

OF ANTICHRISTS AND OF A BODY THAT DESTROYS THEM

FIRST OF TWO BURDENS- ANTICHRISTS REVISITED

Much emphasis was given in the first message to spotting antichrists operating inside the early Church. We derived the bulk of the evidences for this assertion by looking at letters to the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3. We saw that antichrists inside the church were once ministers of Christ. Through failing moral bearing, particularly by their unbridled **love for riches, fame and power** these erstwhile servants made themselves targets of Satan and were engaged by him to fight against Christ. In the course of time these ministers of Satan, Balaams and Jezebels completely hijacked the Church in Laodicea. Now, false teachers and their teachings spread like the **swift destroying action of gangrene** or "make their victims many like the cankerworm" (2 Timothy 2:17; Nahum 3:15). They characteristically network and boasts of cultic following. This is a type of the **development of the beast out of the earth.**

We saw also that Satan set himself up in the corridors of many of these assemblies. Satan is said to "dwell in Pergamum" and evidently had a **seat of power.** From there he caused persecution of Christians in Smyrna, Pergamum and possibly in the other cities in Asia Minor. This situation points to the *nature of his dwelling in Pergamum* known to be the religious cum political capital of Asia Minor. Two things can be deduced from the foregoing presentation. **Satan was a god of this mini kingdom** and used state power to launch out against the interest of Christ. He annexed the cultural beliefs and the economy of the region to advantage. Always longing for worship and lordly control at whatever cost, he enlisted whoever they were that can widen the scope and effectiveness of his tyranny in the region. **This is the spirit behind the raising up empires of old. It will manifest in a fully developed form in this last time in the beast out of the sea.**

That the antichrist and antichrists system will collaborate to annihilate the human race if it were possible is no doubt. None who is genuinely saved should unwittingly be part of it. Many unfortunately dwell in the midst of them that rise up against Christ (Jer. 51:1). Once habitually exposed to drinking Jezebels' (Harlot woman's) intoxicating wine people lose their senses; become drunk, even mad (Rev. 17:4;2; Jer. 51:1, 6 7)

(Rev 17:2) With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

(Rev 17:3) So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of

blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

(Rev 17:4) And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

(Jer. 51:1) Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind;

(Jer. 51:6) Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this *is* the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

(Jer. 51:7) Babylon *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

THE SECOND BURDEN-BODY TO DESTROY THE ANTICHRISTS

God has His plan laid out for the destruction of these two evil beasts. Would any of the Lord's people rather not submit to the grace that develops one to be in the company of the overcomers? Why be a victim? Here again the seed plot for the raising up of a body of people to destroy these two beasts that make up the Kingdom of this world is revealed in Revelation Chapters 1, 2 and 3. The setting is provided in John and the seven churches. (A little explanation is given here in a reminder of what we establish in the first message).

We begin with a question in two parts: **How is this body of people raised and what are the telling stages of their development?**

Glory to God! This is all about Christ and His true disciples, His proven followers; called, *chosen through testing*, and found faithful. The Book of Revelation is truly about JESUS CHRST and of Him fully revealed in His Church **for the purpose of "destroying them that destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18)**; and to lift the human race in the final hour to all surpassing victories (Rev. 21:3, 4).

(Rev 11:18) And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; **and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.**

(Rev 21:3) And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the

tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

(Rev 21:4) **And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.**

Blessed be God, we have a great privilege before. What a joy in knowing that the Lord Jesus Christ will greatly rejoice in our being fully raised up to be like Him- *in His moral image and after His likeness*. GLORY!

Now we ask again, **how is this body of people raised and what are the telling stages of their development?**

And again, what is meant by being ***chosen through testing***?

Let us get to work at providing answers to these legitimate questions.

We begin by looking carefully at the starting event in the encounter John had on the Isles of Patmos. Rev. 1:10, 11 records it.

(Rev 1:10) I was in the Spirit on the **Lord's day**, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

(Rev 1:11) Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, **What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches** which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

The **LORD'S DAY** as given here indicates neither Saturday nor Sunday. Man has had his day and with all that he thinks of himself either in self-conceit or in sincere assessment. But do not matter now, for He has apprehended John to give His unbiased assessment about how each of the seven churches are fairing. The word translated here combines both ideas of DAY AND JUDGEMENT (Greek: **HEMERA**). So in essence, John encountered Christ of a typical occasion of **Lord's Day Of Judgement**.

BEFORE THIS DAY

Jesus Christ made available to these churches abundant spiritual nourishment and scores of years of earnest labours of His apostles and prophets. This included times of consistent *doctrinal teaching sessions, corrections, reproofs and instructions in righteousness that they may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*. Thus the standard

routine for offering solid training and preparations were interwoven with opportunities of having things set straight in their individual lives. Then the years saw them grow up and involved in services for God. But now how they have fared was being determined. The presence of different manners of people *Vis-à-vis*, some faithful and others not so faithful impacted everyone in one way or the other.

Self-adjustments under individual times of testing in favourable settings made possible for the earnest ones to reach higher for the highest.

Most trying times were thrown at them by the activities of supposed anointed ministries who have veered into errors. True love for God and heart loyalty to Him at all times provided them opportunities to judge themselves individually and strengthen themselves in consecration.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRIST'S JUDGEMENT

Revelation 2, and 3 are manifestation of the Lord's inspection and judgment of the state of each of 7 Pentecostal Churches. The Lord brings correction and charges these congregations of His people to repentance from identified failures (moral and spiritual flaws of serious dimensions). He urges individual repentances and offers spiritual uplift if any overcomes the identified flaws by the power they already possess. If not responsive, some heavy sanctions will be meted out.

COLLECTIVE JUDGEMENT TARGETS GROWTH ENVIRONMENT

A proper functioning church provides opportunity for the serious minded to growth in grace and in the Knowledge of Christ. However, if the leadership is dealing with slack hands and not providing noteworthy examples will negative impact the congregation. This is why the letters are addressed to the Leadership of every local church. When it comes to inspections, assessment and rewards for faithfulness, individuals are addressed. TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH is the set pattern.

THE NATURE OF THE PROMISES

It will provide an exciting study to look at what the promises truly signify and the situational conditions that are attached to every one of the promises. That is, what to overcome as spelt out in each letter determine what promises are made. But the scope of this treatment does not go far enough to feast on what these promises really mean and garner what meriting them involves.

Finally, we can authoritatively say that Christ's promises of a lifting up made to these churches were deliberately arranged into gradual ascents in the Spirit until meriting sitting on the throne.

That is, one level of spiritual promotion, leads to another and then to another till fullness of glory is attained, On the hand, a holding back from the disobedient is sustained until the impenitent is amenable to change. So overtime while an individual has a stunted growth experience, another during the same period resurrects to enviable spiritual heights.

THE SEVEN PROMISES IDENTIFIED

FIRST-(Rev 2:7) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

SECOND -(Rev 2:11) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

THIRD- (Rev 2:17) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*.

FOURTH-(Rev 2:25) But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.

(Rev 2:26) And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

(Rev 2:27) 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 2:28) And I will give him the morning star.

FIFTH- (Rev 3:4) Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

(Rev 3:5) He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

SIXTH- (Rev 3:10) Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

(Rev 3:11) Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

(Rev 3:12) Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of

my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

SEVENTH-(Rev 3:21) 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.