Genesis and pervades all Scripture.

Man's creation had to do with *the kingdom*.

Man's fall had to do with *the kingdom*.

Man's redemption had/has to do with *the kingdom*.

Christ's past work had to do with *the kingdom*.

Christ's present work is occurring with *the same goal in view*.

And matters are the same with the Spirit's past and present work.

*It is all about a kingdom to be realized on the seventh day, the seventh millennium, dating from Adam's creation.* This is the way Scripture opens in Genesis, this is the way Scripture continues from that point forward, and this is the way God will bring matters to pass after everything has been said and done.

Redeemed man is presently being called to *the throne in a heavenly realm*. There is a *salvation* out ahead, the salvation of the soul, which is *the greatest thing God has ever designed for the one whom He created and has redeemed*. This is a salvation which even the angels "desire to look into" (I Peter 1:12), for it includes *joint-heirship with God's Son over all things*.

The trials and testings of life — effecting patient endurance, maturity in the faith — are with a view to approval at the judgment seat and subsequent positions of power and authority in the kingdom; and the instructed Christian knows that he is to “count it all joy” (James 1:2) when subjected to all the multifaceted trials and testings which the Lord, for a purpose, brings to pass in his life.

“If we suffer [‘patiently endure’], we shall also reign with him: if we deny him [not deny Christ per se but refuse to patiently endure], he also will deny us [refuse us a position with Him in the kingdom]” (II Tim. 2:12).

(The word translated “deny” in II Tim. 2:12 is *arneomai* in the Greek text, which could, as well, be understood and translated in the sense of “refuse,” which would be more in keeping with the overall thought in this verse. That set forth in the verse has nothing to do with eternal salvation. Rather, the subject, both textually and contextually, has to do with *patiently enduring under trials and testings, with a view to reigning with Christ.*

The thought in the latter part of the verse is not refusing or denying Christ, for the word “him” is not in the Greek text. It is refusing or denying that previously seen in the text.

Following the thought, “If we patiently endure, we shall reign with him,” *the remainder of the verse parallels the first part of the verse.* The continued text, as previously seen, reads, “if we refuse,” not “if we refuse him.” Refusing, contextually, *can only have to do with refusing to patiently endure.* And as well, by the same token, Christ refusing the one who does not patiently endure *can only have to do with refusing that person for a regal position with Him in His kingdom.*)

### Concluding Thoughts:

There is a day coming when every Christian will *render an account to his Lord*, and the present day is *the time of preparation for that coming day.* The present day is the time when the Lord’s servants are in possession of the various talents; and the present day is the time when a work is being performed in the lives of Christians which is connected with maturity in the faith, the proper use of the talents entrusted to them, etc.

This day though will last only as long as God’s Son remains in the “far country.”

One day Christ will receive the kingdom from His Father and then return to reckon with His servants.

This will be *an individual reckoning* — “...we must all appear...that every one may receive...”

And this reckoning will be based strictly on *each servant's use of the talent/talents entrusted to his care during the time of his Lord's absence.*

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he sought to warn “every man,” and teach “every man in all wisdom,” in order that he might present “every man perfect [‘mature,’ ‘complete’] in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:28). The warning which Paul sounded had to do with the coming time of evaluation at the judgment seat. His message along this line was really threefold:

- 1) *A present preparation.*
- 2) *A preparation with a view to a coming evaluation.*
- 3) *And a preparation and evaluation with a view to the kingdom to follow.*

The reference to “the hope of glory” in Col. 1:27, leading into Paul's ministry in verse twenty-eight, has to do with that hope which Christians possess of one day occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom. This is referred to elsewhere in Scripture different ways, *e.g.*, as “that blessed hope” (Titus 2:13), “the hope set before us...as an anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:18, 19), or “the hope that is in you” (I Peter 3:15). Paul, above everything else, did not want any Christian within the scope of his ministry to experience rejection/disapproval when he appeared in Christ's presence at His judgment seat (Col. 1:28, 29).

Issues of the judgment seat, *in every instance*, will result in a *just recompense*. *Every Christian will receive exactly what he deserves* — reward, or chastisement — in complete accord with revealed faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out or failing to carry out that portion of the Lord's business which had been entrusted to him.

And this will be with a view to occupying or being denied positions of power and authority in the kingdom which will follow.



## Appendix III

### THE WILFUL SIN

Christ provided Himself as the Sacrifice for sin, His blood is today on the mercy seat in heaven, and He is presently occupying the office of High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of sinning Christians. Christ is presently performing a cleansing from defilement for Christians who sin, and all a Christian needs to do in order to avail himself of this provided cleansing is to confess his sin. When he does this, cleansing will occur (I John 1:9).

The wilful sin of Heb. 10:26 results in defilement, as any sin. But, a different situation exists with this sin. This verse states that *no sacrifice* exists for those who sin after the manner dealt with by the verse, which separates it from Christ's present ministry.

How does this sin differ from any other sin which Christians can commit? Is it possible that this sin could somehow be brought under Christ's present ministry and confessed, with forgiveness resulting from the person's confession? If so, How? If not, Why not?

#### Christ's Present Ministry

To properly understand *the wilful sin*, for several reasons (one reason being contextual), it should be viewed, first of all, in the light of Christ's present high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Note the context of Heb. 10:26 (vv. 19-22) and also I John 1:6-2:2. The "blood" of Christ is presently on the mercy seat in the "holiest [Holy of Holies]" of the heavenly sanctuary; and a "new and living way" of access has been provided through the One Who shed this blood, our "high priest over the house of God."

The *blood of Christ*, presently on the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary, “cleanseth [‘keeps on cleansing’]” Christians who have become defiled (through sin) as they “walk [‘keep on walking’] in the light” (I John 1:7; cf. Heb. 10:22). It is impossible for the ones walking in the light to occupy a position other than being cleansed from sin; but, viewing the other side of the picture, it is entirely possible for Christians to not walk in the light, in which case there will be no cleansing.

To understand exactly what is meant by *walking in the light*, one must draw from the typology of the tabernacle. The light was provided by a seven-leaved golden candlestick inside the Holy Place where the priests carried on part of their ministry, and the only way that these priests were permitted to enter the holy place and walk in this light was through a previous cleansing at the brazen laver in the courtyard.

This laver lay between the brazen altar and the Holy Place and had upper and lower basins for washing the hands and feet. The entire bodies of these priests had been washed upon their entrance into the priesthood (Ex. 29:4; 40:12-15) — an act never to be repeated — but in their subsequent ministry, it was necessary to avail themselves of partial washings (washings of parts of the body) at the laver. Their hands and feet became soiled in their ministry, and these parts of the body had to be cleansed prior to entering the Holy Place (Ex. 30:18-21; 40:30-32).

Exactly the same thing holds true for Christians, New Testament priests, in the antitype today. Christians have received a complete washing (received at the point of the birth from above, upon their entrance into the priesthood) — an act never to be repeated.

But, as the Old Testament priests, they must now avail themselves of partial washings in their ministry. And this is seen in the type through the actions of Old Testament priests washing at the laver.

This is what Jesus alluded to in John 13:8, 10:

“If I wash [Gk., *nipto*, referring to a part of the body (the Septuagint uses this same word in Ex. 30:19, 21)] thee not, thou hast no part *with me*

[note: not ‘in me,’ but ‘with me’]; and “He that is washed [Gk., *louo*, referring to the entire body (the Septuagint uses this same word in Ex. 29:4; 40:12)] needeth not save to wash [Gk., *nipto*] his feet...”

This is also what is alluded to in Heb. 10:22 and I John 1:7.

Old Testament priests whose hands and feet had become soiled through activity in the courtyard *could not* bypass the laver and proceed on to the Holy Place. *Nor can* New Testament priests. New Testament priests must *first*, as the Old Testament priests, avail themselves of cleansing. Defilement in the Christians’ case comes through contact with sin; and cleansing, according to the context of I John 1:7, is accomplished through confession of sin:

“If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (v. 9).

And this cleansing is accomplished solely on the basis of Christ’s shed blood on the mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary:

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate [Gk., *Parakletos*, one called alongside to help in time of need] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

And he is the propitiation [Gk., *hilasmos*, (God appeased, through Christ’s work on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat)] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world [contextually, a reference *to all of the saved in the world*, not the unsaved (a cleansing *for Christians alone is in view*; the unsaved and eternal salvation are not in view at all in these verses)]” (I John 2:1, 2).

Thus, the ones walking in the light in I John 1:7 are Christians who have availed themselves of the provision in I John 1:9. As they continue walking in the light (continue availing themselves of this provision, allowing continued access to the Holy Place), the blood of Christ continues cleansing them from “*all sin*.”

And a Christian refusing to avail himself of provided cleansing today is seen walking in darkness. He has not come to the laver and, consequently, can only remain in the darkened courtyard

outside the light in the Holy Place. He has refused confession of sin; he has refused the cleansing provided by Christ. And for such an individual, in reality, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” That is, there is no sacrifice for those refusing the sacrifice which God has provided in the person of His Son.

Thus, contextually (Heb. 10:19-22), one might think that the wilful sin in verse twenty-six (for which there is no sacrifice) would be a Christian’s refusal to avail himself of Christ’s present high priestly ministry. In this respect, there would be no sacrifice for his unconfessed sins (for a Christian refusing to confess his sins would be refusing the provided sacrifice).

### **But...**

But Christians harboring sins of the flesh and refusing to confess these sins *cannot possibly* be that which they are warned against in Heb. 10:26. This verse continues the thought from the immediately preceding verses (vv. 23-25), and this thought has nothing whatsoever with Christians confessing (or not confessing) their sins.

Nor can the wilful sin in this verse be thought of in the broad sense of sins committed by Christians in a wilful, or a deliberate, or a knowing manner. If the truth were known, it could probably easily be shown that most sins committed by Christians would fall into a singular category — things which Christians knew were sins before they committed them, knew were sins during the time in which they were committing them, and knew were sins after they had committed them.

The only possible way to properly understand the wilful sin in Heb. 10:26, for which there is no sacrifice, is to view this sin, *contextually, within the Book of Hebrews where it is found*. If this is not done, a person will invariably go wrong at this point in Scripture.

Note first that all of the warnings in Hebrews are closely related, drawing heavily from the Old Testament types. The second warning (chs. 3, 4) draws from the account of the Israelites under Moses, and the same thought is continued in the third warning (6:4ff), relating the matter to Christians.

In both the type (chs. 3, 4 [second warning]) and the antitype (ch. 6 [third warning]), the sin referenced in the fourth warning (10:26ff) is present. The Israelites under Moses committed a sin for which there was no sacrifice (second warning), and Christians today can commit *exactly the same sin*, with the same result following (third warning). Then the fourth warning continues with thoughts pertaining to this sin; and the matter has to do with “so great salvation” (ch. 2 [first warning]), resulting in “blessings” associated with the “birthright” (ch. 12 [fifth warning]).

That is the broad contextual scope of the matter. The Israelites, in the type, through their actions at Kadesh-Barnea — refusing to go in and take the land to which they had been called — committed a sin for which there was *no sacrifice*. And, with there being *no sacrifice* for this sin, God didn’t, He couldn’t, change His mind concerning that which He had decreed pertaining to the matter.

And Christians, in the antitype, can commit *exactly the same sin relative to the heavenly land to which they have been called*. And, as in the type, *no sacrifice* exists for such a sin. As in the type, God won’t, He can’t change His mind concerning that which He has decreed pertaining to this sin, if committed by His people today.

This is plain from that which is stated in Heb. 6:2-4, again drawing from the type in chapters three and four:

“For it is impossible...if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance...”

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, LET US GO ON, Chapter V, “If They Shall Fall Away”.)

Then note that the reference to this sin is the continuation of a text having to do with a central purpose for Christians assembling together during the present dispensation — whether on Sunday at a regular meeting place, or at any other time or place during the week (vv. 23-25). The particular purpose given in the text is singular:

Christians meeting together in order to exhort and encourage one another concerning the hope set before each one of them (“pro-

fession of our faith" [v. 23, KJV] should be translated, "confession of our hope"). And this hope set before every Christian is *the hope that they might one day realize the very thing to which they have been called — win a crown in the present race of the faith and, as a result, occupy a regal position with Christ in that coming day of His power.*

In short, Christians are *exhorted to assemble together for a particular purpose*, and then they are warned concerning *the danger of failing to assemble together on a regular basis for this purpose*. They can either find mutual strength in the race of the faith through assembling together, or they can fail to assemble for this mutual strength and find themselves in danger of *falling away and becoming involved in that which Scripture refers to as wilful sin.*

*The wilful sin*, simply put, has to do with *apostasy, after one has come into a mature knowledge of the things surrounding the hope set before Christians* — something seen in the type in the second warning and in the antitype in the third warning. And sinning after this fashion will result in a Christian failing to come into possession of *so great salvation* (first warning), synonymous with failing to realize *the rights of the firstborn* (fifth warning).

Numbers 15:30, 31, immediately following the account of the Israelites refusal to enter into the land at Kadesh-Barnea (chs. 13, 14), deals with God's statement concerning a sin for which there was *no sacrifice*. And an example of such a sin — a man violating the Sabbath — immediately follows God's instructions concerning the matter.

God's statement concerning a sin for which there was *no sacrifice* in this passage had to do with a person acting in open rebellion, followed by his being cut off from the people of Israel (which was exactly what occurred at and following the events at Kadesh-Barnea). And the contextual example not only had to do with the experiences of the Israelites, beginning at Kadesh-Barnea (chs. 13, 14), but it also had to do with a man violating the Sabbath (Num. 15:32-36).

As with the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea, so with the man violating the Sabbath. *There was no sacrifice for the sin committed by either.* Rather, in both instances, *the Lord commanded that a sentence of death was to be carried out.* And, resultingly, an entire

accountable generation died on the one hand, and a man was taken outside the camp and stoned on the other.

The land set before Christians is associated with a rest, a *Sabbath rest*, drawing from Gen. 2:1-3 (Heb. 4:4-9). And a Christian turning his back on this land (after coming into a mature knowledge of the things surrounding the land) would be doing exactly the same thing which the Israelites under Moses did at Kadesh-Barnea (after hearing the report concerning the land by the twelve spies). Then, in another respect, such a Christian would be doing violence to that which God had to say about *the Sabbath rest set before the people of God*, in a similar respect to the man violating the Sabbath in Num. 15:32-36.

The Sabbath was a *sign* pointing to a day of rest following God's present six days of work (Ex. 31:13-17). As God rested on the seventh day after working six days to restore a past ruined creation (the material creation) — establishing an unchangeable, foundational pattern — He is going to rest on a seventh day (a 1,000-year day) after working six days (six 6,000-year days) to restore two present ruined creations (both man and the material creation once again).

Thus, drawing from both Num. 13-15 and Heb. 3, 4, 6, it can easily be shown how Christians, in Heb. 10:26ff, can sin wilfully today. They can do so through only one means: *coming into a mature knowledge of the truth surrounding their calling, and then apostatizing (turning away from this truth)*.

Any Christian committing such an act, according to Heb. 10:29, will have done three things:

- 1) *Trodden* "under foot the Son of God."
- 2) *Considered the blood of Christ* "an unholy ['a common'] thing."
- 3) *Insulted* "the Spirit of grace."

God places the wilful sin in a category of this nature simply because of the high place in which He holds that which He has stated concerning the coming reign of His Son. And, according to Scripture, any Christian coming into a mature knowledge of that which God has stated in this realm, and then *turning away*

— *apostatizing* — has only one thing awaiting him:

“...a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (v. 27).

Then note how verses thirty and thirty-one parallel II Cor. 5:10, 11:

“For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Events of the judgment seat will be one of *the most terrible times* many Christians will ever experience, for Christians who have refused to follow the Spirit’s leadership during the present day and time will, at the judgment seat, “fall into the hands of the living God.” Such Christians will find it to be a “fearful,” “terrible” experience, for there the “*terror of the Lord*” will be manifested, and *a completely just recompense* will be meted out.

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Christians are in a race, and *the highest of all possible prizes* is being extended as an encouragement for them to run the race after a manner that will result in victory. In Hebrews 12:1, 2, the Spirit of God has provided Christians with *instructions* concerning how the race is to be run, and a Christian running the race after the revealed fashion can be assured that he will finish the contest in a satisfactory manner. On the other hand though, any Christian not so following these provided instructions can, under no circumstances, expect victory in the contest.

If there was ever a group of individuals who should be preparing themselves for that which lies ahead, *it is Christians*. God has set aside an entire dispensation lasting approximately 2,000 years to acquire a bride for His Son, who will rule the earth during the coming age as co-regent with Him. Positions among those who will form the bride *are to be earned*, not entered into strictly on the basis of one's eternal salvation. And even among those who eventually enter into these positions, there will be no equality. Rather, there will be numerous gradations of positions held by those occupying the throne as co-regents with Christ in that day.

Christians will receive positions in Christ's kingdom *exactly commensurate with their performance in the race*. That is to say, positions with Christ in the coming age will be assigned to household servants in perfect keeping with their *faithfulness* to delegated responsibility during the present dispensation, for faithfulness after this fashion is how Christians run the race.

There will be "a just recompense of reward" for each and every Christian after the race has been run (Hebrews 2:2; 11:26), which is the biblical way of saying that *exact payment will be given for services rendered*. And such payment will be dispensed at the judgment seat following an evaluation of the services rendered in the house.

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