

The Book of Revelation

By

Russell I. Humberd

FIFTH EDITION

Copyright © 1944

CHAPTERS TWO AND THREE

MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

So many and so varied are the angles of approach to the study of these two chapters that we might fill several pages. The speaker is our Lord, as He walks in blinding glory among the candlesticks. Every word is from His lips. Fifty-three times He uses the pronoun "**I**." And every word is for us as members of His church.

They are to seven churches in Asia. Seven is GOD's number of completeness. It is not only a message to those seven historical church's, but to all churches of all times, and has ample application to the individual believer.

Divisions of the Messages

There is Salutation: The speaker addresses His message to the "**angel of the church in - .**"

There is Introduction: He introduces Himself by some description of His work or person. "**These things saith He - .**"

There is Information and Inspection. He is among the candlesticks beholding every move within His church. He notes the light and the lack of light. "**I know thy works.**" He rejoices in their love and warns those who are easing up.

There is Admonition in view of His return, and warning lest He find them unprepared.

There is a sevenfold Exhortation to read: "**What the Spirit saith unto the churches.**"

There is Exaltation: to "**him that overcometh**" and promise that "**I will give**" some rich reward.

Since space is limited, we will confine our study to the last heading - exaltation to the overcomer.

Unattractive Rewards

As a little boy I read this book through and through, but to me these rewards were just mere words, meaningless and empty. Indeed some were unattractive and some even undesirable.

To him that overcometh will I **"give... a white stone," "[clothe] in white raiment," "make a pillar in the temple... and he shall go no more out."**

White clothing is unpopular. In an audience of five hundred there are few indeed who are clothed in white raiment. As for a white stone, certainly I did not wish to carry a stone about with me for eternity; I wanted both hands free. And to be a pillar in the temple and never get out, was a fearful possibility.

Had I not been to Indianapolis with my parents; and did we not visit the state house and see those massive pillars upholding that great structure? Were they not there year after year and never went out? If I were to be so unfortunate as to be an overcomer, would I have to stand in Heaven and hold up one corner of the temple and never go out and be free?

Our readers carried the story of Atlas and Hercules. I knew it was a myth, and yet I pitied poor Atlas as he must stand there century after century, with the earth upon his shoulders and hardly daring to move an inch. Certainly if that was the reward of the overcomer, I did not care for it at all.

Precious Rewards

But these rewards are precious to me now. I have never had so much "fun" in getting up a message as when, a few years ago, by comparison and contrast, I found these honors to be the very ones this old world dotes on. Men will work for years and even spend their entire life in pursuit of these honors. They will enjoy them for a few years, but to the overcomer there is an eternal reward.

A White Stone

"To him that overcometh will I give... a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Let us imagine a department store. A hundred women are scattered here and there. A young man enters and passes down an aisle. A woman here and there, glances up and then back to her shopping. To them he is just another man.

But not so with one young woman. She glances up; their eyes meet. Instantly her cheeks flush and her heart pounds furiously, for that young man has given her a little white stone. True, its value may be small in actual cash, but she treasures that stone as her most precious possession. When he gave her that stone, it meant that he had set his love upon her; that she was his and he was hers, and she would defend it with her very life.

If the heart of an earthly bride thus thrills as she receives a small white stone from the one she loves; with what joy will the overcomer take from the hand of the heavenly bridegroom a white stone, with all it signifies and means to his eternal joy and happiness.

The New Name

There is a name in that stone which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. What precious truth here.

Sister has a beau. Certainly there is room in the back seat. But who wants a tar bucket? Two's a company; three's a crowd. Love flows freely when there are but two. There are mutual joys and understandings between them that no other can enter into. Only the bride knows the full meaning of her pet name, and how her heart thrills to hear it from his lips. **"I am my beloved's and he is mine."**

"And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known."

And so, between the heavenly bride and bridegroom, there are consecrations and heart throbs that no one else can know. There are joys in answered prayer and groanings in spirit that cannot be uttered so another can understand. And so the overcomer will receive a name that only he can appreciate and know; a name that will bring to mind and include those exercises of soul that are so precious in the sight of the Lord.

It was at the brook Jabbok that Jacob received such a name. He was homeward bound, but alas, Esau was coming with four hundred men. Fears were already gripping his heart as he lay down that night for needed rest. Suddenly a new terror fell upon him as a stranger entered his tent, grabbed him and wrestled with him until the break of day. But the sun would shine that day upon a new man.

It would be a new Jacob that would limp along the shore of that brook, for precious things had taken place in Jacob's heart that night as GOD had wrestled with him; things that would never be forgotten. It was because Jacob had prevailed; because he had power with GOD and man, that GOD gave him a new name. True - others might speak that name; the word "**Israel**" might pass their lips, but no man could really know that name saving he that received it.

It is thus with the overcomer. There are precious experiences and consecrations that only he and his GOD can know, and his new name will be such as to include them all.

A few months ago one of my students wrote in her examination paper, "I also lost my job because I wore a 'JESUS Saves' badge."

Here was an act of consecration that only she and her GOD could know. And so precious in the sight of the Lord is such an act of faith, that her new name will include it all and thrill her heart with lasting joy.

The White Garment

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." A new babe is born. Grandpa pays his first visit, and as he stands and looks into the tiny face, and as the little hand

clasps his big rough finger, a firm resolution is formed far down in his big heart - that young man must have the best.

"This is to begin a bank account for sonny's college education," he says, as he lays a ten dollar bill on the table. Time goes on. The little fellow earns his first pennies, and then his first dollar, and all is carefully laid aside for that one purpose - a college education.

School days begin and end; high school comes and goes, and the great day arrives. Proudly the young man marches across the campus and into the halls of college learning.

"You will have great difficulties," warns the professor. "There will be chemistry, with valence, the molecules and the atoms. There are the elements with all their countless forms and combinations. And you must master ethics, philosophy and pedagogy. But if you will overcome these difficulties for four years, we will clothe you in a black garment, place a square hat upon your head and permit you to sit for one hour upon the platform during commencement exercises."

What does that young man do? Does he shrink at the price? Ah, no. He will wash windows and scrub floors; he will dust carpets and mow lawns; he will study and toil; he will work and sacrifice if he can only win that goal and be clothed in a black garment and have a square hat upon his head, with all the joys and honors and advantages that will mean to his present and future life.

If this young man will thus deny himself to win the earthly honors for which that black gown stands, how much more should the child of GOD set his face steadfastly toward the eternal honors and advantages that are invested in that raiment so pure and white.

The Tree of Life

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

There were two trees in the midst of the garden. Eat of the one and die; eat of the other and live forever. When Adam ate of the tree of death, GOD did a merciful thing. He drove them out lest they should eat of the tree of life and live forever. What misery would have been ours had Adam reached forth his hand to the tree of life and lived forever in a mortal body. Think of a cancer eating its way through the tender tissues and never relief in death.

GOD has provided a body for His own. A body that will never get sick nor weary, a body that will never shed a tear nor feel a pain; an immortal body, throbbing with the very life of GOD Himself. In such a body the overcomer will sometime pluck fruit from the tree of life and live forever.

Various Fruits

The tree of life will grow in the midst of the street of the New Jerusalem and on either side of the river of life. It will **"bare twelve manner of fruits, and [yield] her fruit every month; and the**

leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Looking back through the years I see my wife coming in from a trip around the farm. The spoils of that expedition netted a few little raspberries in the bottom of a pan. Raspberries - I never got enough of them. When I moved to Pennsylvania I learned that there were acres of them nearby.

The great day came. I marched the family down the long rows, and we picked raspberries. We ate raspberries and canned raspberries. All that winter we ate raspberries and next summer we picked and ate raspberries, and we still eat an occasional raspberry.

But not so with the fruit from the tree of life. No one will ever tire of that fruit for there are twelve different kinds and they ripen at various times.

Healing in the Leaves

"**The leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations.**" Father places a stick on the coals and opens the draft. For years the carbon in that wood and the oxygen in the air were content to live apart. But when the wood touches the coals, the temperature is raised and Mr. Carbon and Miss Oxygen decide on matrimony and, clasping hands, they trip merrily up the chimney as carbon dioxide.

The same thing takes place in the body. Carbon enters the body through the food we eat. Oxygen enters through the lungs and is carried to the uttermost parts of the body by the blood. There metabolism takes place as carbon and oxygen unite and leave the lungs as carbon dioxide. An unventilated room soon becomes foul and unhealthy, and so might the outdoor air, as thousands of fires and millions of humans and billions of animals continue to throw off carbon dioxide gas.

But look to the wooded hills from whence cometh thy health, for there are millions of trees and billions of leaves and under each leaf are countless holes, and each hole is breathing in carbon dioxide and exhaling oxygen. And so it goes; men breathing in oxygen and breathing out carbon dioxide, and the leaves breathing in carbon dioxide and out oxygen.

Why does the tired city-dweller find rest among the trees? Do not the leaves purify the air he breathes and heal his weary body?

May the writer and reader of these notes pluck fruit from that tree; bask in its glorious shade; drink from that crystal fountain, and fall together upon our faces before the throne and render glory and honor and thanks to Our Lord, who has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

The Morning Star

"**He that overcometh . . . I will give him the morning star.**" To what glory and honor this crown may point, I do not know. They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever. Thus to receive the morning star must point to honor that is honor indeed.

We look at a Sears Roebuck catalogue. This dress is worn by a movie star; that coat is modeled

after Hollywood. And so it goes, even the children must eat their breakfast food to find Shirley Temple's picture at the bottom of the dish. The idol of America is the movie star, and at this moment there are hundreds of foolish mothers and thousands of silly girls with but one ambition.

Money is raised; a trip is taken. They stand in long lines and wait for long hours to pass before the employment window. Everything must be done to win the prize; nothing must stand in the way, even at the risk of being dumped out the back door of Hollywood in disgrace. And all of this in quest of that illusive thing called a Movie Star.

If girls will fight to win such a prize; if they will pay so fearful a price for so slim a chance; if they will mortgage all that life holds dear to win the Movie Star - With what consecration and steadfastness of purpose should the child of GOD set his face toward the goal to win that glorious and lasting prize - the Morning Star.

More Names

When Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist, he had to introduce himself and tell where he was from. "**I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God.**" But not so with the overcomer prince. He may go to some far distant orb, there to bring a message to some strange and unknown creation, but he will need no introduction. They will immediately recognize him as a trusted and honored messenger from their great GOD and with a palace in that far famed city, the New Jerusalem. For "**him that overcometh... 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.**"

Looking back through the years, I see a little Ford jostling along that long Indiana road to the big city some twenty miles away. There we entered a jewelry store and I bought a gold ring and in that ring I had inscribed her '**new name.**' All these years wherever she has gone she has been known by my name.

How the chords of joy will vibrate on that glad day, when the heavenly bridegroom will fulfill His promise and "**will write upon him my new name.**"

Pillars

"**Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.**"

When Paul went to Jerusalem, he met "**James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars**" (Galatians 2:9). And how many a pastor can thank his GOD for those pillars in the local church. Some man or woman upon whom he can depend; whom he can trust, and who will help him bear the burden of the church.

Let us look to the political realm to see men vying with one another when the president is to select his cabinet, or the king his counsellors. What an honor to be a pillar in the government of the United States, or a trusted man upon whom the king can depend. But these high honors of earth are small indeed when compared with those of a heavenly court. Here the term may end in

a few short years, but over there they "**go no more out**" but retain that high honor for the ceaseless ages or eternity.

Last That are First

But do not I hear a sigh of disappointment? Is there not a child of GOD who would be a candidate for that glad day but who is not a pillar in the local church? He holds no office and is never asked to lead in public prayer. If so, let him take heart, for "**Many that are first shall be last; and the last first**" (Mark 10:31).

Many of those who are first in the local church; those who hold office and are high in administration of affairs, will be last up there. And what godly pastor but can point to some humble soul in his congregation who has none of these honors here, but will sometime stand among the high and holy ones and be a pillar in the temple of his GOD.

Little do some of these meek and lowly ones realize the strength their presence means to their pastor as they faithfully listen and pray as he gives forth the word of life.

These men in Jerusalem "**seemed**" to be pillars.

And what pastor but can testify to the truth of that word "**seemed!**" There are those in the church who because of their office and position can well be regarded as pillars. But when the pastor needs a friend; when he most needs their strength and support, lo, he finds them as Israel found Egypt, merely a "**broken reed,**" weak and of no account. Yea, it may even be that if he leans upon them they "**will go into his hand, and pierce it**" (Isaiah 36:6), and leave him wounded, perplexed and almost in despair.

Winning the Prize

We have done a strange thing. We have held out high honors to the overcomer. but have not told how to reach that high degree.

But is there a child of GOD who is a candidate for that rare glory, who does not already know how to reach its glorious heights? Let him study his Bible and obey it fully; let him hunger and thirst after righteousness and he shall be filled: let him will to do the will of GOD and he shall know what is right; let him present his body a living sacrifice; let him lay aside every weight and run with patience the race that is set before him; let him seek the will of GOD as his chiefest joy, and his position is secure, he will sometime hear those thrilling words, "**Well done... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.**"

~ end of chapter - 2 and 3 (combined) ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
