

Sunday February 16<sup>th</sup> 2020  
The Word of God  
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 18F  
'I Know Your Works....'

1). Re 2:7 *To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’*

Re 2:11 *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’*

Re 2:17 *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” ’*

These are the first 3 of 7 overcomers’ promises which are to be realized by faithful Christians at the judgment of the Church, promises that are shown to us in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3. All 7 promises are age lasting in their scope and all have to do with regality in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, which will bring to fulfillment the purpose for which God created Man in the beginning – Ge 1:26 *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion.....*

And we will remember that God had restored the ruined earth and created the Man and the Woman to rule over it in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day in order to replace Satan, the one who presently holds the scepter of rulership, because of his disqualification to rule as a result of his rebellion – Isa 14:13 *For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’*

The events that we witness at the Judgment Seat in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 are the precursor to Satan's overthrow as the Bride of Christ, made up of those who are overcomers in receipt of the promises, are called out of the body of Christ so that the Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Woman, His Bride, who will become His Wife, will have dominion together in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, just as God had said in the beginning.

a). Now, that which God has said is absolutely certain, and yet the ruler of this age has attempted from the beginning to overturn God's word.

b). Having heard what God had said about the Man and the Woman having dominion together in the beginning, he immediately attacked the Woman, deceiving her so as to bring about her disqualification, so that rulership was not possible at that time.

c). The serpent heard the word of God following the fall of Adam and the Woman – Ge 3:15 *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

And having heard this the ruler of this age sought to stop the 'Seed' of the Woman from fulfilling that which God had said, and this began almost immediately with the death of Abel at the hands of Cain.

d). It continued with the attempt to totally corrupt the bloodline of the human race through the cohabitation of fallen angels with the daughters of men. Noah, however, was perfect in his generations and he and his family were not touched by the corruption.

e). Satan then sought to destroy the sons of Israel, those adopted as God's firstborn son, who would be the wife of Jehovah, in the brickyards of Egypt and by attempting to kill all the male children.

f). And this attempted destruction of the sons of Israel has continued for millennia. It continues to the present day. And will continue until the end of the Tribulation.

g). The ruler of this age again tried to stop the Seed of the Woman by killing all the male children following our Lord's birth – Mt 2:16 *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in*

*Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.*

And no doubt he thought he had accomplished his aim as the Christ, abused and rejected, hung naked on the cross and breathed His last. BUT- 1 Co 2:6 *However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

Christ's death and shed blood as He became sin for us, in the antitype of Adam, provided the means of eternal redemption for those who through believing on Him would be entered into the race of the faith, having the opportunity to become part of His Bride and His resurrection has given those running the race, the hope of glory.

h). And as soon as the Lord had gone into a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom, so the attack began to destroy those created in Christ to become His Bride.

i). And this attempted destruction has followed a 2-pronged attack. It began with the literal attempt to eradicate the body of Christ through centuries of persecution and to bring about the overthrow of those not killed through deception. And when killing Christians didn't work, he focused fully on deception, bringing about the marriage of the Church and the world.

j). Our enemy's goal has never changed – it is to prevent that which God had said about the Man and the Woman having dominion together in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day from coming to pass, so that he may retain his hold on power forever.

2). Now, we have spent time laying out this foundation again so that we can place the events of the Judgment Seat that we are studying within their proper context and to help us understand the significance of what the Spirit says to the churches with regards to being successful in our own race of the faith in the face of Satanic deception.

a). If we go back to the overcomers' promises we began with we should now realize that to be an overcomer is to have overcome the attempts of our enemy to deceive us, through the world, the flesh and the devil, to disqualify us from being recipients of the promises.

b). This is the great contest of the age; this is our engagement in the spiritual warfare that has been raging for the past 2000 years. In this contest everything will be either won or lost, there is no second place to be had.

c). And because of the nature and seriousness of the contest –  
*Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

And because the seriousness of the outcome of this contest, the Lord has seen fit to draw our attention once again to that which we have known from the beginning – *Isa 46:9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*

And as we have seen, it is through His words to the church of Ephesus that He begins to teach us one last time through this final Book of Scripture - *Re 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."*

We had seen last time that early on in this dispensation, as the church was just beginning, that individuals within the groups of Christians who met together in houses sought to dominate and control the others within their group and then to dominate the larger grouping within individual cities like Ephesus and beyond.

d). And they sought to bring this about by forming a ‘priestly class’, probably patterned after the priesthood in the Jewish temple. A priestly class that in all respects promoted itself as superior to the rest of the eternally saved. Through this perceived elevation this superior ‘ruling class’, the clergy, were able to force their will on the others, the laity, through corruption of the Scriptures and then to enforce obedience to their corrupted doctrine – 3 Jn 1:9 *I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.*

This was exactly the situation that existed in the camp of Israel at the Lord’s first advent among the religious leaders of that day and in their focus on self we can hear the repetition of Satan’s words recorded in Isaiah Chapter 14, ‘I will, I will, I will’ – Mk 7:8 *For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” 9 He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.*

Jn 12:42 *Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

As it was then, so it would be, and continues to be in the church even to this day.

e). It seems to be an integral part of the sin nature seen readily in those like Diotrephes, who love to have the preeminence, to have those in their charge subject to their own ‘Christian world view’, having probably embraced the deception as the scribes and Pharisees had, that their will and God’s will are one and the same. And in doing so, although this would likely not be a conscious thought, they choose to exalt their ‘thrones above the stars of God’, just as Satan did.

f). There is only one will we are to be subjected to and that is the will of God. And His will we know.

g). And Nicolaitanism, if we can call it that, is not confined to the ranks of the pointy hat and fancy costume but is found everywhere where church leaders do not live out a life of service to the flock entrusted to their care, looking to their position rather than their responsibility.

h). Leaders then are not to see themselves as the fount of all wisdom, nor as the guardians of the moral high ground, nor the enforcers of a code of behavior, because this is eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But, according to the Scriptures, leaders are to be humble, self-controlled, gentle to all, not self-willed nor quick tempered, and most especially holding fast the faithful word as they had been taught. The Lord Himself being their example as the 'Shepherd and overseer of our souls' - Mt 7:16 *You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?*

'Nicolaitanism' did not and does not exist in a vacuum though. Rather it is the outworking of a broader strategy of deception that our enemy has employed to overthrow the faith of those whose determination is to rule with Christ.

3). Re 2:14 *But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

Re 2:20 *Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.*

And the Lord has revealed our enemy's broader strategy to us by taking us back to the type of Israel in their encounter with Balaam on their march to the promised land. And this we see in the Lord's words to the church of Pergamos where the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans

are seen in the same light. And then He takes us to the darkest of days of Israel's history during the divided kingdom through reference to Jezebel the pagan wife of king Ahab in the days of Elijah. Which is shown to us through His words to the church of Thyatira.

a). Both Balaam and Jezebel would complement one another as the outcome of their actions was the same, but through the example of Jezebel we see the depraved depths to which adherence to the 'doctrine of Balaam' must lead.

b). And that pictured through these individuals is not limited to a past time in church history, rather it has been present from the beginning and can only intensify as the dispensation draws to a close and the leaven completes its corrupting work.

c). And let's keep in mind that as we look at that taught through Balaam and Jezebel with respect to the church we are not dealing with denominations or cultic off-shoots of denominations, but with individual Christians. Let's remember that deception must always be embraced at an individual level before it can ever become anything more organized.

d). So, to Balaam then – interestingly, Balaam appears 3 times in the NT. Once here in the Revelation and also in 2 Peter and Jude also in relation to false teachers – 2 Pe 2:14b *They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. 15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;*

Jud 1:11 *Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in **the error of Balaam for profit**, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.*

Both 'the way of Balaam' and 'the error of Balaam' have to do with the love of money – Nu 22:7 *So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak.*

Israel on the march to the promised land had utterly defeated the Amorites and before them lay Moab, and the Moabite king, Balak, was terrified. God was with Israel and nothing it seemed could stop them.

Balak, to preserve his own rule, thus becoming a type of Satan, wanted Israel's advance stopped, or else God's firstborn son would accomplish that which God had determined for them and Balak's kingdom would be lost.

e). To accomplish this, he wanted a curse pronounced on Israel and Balak sent to Balaam, to pay him to do it – Nu 22:6 *Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.*”

But Balaam could not curse those whom God had blessed, and the attempt failed – Nu 23:8 *“How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And how shall I denounce whom the Lord has not denounced?”*

But this was not the end of the matter. There was still money to be made, and so Balaam adopted a different approach – Nu 31:15 *And Moses said to them: “Have you kept all the women alive? 16 Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through **the counsel of Balaam**, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.*

And this is what the ‘counsel of Balaam’ accomplished – Nu 25:1 *Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.*

The counsel of Balaam seen here in the type is synonymous with the doctrine of Balaam that we see in connection with Christians through the church of Pergamos in the antitype.

f). So, what was the counsel of Balaam that resulted in Israel joining themselves to Baal of Peor, that caused a plague among the congregation of the Lord?

g). It's really quite simple. Israel were [are] God's covenant people. Both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants were in place at the time this

encounter with Balaam happened. God's covenant with Israel could not be broken as this would violate His word, therefore whatever Israel did they would be secure as God's covenant people. Can you hear those words, 'You will not surely die'?

h). Although it was an irrevocable truth that God's covenant with the nation could not be broken, it was a lie to say that individuals within the nation could do whatever they liked and there would be no consequences – Nu 25:9 *And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.*

To have embraced the practices of the world system under Satan could only lead to death. A complete separation from their inheritance and their status as a firstborn son. Eternally redeemed, but not fulfilling the purpose for that redemption – Now, fast forward to 'the doctrine of Balaam' within a Christian setting and what do we find? All Christians are eternally saved, and nothing can ever take away from or nullify Christ's finished work on the cross. Therefore, because our salvation is secure and is irrevocable it really doesn't matter how we choose to live beyond that because we are all going to heaven and God will not let anything bad happen to us. And again, we can hear those words 'You will not surely die'.

h). It is an absolute, irrevocable truth that the salvation we presently possess cannot be lost irrespective of what we do, but as with Israel, for a Christian to embrace the practices of the world system under Satan can only lead to death. A complete separation from what would have been their inheritance and their status as a firstborn son, part of the Bride of Christ. Eternally redeemed but falling short of the purpose for that redemption– Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die.....*

*2 Ti 4:10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica*

And for the 'doctrine of Balaam' to become normalized among Christians, any teaching that demonstrates that Christians can suffer loss and experience negative consequences for their actions at the Judgment Seat

has to be corrupted. Any teaching that makes a distinction between the soul and the spirit, showing that the salvation of the soul remains yet future, determined by works of righteousness, and can be lost, also has to be corrupted. Spirit and soul must be lumped together and only one salvation must be proclaimed.

i). And here in essence then, is the leaven placed in the 3 measures of meal until all became leavened. The challenge to the truth today is the same as it was in the Garden, 'Has God indeed said' and 'You will not surely die'.

j). As it was for Israel at Acacia Grove, so it is with Christians. Should we think that those in Israel had no desire to commit harlotry with the women of Moab and were forced into it? Of course not. This was something that many wanted to do, and the counsel of Balaam provided the legitimacy for their desire. It allowed them to do what was right in their own eyes; to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After all Balaam was a prophet who heard from God, wasn't he?

k). And for Christians in general, starting way back at the beginning of the church, there has been a desire to commit harlotry with the world and 'the doctrine of Balaam' proclaimed through a corrupted message has provided the validation for this. After all, those who proclaim these things are they not great men and women of God who have spent all their lives in the study of the Scripture?

*Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to*

*the gospel of the grace of God. 25 “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

l). And what about that woman Jezebel? Well, we will have to wait for her until next time – if the Lord is willing.