

Revelation 2, Part 1 (Phil Richman and Conrad Bowman) (9-30-07)

Phil Richman. [Paraphrasing from an article by J. Vernon McGee].

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate [Rev. 2:6].

Nicolaitans is a compound word. *Nikao* means “to conquer,” and *laos* means “the people.” We get our word *laity* from that. It is difficult to identify who the Nicolaitans were. Some scholars think that they were a priestly order which was beginning to take shape and attempt to rule over the people. So, that’s a strong view. That’s his first view.

Another theory is that there is no way to identify this group in any of the early or late churches.

The third explanation is that there was a man by the name of Nicolaus of Antioch who apostatized from the truth and formed an Antinomian Gnostic cult, which taught (among other doctrines) that one must indulge in sin in order to understand it [Laughter]. They gave themselves over to sensuality. Now, in most of the commentaries I’ve read they spoke of the Nicolaitans, in other words, I hate the work of Nicolaitans and I’m glad you guys are not with them; but we’re going to find in our studies that another church, Pergamum, is letting this in, O.K? And, it may go hand in hand or it may be this priestly class, and the eventual laxity in morals that went hand in hand with it. It says here that the Church at Ephesus hated it. A little later we will see that the Church in Pergamum tolerated it. That’s from J. Vernon’s commentary. Maybe that clears it up, and maybe it makes it worse.

That’s pretty good, you know; so now we at least know McGee’s position. “I hate the work of the Nicolaitans,” my question was, ‘does that mean that the Ephesian Church did not have clergy?’ We don’t know, OK? I just want you to know that we do not know, and we don’t know exactly what “clergy” means; but we do know that churches are supposed to appoint elders; not a priestly class, like in the OT, like the Jews had, not a priestly class, but elders who are to guard the doctrine. And, one of these days we’ll go over Acts 20 where Paul gets more specific about how the church is to be governed. That’s his only speech on Church leadership that Luke records, and you might read what that has to say and what he tells those elders to do. The elders, as we know in Timothy and Titus, had certain qualifications that they had to meet. But it is not a

distinguished or distinctive class; rather, it is strictly people that are serving the Church. Read it with that in mind.

Now, I'm going to confuse you. Let's have some prayer requests.

[Prayer Requests]

Conrad Bowman. Turn to Revelation chapter 2 this morning. I've skipped a few verses at the end of chapter 1, but if I don't, we'll never get to Ephesus, and that's the first one of the seven churches. So, we're going to start in chapter 2 and go right to the Church in Ephesus. John has responded to this image that appeared to him. The white haired, burning eyes, burnished feet of one likened to the Son of Man standing in front of him, who gave him this message and said, I want you to take this message, and give this message to the angel, the messengers, to the seven churches of Asia. And here's the first one, Ephesus. And remember, for those of you that perhaps have not been with us before, this look at the letters to the seven churches is a cap on the Pauline epistles that we've been studying. Paul wrote his letters and finished them around 60 A.D. So, this is approximately 40 years later that John gets this vision, when he has this appearing to him on Patmos. The letters that he has received to be given to the churches in Asia are exactly in line with Paul's caution and warning to the churches 40 years before. We want to pay careful attention to this because it indicates how fast the Church fell into ruin. It didn't take long at all for that to happen.

To the angel the messenger of the Church in Ephesus, write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand...

The word "stars" is *asteris*, and it's a word, not for stars as we know them, it's the word for "planets." It's not Pleadies, or Orion, or any of the constellations, it's the word for "planets." So, the seven stars are seven planets.

He holds the seven planets in His right hand, and the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: **I know your deeds and your toil.**

I don't know about you, but I have that underlined and **highlighted** in my bible.

I know your deeds and your toil. I know your perseverance. I know you can't endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found

them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for my namesake, and you have not gone weary. But [and there's that fulcrum again, "but"] I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

And the word there, as Jeff pointed out last week, is *agape*, which is source love. And, about three or four weeks ago we studied the four "loves," as C.S. Lewis defined them and treated them in his book by the same name. And that's:

1. *Agape* – source love.
2. *Storge* – natural affection, *i.e.*, like the affection parents feel for their offspring.
3. *Phileo* – or *phileo* love, brotherly love is the way we know it.
4. *Eros* – erotic or fleshly love.

And, those four all relate to man as a trichotomous being. Man as spirit and soul and physical being. Those four "loves" come out of those three aspects of mankind. We've studied those in the past, so we won't go into those in detail today. But, if you're concerned or interested in that and want more information, it's in our past notes and I've got them.

Verse 5.

Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand [or your ability to present the gospel – your capacity for doing that] I'll remove it out of its place unless you repent.

So repentance is what they are called to do, change their course; change their thoughts, and change their course of action, which is what repentance means. It means to make a change.

Yet, this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Phil was just giving you J. Vernon's take on the Nicolaitans. The Nicolaitans wrapped themselves around the idea that there was a class between the believer and God. And they taught that you could make an appeal to those people in that

class and you could get better access to God; they were quasi Gatekeepers. Well, it ain't so—It's just not so.

Betijean Kennerly. That's the Catholic priesthood.

Conrad Bowman. That is the Catholic priesthood. But, what's more insidious though to me is that with the Catholic priesthood, you could identify it; they put robes on and white collars...[interruption – other recorder started playing back]. But, there is a protestant priesthood, it's just not so easily identified. It is the idea that we have within our assembly people who have better access to God than the average believer.

Alright. Verse 5

Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and I'm going to remove your lampstand out of it's place unless you repent.

Now that's pretty serious. That's pretty serious. If there's a problem in what you believe, and there's a problem in what you're teaching, and there's a problem with where you're putting your trust and in your leadership, the risk is that the Lord will take your capacity to present the gospel to other people (your lampstand), and He'll just move that out.

Now, we today are just surrounded by ministries that are huge, and growing, and expanding at an enormous rate and gathering people in by the tens of thousands, and they have everything they need but the gospel. And the gospel is not going out, because the Gospel of Grace is very specific. Paul said that the gospel of Grace was what he was entrusted with, and it was what he was teaching to faithful men that they should be teaching to other people too. That was his whole message, and we've covered that over and over again in these Pauline epistles. Because it's the core of every one of the letters that he wrote; "Pay attention to what I am teaching you and do not let it slip away."

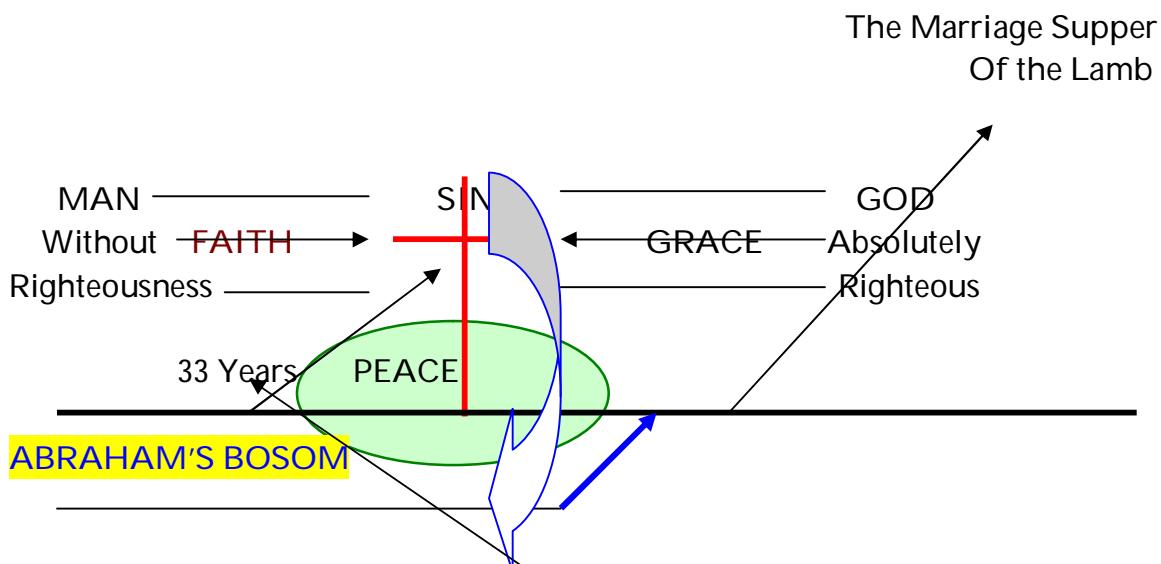
Now here at Ephesus he said, you are doing all of these good things, but you've got to change your course and do the deeds you did at first, which we decided last week, was acting in response to the love that we should have for the Lord Jesus. It's adoration of Him.

The Church today is full of people who want to know more *about* Jesus, when they should be wanting to know Him; not just to know more *about* Him, but to know Him. That starts with adoration. That starts with adoration and preoccupation with Him, and not letting anything else get in between you and Him. That is an exchange of love *agape*, because that's the total kind of love He's pouring into you and it demands nothing less than that in return. If fact, it can't be anything less than that in return. Totally coming to know Him; that is the heart-cry of every believer.

Now, you can bury yourself in the gospels, and you can learn everything there is to know *about* Christ in His walk from the first miracle to the Cross. I'm going to put this up here, and you may like it, and you may not like it.

[DEPICTION ON BOARD]

REDEMPTION BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH



For approximately 33 years from the incarnation, Christ walked here [33 year period before the cross]. The last 3 years of that was really His public ministry. Now, you can't read that from the back of the room, but you know what it is right there. Most of Christendom, most of Christendom, and that's the whole world of people who profess to know Christ, most of Christendom is occupied with knowing *about* the Jesus who walked for that 3 years on His way to the cross. It's great to know that, to know His heart, and to see His work, and to see

His presentation of Himself. But, who did He come to when He was born? Here, in the incarnation. Who did He come to?

Phil Richman. He came to His own.

Conrad Bowman. Right, He came to the Jew. He came to His own, as MESSIAH. Why? Because all the way back through the OT to Abraham, to David, to the nation of Israel, to all the Jews of the past who were children of promise, **He was delivering the promise**, the promise of the Kingdom, the promise of a Kinsman Redeemer, the promise of the King, the promise of a Redeemer – a Savior. He had come to deliver all those promises that the Father had made **to His chosen people**, right here, including the promise of a Redeemer that he made to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. So He came to deliver all of that. That's what He was doing for this period right here [the 3 years before the cross].

Now if you attempt to emulate in your own life the life of Jesus in this walk from here to here [the 3 years before the cross], you are taking the role of the Messiah and you are emulating the very man that Israel and the Jews **rejected** and threw out of the camp. What happened next, when they took Him **outside the camp of Israel** and they crucified Him on the cross? "He who knew no sin became sin for us in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." That is what Paul told the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 5:21)

He who knew no sin became sin for us in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

So, the Messiah of Israel was put on the Cross, labeled by the Romans as "King of the Jews." They (the Jews) didn't accept it; but the Romans accepted Him, as King of the Jews. Paul told the believers in Corinth that He became sin.

Now, all the way across the OT, in the Holy of Holies, on the Ark of the Covenant, the blood of the sacrifice that came from outside off the brazen altar, was taken in and sprinkled over the Mercy Seat, and those two angels looked down on the sin in the box – Aaron's Rod that budded, a bowl of Manna from the wilderness, and the Table of Law. That was the three objects



inside the Ark of the Covenant representing the three gross sins of Israel, and on top, two angels representing the justice and righteousness of God, and His attributes, His perfect character, which were judging those sins. But, instead of seeing the sins on the lid of this box – the Ark of the Covenant – they saw the blood of the sacrifice. The blood of the sin offering. Justice and righteousness were satisfied and atonement was effected. The sins of Israel were covered because that's what "atonement" means. So, they were covered up, and God didn't look on the sins, He looked on the blood of the sacrifice. The word for "sin offering" and the word for "sin" is exactly the same across the OT in Hebrew. There's no difference. It's the same word. The application dictates how you use it. So, He who knew no sin became sin for us. He became our sin offering.

Now, when you take the Lord's Table, and you take the juice representing His blood and drink it, and you take that bread, that little piece of cracker, and you eat that cracker, you're signifying to one another what? **That you have become one with the sin offering.** You've been joined to Him.

Now to us, this side [*i.e.*, this side of the cross], we know that that is union with Him. You see, He who knew no sin, went into the grave. And in the grave, He announced victory over sin to all of those OT saints being held in Abraham's Bosom. He gathered them together with Him, victorious over death, and He took them with Him in His resurrection. That is all the OT saints that were taken in His resurrection. They walked on earth for 40 days to this day right here, the day of His ascension [pointed to the point 40 days after the resurrection].

He who knew no sin was made to be the Righteous Son of God again. He was the righteous Man, but He's the only Begotten Son. Now, He's not known as God the Son; He is known to us as Jesus the Only Begotten Son, and that Man, made righteous, was taken to heaven with all of those saints to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. That is where they are now. Everything is ready, and the celebration has started, and what they're waiting for is the identification of the Bride. That is what Paul's letter to Ephesus is supposed to unfold. So, we see that time is marching on; ten days after His ascension, the Holy Spirit descended, and the Church Age began. That will last until He comes again to claim His Bride, and take her to the supper, which is already under way. Any questions?

Betijean Kennerly. We're the Bride?.

Conrad Bowman. You're the Bride. So is Phil.

Betijean Kennerly. I know. [Laughter].

Jeff Little. Last verse, chapter 1, is that the Lampstands are the churches. And, if I understand the word *ekklesia*, it means the gathering of believers.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Jeff Little. So, the consequence that He's going to break up the church?

Conrad Bowman. The consequence is that He's going to remove from that location in Ephesus the Lampstand.

Jeff Little. And does that mean He's going to break up the fellowship of believers?

Conrad Bowman. Yes it does, as a matter of fact. It does.

Betijean Kennerly. [Comment – could not hear].

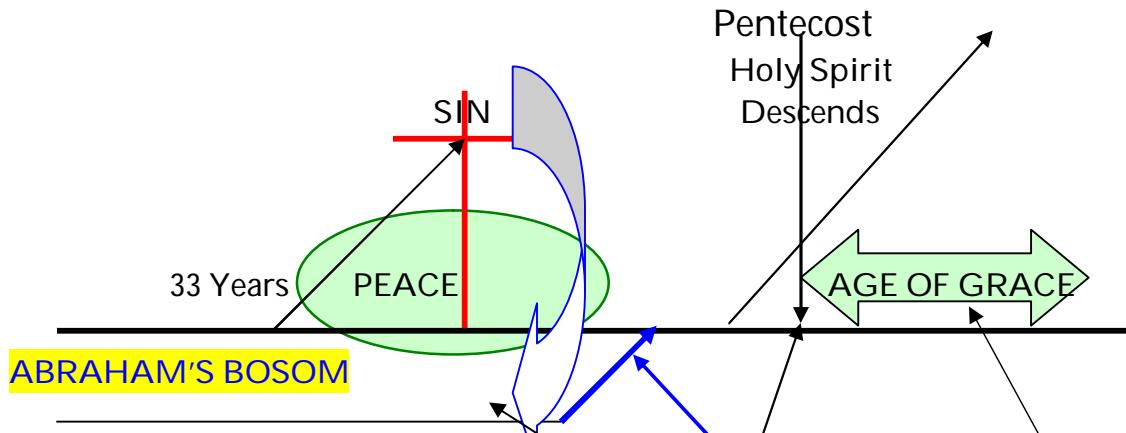
Conrad Bowman. That's exactly what's happening. You see in every church location, the *ekklesia*, we who are "called out," there is the church within the church. You cannot necessarily assume that everybody who walks on your campus understands or has even heard the true gospel, which is why the elders are charged with the responsibility of making sure that is what is offered, often and correctly. That's their job. The elders have one job; to guard the doctrinal purity of what's being offered at that location. That's the elders' job. They're not responsible for anything else. You have deacons who are responsible for everything else. The elders' responsibility is to guard the doctrinal purity of what's offered.

Jeff Little. So does that also include losing your salvation.

Conrad Bowman. It has nothing to do with salvation. It has nothing to do with salvation. It has to do with service. What He's telling the Church at Ephesus is, they're there to offer the gospel. If it's not being offered, and it's been polluted, remove the Lampstand. That's a risk and burden every Christian church should know it's carrying. And we can look around in our city and our nation and we can see thousands of churches that are operating in the name of Jesus that are not offering the gospel of the ministry of reconciliation. Isn't that the way it was defined. Unto us has been given the ministry of reconciliation. And, the ministry

of reconciliation says, when this happened, and Christ was in the grave – what does Romans 6 say? We have been joined to Christ in His death to sin. This is

The Marriage Supper Of the Lamb



What and how it happened. When you trusted Christ as your savior, from right here within the Church Age, the Spirit took you to the grave in Romans 6 and He joined you to Christ in His DEATH to the LAW and to SIN. And when He was raised to newness of life – that's what Romans 6 says – SO WERE YOU, raised to newness of life. That's new creation life. When He was made a new man, He became the firstfruit of all of mankind. That was Christ Himself. He was the firstfruit of all mankind. **You have been made one with that firstfruit, and when He was raised, you were raised.** And, you were given that New Creation life in which you now walk.

Evelyn Wamble. That's eternal life.

Conrad Bowman. More than that; it is eternal life, but it is eternal life today!

Evelyn Wamble. Right now.

Conrad Bowman. Right now - New life, now! You have within you the Holy Spirit of God who descended here and indwells everyone of us as we're made to join Christ **just as He was indwelled by the Spirit.**

So, just as with His time of ministry, the same Spirit that directed Him now directs us, and that Spirit is the source of your walk. It's got to be, because He

makes unreasonable, outrageous demands and claims of His Church. He expects you to do, absolutely astounding things like:

Make it your ambition to live a quiet life and tend to your own business...

That's number one on the list.

Work with your own hands so you won't be in any need, and might live at peace with all men.

That's [basics 101, Life in Christ](#). That's what He expects of us first. Now after that, He has other things He drags us into. Martin is going to Sri Lanka. He didn't pick Sri Lanka as the place to go; he's being [sent to](#) Sri Lanka. That's the way it works. Phil and I, a couple of years back, too many years now, had an opportunity to go to Raymond, Mississippi, and meet with a group of people there; in a Baptist church just getting their doctrinal act together. We had a chance to go there and spend four days with them. What a marvelous time it was. Every one of us has those opportunities, almost on a daily basis, don't we? Charlie?

Charles Pirtle. I know we're appalled with the words, the Lord has sent me here, the Lord is sending me there. I think the greater proof is that if you have received the call, the Lord takes you there. He doesn't send you; He takes you.

Conrad Bowman. OK. Think about it. Whenever and wherever He sends you, He goes with you by means of the Spirit within you!

Evelyn Wamble. He expects to do a whole lot through us. Am I right?

Conrad Bowman. He expects to take Charles. [Laughter].

Evelyn Wamble. But, He expects outrageous things of us.

Conrad Bowman. He does.

Evelyn Wamble. I think He expects to do outrageous things.

Conrad Bowman. No ma'am. He expects you to do the most outrageous things. See, He's already done the work. When Christ came, He did all the work. Now,

He didn't just do all the work of the Cross, He did all the work in the life of those people in Sri Lanka that Martin is going to go visit. Martin is going to Sri Lanka to look for God's footprints in Sri Lanka. And the best he can, he's going to put his feet right in God's footprints, and walk in those. And if he does that, he will see some absolutely amazing things come out of Sri Lanka. He's done it before. I'm looking forward to hearing a report when he gets back. That's it. That's the outstanding thing He expects us to do - Walk in His footprints where the Spirit is already at work and the work is complete. You see, man is always going to do the work and give it to God as a trophy, but God does not have a trophy case. It says, we are the trophies of grace. That's what Paul has said over and over. We are the trophies – what did Ephesians 2:10 say?

For you are His masterpiece, created unto good works, which God hath before finished in order that you should walk in them.

The sooner we quit trying to crank out these great projects for God, the sooner we will find His great projects that have been finished that He expects us to walk in. You see, we are His Bride. This is the period when He is pouring out Himself on us. We're not His workmen. We are the Bride. Now, the minute we begin to act like a bride, we'll turn our lives in adoration to Him and we'll see Him begin to pile those things up, right here where we walk in them. And, every step we take will be another step in His presence and in the work that He's finished, and the work that brings glory to Him, which is what the Bride wants. She wants her husband to be glorified. To look good. Ok. That's why I got this new shirt. [Laughter]. Well, I'll get points for that.

Martin Mosvold. With Charlie's comments, I would like to request he join us the next time.

Conrad Bowman. Charlie? Look, he's consulting Yvonne now. The bus is going to leave from Armenia, Charlie. I love this. I like the way this whole thing works.

Alright. Now, you see what happened, you see what happened at Ephesus? What did He say?

I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance [look at all of this] and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

I know your deeds and your toil and your perseverance – look at all this – and you can't endure evil men, you put them to the test, you check on those that say they are apostles, you have perseverance, you've endured, you've done all those things, but you forgot your first love. You're not walking in my footprints, like I want you to. Your eyes are not on Me. They're on stuff you're doing for Me.

See the difference. God bless you.

Yet, this you do have, you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

You're not turning your decision-making over to anybody else. So the next verse is logical.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the [ekklesia], to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.

Now, there is a promise, isn't it. To he who overcomes. Remember, this is a church at the end of it all. It's going to require overcoming to get to the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God. I'm not going to stop there, because that will take us in a whole other direction, but if you're interested in it let me know and I'll get you some stuff on the web.

To the angel of the church in Smyrna, write: The first and last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not...

You see, what they had amongst them was this group of people posing as Jews, but they are a synagogue of Satan. The synagogue that they are speaking of is not one dedicated to God but one that's controlled by Satan himself. Do not – by the way - that tells you that there in that midst of these seven churches, Satan is busy at work, and you'll see this repeatedly. I want to remind you that Satan is not an omnipresent being. John and I were talking about that this week. Satan is not an omnipresent being; he is only at one place at a time. He's not all places at all times. I fear for those people who say they wrestle with the devil, because that means at that moment when they were wrestling with the devil, they are the

most important person in the entire universe; that the enemy himself would present himself to them in person. It just doesn't happen that way. The enemy walks to and fro and he is before the face of God accusing God of being unfair to him and the angels, by the way He treats us, and because they are not treated in grace and mercy. They are treated by – according to - what they knew of God. They didn't know Him in part like we do, so God treated them according to what they knew; because the principle is, you're responsible for what you know. **With knowledge, comes responsibility!** OK? In one sense, you could say that we're not doing you any favor, by putting a class together and teaching you the principles of the Word, because now you're responsible for all of it. So, believe it if you want to. It's up to you, but there's risk associated with turning your back on it, and you need to know that. Listen carefully to what the Spirit says, as He teaches you.

So he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.

To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **Do not fear what you are about to suffer.**

I take great comfort in that – I have – through this whole time of treatment for colon cancer and the other things that I've been dealing with. Barbara, I hope you do to.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, and you may be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches [it's repeated for emphasis]. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

The first death that occurs is just like Adam. It's spiritual death. And, we are born spiritually dead until we are reborn and regenerated here [pointing to Board at Pentecost]. And then man, who has body, soul, and spirit, but who was born spiritually dead, now has his human spirit regenerated. The Holy Spirit, who resides within, instructs our human spirit regarding the things of God and

we know them and accumulate that information right there within us. That's the source of life for the new creation man. This is new creation man; the man that's walking [after being resurrected in the new creation life with Christ](#). That occurs – that's when we are given life. The first death that we will now experience is physical death. And, when we experience physical death, we join Christ at the Rapture of the Church when He comes and claims His bride. The second death only happens to those people who do not trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. And, when they die physically, they go to the Judgment Seat of God, the Great White Throne Judgment. And, at the Judgment Seat of God, that's where the second death occurs. And, that's spiritual death and condemnation forever.

Evelyn Wamble. Separation from God, forever.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Evelyn Wamble. It's hell.

Conrad Bowman. Yes. It's not just separation, it is hell. Hell is much broader than that. But you're right. It's separation from God forever. And that's the second death. And what He's saying to these people, is do not fear the first death. Death itself, physical death, is not something to be feared. OK? It's not something to look forward to, but it's not something to be feared; because we know that the moment we close our eyes, in the twinkling of an eye, the next sight we'll see is our Lord descending for us, and we'll meet Him in the clouds. And, every believer who has been born since this period of time [pointing to period after Pentecost on the Board] until that instant right there [pointing to the Rapture of the Church on the Board] will be right there with us arriving at the same time. No separation. No waiting. Be right there. OK.

My Dad, the apostle Paul, and Abraham as a guest at the wedding, I'm looking forward to it – that's going to be some crowd, you know it? That's going to be some crowd. You think about all of your family who have passed on as believers – they're all arriving right there, right now! And, we step into that scene the instant we leave this one. It's a marvelous – that's the basis on which we don't fear the death that we face.

He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Hear because it's the Spirit always that's doing the instructions. Any questions on this? We're down to the third church.

Phil Richman. I have a question. It says he who overcomes. What does it mean by "overcomes"?

Charles Pirtle. 1 John 5:5.

Conrad Bowman. I'm a ventriloquist. [Laughter]. You didn't know that, did you. Go ahead, Charlie.

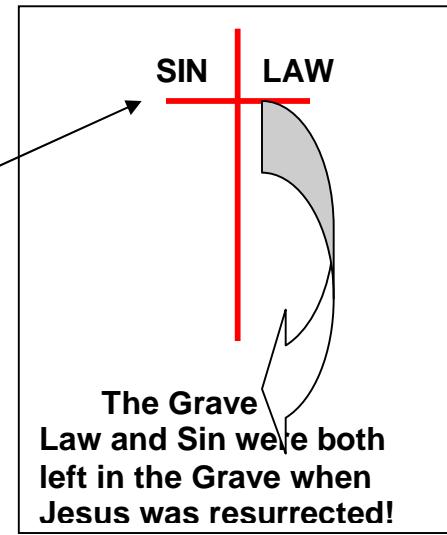
Charles Pirtle. I ask that same question. In every message to every church He says, to him that overcometh. First John 5:5 says, "And who is He that overcometh? He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God."

Phil Richman. Good question.

Charles Pirtle. So the same John who wrote The Revelation, Christ through him, God through him, is the same John who describes who He that overcometh is.

Conrad Bowman. Do you have a thought on this? John is writing, John is writing to – 1st John – the general epistle of John, is writing down here in time [points to Board]. And I always found it interesting that John is using the term – he said, he that overcomes is he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Now, "the Son of God" was His name before, (in the face of), all of Israel. That's who came as Messiah. That's who He announced Himself to be when He came to all Israel in His own personal ministry, didn't He? He announced Himself to be the Son of God. That's what He kept saying to people. He was the Son of God. We recognize Him first (the Gentile Church) recognizes Him first as Savior, as Lord! OK? Israel recognized Him first as the Son of God. That's what they were challenged with first. So, the challenge to Israel during this time right here [pointing to the Board – 3 years before the cross] when they started hearing the gospel as He presented it, was the gospel of the Son of God. And they were asked to believe that. That gospel carried them all the way through – John is saying, (even though he is up here in the Church Age), John is saying to a group of people – the man who overcomes is the man who recognizes Christ as the Son of God. He is speaking to a specific group of people with a very specific message. What he's doing is appealing to these people who have been burdened with the Law, and had carried that burden of the Law from the time it was given all the way through Messiah's having come. And now, they're approaching the Church

Age, and Christ has ascended, and they're still carrying the Law on their back and they have to overcome that burden of the Law by turning it loose, regardless of where they are in the scheme of things. John the apostle is saying, the man who overcomes that burden is the man who can turn this loose [pointing to the period before the cross on the Board] and latch on to grace [pointing to the period after the cross and before the Rapture, on the Board], and become a member of the *ekklesia* of God. It's a very specific message, the letter in the general epistle of 1st John. It's an appeal to those people all the way through the transition period, because John wrote that and he gave it to them right at the end of the 1st century, so they're right in here [pointing to the Board around 100 A.D.]. It's this period when all this turmoil is taking place. You see, because the seven churches of Asia were put together, and then the Roman army just rolled in over them and is attempting to crush them out. And, they are holding onto Law – isn't that what the Church in Smyrna was plagued with? There's this group of Jews that say they're Jews, but they're not. They're operating the synagogue of Satan because they're trying to hold on to the Law in a period when the Law has been nullified by the death of Christ, because the Law defined this, SIN. This is what the Law defined. You could put Law up here, or Sin up here, and you would have the same thing. They are mirror images of the same thing. Law is one side of the coin, and you turn it over, and it says "Sin." Because that's all the Law did, was to identify sin and point out the condemnation of it. That burdened them. And the apostle John is saying to those people, only the one who overcomes will be given to eat of the tree of life. And, because when he overcomes that burden of the Law, he'll accept the freedom of grace. Because when Christ died, He died to the Law. The burden was dropped. That's what freedom means. When you see freedom, that's what freedom is talking about. **It's freedom from Law**, and freedom from The Law, for the Jew. For the Gentile, it could only be freedom from law as a principle, because they were never born under The Law. But, we can pick it up as law. We write our own, and say, OK, we'll hold all you guys accountable for it.



Phil Richman. Does that apply to the Gentile Church at Ephesus?

Conrad Bowman. Yes. It absolutely did. It absolutely did. Why? Because that Gentile church – just like our church. It's not different from what we're doing today? We've got our own law here. You dig around and you will find it. You'll find it. Wherever you left to get away from it, you kind of drug it here with you, I guess. But then it was here when I got here, and if it wasn't, I had plenty in my briefcase. You see, we have an affinity for Law. We are legalistic people. We love law. Because then we can hold everybody else accountable of doing what it says, or not doing what it says. We just love that. We don't like...

Make it your ambition to live a quiet life. Tend to your own business. Work with your own hands

We don't like that. That's too simple. Who's in control of that? The Lord is. He knows what's going on. And it's 10:30. Mr. Walch?

Mr. Walch. I was just going to make a comment. It appears there's a cautionary comment note to the Church in Smyrna that there's a tsunami on its way; be prepared.

Conrad Bowman. Yes sir. Yes sir. Yes sir. It's rolling in. And it's going to roll up seven churches, and what we're going to find is all seven churches – we've got them here. We've got them ahead of next week. We can line them up. Alright?

Gentlemen. And you can even look today to see whose lampstands are being removed.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Gentleman. It's rather large.

Conrad Bowman. And then the painful part is you take your own life and your own history, and you lay your own life and history out right there on the table, (if you want to talk about it), and you'll find: All of a sudden, those churches are right there in my house.

Charles Pirtle. Why do you think He never asked the Church in Smyrna to repent?

Conrad Bowman. Charlie, what do you think?

Charles Pirtle. I don't know.

Conrad Bowman. Charlie, the first rule of being a good lawyer is, don't ask the question you don't know the answer to. [Laughter].

John Young. Charlie, don't let him turn that around on you. That's what he does to me.

[Banter back and forth].

Phil Richman. Somebody close us in prayer.

Woody Laywell. "Father thank you for our time to study Your Word, and for the opportunity to understand it..... Amen."