***Reversionism, No. 2

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-070***

Today we continue with the subject that we began last time. This is a special on the tragedy of reversion, segment number two.

Because everyone comes into the Christian life with an old sin nature, the believer's life consists of spiritual defeats as well as victories. It would be a great mistake to think that when you come into the Christian life, it's all on the upside. That is not true. There's potentially great downside to the Christian life. There doesn't have to be, but that is the nature of the potential of the world; the sin nature; and, the devil who influences us. The problem is that, at the point of salvation, we are devoid of divine viewpoint frame of reference in our thinking. We don't think like God. We don't have any inclinations in that direction. We are completely ignorant of Scripture. We have nothing to guide us, so we are a total blank, and that is a very big problem right off the bat. We know about salvation. We know that doctrine. We know how to be born-again, and that's all we know.

This is why it's a great tragedy when somebody who is famous in life, maybe in an entertainment world, or in the world of athletics, or even in the world of business becomes a Christian, and the first thing people do is to take this person around to give their testimony and to be a voice for Christianity. Well, those people are the worst possible people to talk about the things of the Lord as you can imagine. They have minds that are totally devoid of divine viewpoint. They barely know how to get into the Christian life, and that's all they have – salvation. And they can maybe say a few things about that, but that's as far as they can go.

It is a principle of the Word of God that the most important thing in life, first and foremost, is to grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And that means to get a great deal of doctrinal instruction as a foundation for your thinking. In the meantime, we should be comparatively silent, and not demonstrate our lack of divine viewpoint orientation, which those people generally are very capable of doing. We have minds which indeed, instead of being filled with God's thinking, are filled and controlled by the human viewpoint of Satan's world organization.

If there's anything we see in summer camp, it's the uphill fight for kids who are growing up in a society where human viewpoint and the world of Satan is what dominates the thinking of people. And they have to stop and think. And we can see it. One of the Bible teachers said, "You could see it on their faces in Bible class when this was pointed out." Everything the people around you think: your friends; the people on the public entertainment; and, what you see on TV, those people are all wrong. They're the enemies of God, and you'll be just like them. And you'll end up just down at their level unless something dramatic changes in your mind. And the point was that this Bible class that we're in is one of the ways of making that change. You parents understand that. You know that natural inclination of the sin nature, and the constant correction that that takes in the lives of your children.

So, the first foremost duty of the Christian life is to flush out the human viewpoint (which the Bible calls "doctrine of demons"), and to replace it with divine viewpoint, which the Bible calls "doctrine."

**The Grace System of Perception**

Now, God has provided us a way to do this. He has given us the means for this to be accomplished. And this is an extensive study in itself. All I can do is say the word, and that's all we can do now: The great system of perception is a provision that God has made. It begins with the pulpit, with the gift of the pastor-teacher, and right on down to the whole local church structure. You will not go very far in a Christian life, in depth, and have great hopes for your children if that is not the kind of instruction you have. Furthermore, the principle of being in temporal fellowship with God the Father enables you to walk the godly life.

Christians who are under God's system for building spiritual maturity may actually continue growing to what James calls a super-abounding grace life. We call it super-grace. This must be maintained by regular feeding upon the Word of God, and the use of the technique of confessing our known sins to God the Father. That is important. It is just as important to know how to confess your sins as it is to be saved in the first place.

Now, since a Christian is under the constant attack of Satan in the angelic warfare, the believer is always a potential spiritual casualty if he is not on the defensive as the Word of God says. Paul makes it so clear: "Let him that thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." You are never at the point in the Christian life where you are safe and secure. And it never ceases to amaze me what Christians will do: Christians that I would expect better of; Christians who should know better; and, Christians who are completely capable of doing better. But instead, they go the low road. And I know what's happening. It is the fact that the soul has not been nurtured upon the Word of God.

I'll guarantee you, in a week of summer camp, if you did not eat those delicious gourmet meals that those cooks prepare up there, you'd become a frazzle. You'd become a whisper of your former self. Now, for some of you, that may be attractive. You may like to be more of a whisper than what you are now. But starving takes you down. It doesn't go anywhere. You have to have the capacity of strength spiritually, as you do in natural food.

So, what is the ultimate issue in the Christian life? What do you want to do? Do you want a life that's focused on God? You want a life that is focused on His will? Do you want a life that is his mission for you? Do you want a life where He is your role model for godly living? And whether you're younger or old, you have to decide whom you are going to imitate.

I can't believe how our parents get caught up with the athletic world, for example. Here's some big star on a football team. The guy's an unskilled laborer. That's all he is. He's just an unskilled laborer. He was born, however, with a genetic structure of being able to catch a ball, usually a pigskin filled with air. He manages to catch that, and then he has a great ability of flexibility and agility to elude people who are trying to take it away from him. And a lot of people find that great fun to watch, and pay huge sums of money to see this guy, an unskilled laborer, who has a genetic ability to grab hold of a ball, and run, and elude all the people who are trying to take it away from him. And their whole lives will be spent watching somebody do that. And yet, what is this person as a role model? That's the word they use. He may be a druggie. He may be an immoral person. He may be a lowlife type. And this is our role model?

You can see what we're up against. And we have to fight this in camp. We have to tell our kids that these people are nothing. But it's hard for them, because they're kids, and everybody around them says, "These are people who are something." No, they're nothing. It is Christ who is something. And you have to decide whether you're going to follow the godly character of the Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest Man that ever lived on the face of the earth, rather than some stupid wimp who doesn't know how to put a nut on a bolt.

**Reversionism**

Throughout human history, there have been believers who grew very close, and became very dear to God, because He became their whole life. When we're talking about reversionism, we're talking about going down from a great walk with God to nothing, or to never get up to where you have a real relationship with God.

**Enoch**

Here are a few of them. How about Enoch? Here's the dawn of human history. Back in the book of Genesis 5, these great patriarchs are being described. We get to Genesis 5:21, and we read, "And Enoch lived 65 years and became the father of Methuselah." Methuselah, you may remember, was the longest recorded lifespan in history: 969 old. And the father of Methuselah was Enoch. Now, it was very interesting that Enoch was a very special man with God. He was very close to God. His whole life was God. His whole life was nothing compared to what was going on around him – a society that ended up in the flood. And I think it is interesting that Enoch, as a father, had such great influence upon Methuselah, because Methuselah's name means "when he is gone, it shall come." And it was the symbol that God gave that when Methuselah is gone, what was going to come was the flood that was going to wipe out all the humanity that had degenerated up to that point in a few generations from Adam.

Now, how did Methuselah become that kind of a boy, and that kind of a man? Because he had a father who was pointing him to the real people to imitate, and to the real walk with God. And Methuselah, you may remember: when I said this recently, somebody was surprised. They hadn't realized that Methuselah died a week before the flood began. So, it was exactly the way his name said: "When he's gone, the flood comes."

So here's Enoch. Genesis 5:22 says, "And Enoch walked with God 300 years." Now these people are living up to almost 1,000 years: "He walked with God for 300 years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So, all the days of Enoch were 365 years. And Enoch walked with God. And he was not, for God took him." This man was so dear to God. This man was so close in walking with God as his role model that he never got to live more than 365 years. And God said, "Enoch, you don't belong on earth. You're the kind of a man that belongs in My heaven now. Come on up here." And Enoch never died. He went to heaven alive.

And Hebrews 11:5 looks back to that event, where the writer says, "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death. And he was not found because God took him, for he obtained the witness that, before his being taken up, he was pleasing to God." Now that's what it's all about.

Now, you can either be pleasing to God, or you can be a stumbled bum reversionist. Now when I say "pleasing to God," and when the Scriptures say "pleasing to God," it not only means a moral life. That's true. This is not to be interpreted as something as real lowlife type. It's to be pleasing to God in all those sophisticated ways that Christians are unpleasing to God. These are Christians that we respect, and Christians that we esteem, but they are Christians who cannot rise to the full capacity of spiritual maturity, and all that that entails. But Enoch did.

Now, what did Enoch lose because he didn't have a long life; because he didn't have a great deal of wealth; and, because he didn't have a great deal of reputation and esteem? He lost nothing. What a medal of honor that man is wearing in heaven now.

**Noah**

How about Noah in Genesis 6? Noah was in the midst of a horrible age of evil. Genesis 6:8-9: "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time. Noah walked with God." Enoch was pleasing to God. Noah walked with God. What a great thing to be able to have said about you. And when it says he was "blameless" here, it means that he was "complete." He was a man who was born-again. It didn't mean that he was sinless. You are blameless when, in spite of sin, you confess it, and correct it. Then you are blameless with God. You are not blameless when you are a Christian who is in sin, and you don't correct it – when you fall short of what you should be, and could be, and don't make appropriate correction.

What did Noah do? Well, he refused to live the corrupt lifestyle of his age. Instead, he preached righteousness. He didn't go along with the evil of his age. Notice that 2 Peter 2:5 says, "And did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly." Now, that must have been very hard for Noah. Everybody's making fun of him. But for 120 years, he's right, and they're wrong, and he lets them know it.

**Job**

Then here's probably the first book of the Bible ever written – one of the oldest patriarchs we have a record of: Job. How about his example? In Job 1:20, Job has had everything stripped from him – stripped down of his great wealth. He was an enormously wealthy man. Now he's got nothing. He lost all seven of his children. And his wife is giving him her wifely advice. Because she has not risen to the capacity that her husband has, she is telling him how to do things. And she's so pleased with herself. She says, "Curse God to his face, Job. Just curse him for what he's done to you, and forget it." And he calls her a foolish woman. Then, Job 1:20-21 says, "Then Job arose and tore his robe, and shaved his head, and fell to the ground, and worshiped God. He expressed his grief, and worshiped God and said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' Through all this, Job did not sin nor blame God." Isn't that something?

Here was somebody who was not a revisionist. He was not going to go backwards in the life to which he'd been called. He was going to live it to its maximum level.

**Abraham**

Then there was Abraham in Genesis 12. Here's this pagan. Somehow, suddenly, in the Great Tigris/Euphrates River culture, and God speaks to this man, and he says, "I want you to trust me. I am the Creator God." And Abraham does. And from then on, Abraham was God's man. He was nobody else's man. He refused to fail to do anything that God asked him to do, including proceeding to offer his own son in sacrifice. Genesis 12:1-2: "Now the Lord said to Abram, go forth from your country, from your relatives, from your father's house, to the land which I will show you, and I'll make you a great nation. I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed." And that blessing, of course, was through Christ as Savior.

This man obeyed the call. He didn't know where on earth he was going. He went out. In fact, that's the observation that the book of Hebrews makes about him. Hebrews 11:8 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and he went out, not knowing where he was going." Now that's what faith is all about: moving out; doing what you should do; and, not knowing where you're going, but trusting God.

**Joseph**

Then, of course, there was Joseph, in Genesis 39. He was mistreated by his brothers and rebuked by his parents for the dreams which God had given him. Genesis 39:7-9: "And it came about, after these events, that his master's wife (Potiphar's wife) looked at Joseph with desire and said, 'Lie with me. But he refused, and said to his master's wife, behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house. He has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. Now, how could I do this great evil and sin against God?'" What a horrible invitation. And yet, Joseph says, "No, I'm the friend of God."

James 4:4 says, "If you're the "friend of the world, you're the enemy of God." And Joseph understood that. He said, I don't want to be the friend of the world. I want to be the friend of God. So, he refused the fashion of the world because he was a devoted follower of God.

**Moses**

Then, of course, there was Moses – a man who went from nothing to great wealth and to royalty itself. He was picked up by the Pharaoh's daughter, and she chose to make him her particular child. And when he grew up, and he was grown, we're told that he refused to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a little season. Instead, he stuck with the people of God. He refused their attractions. This is specifically pointed out to us in the book of Hebrews chapter 11, in that list of famous people. Hebrews 11:24-26 "By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure the ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking for a reward." He was looking for a reward? Not on earth. Eternal. That's our problem – not looking for the rewards that are eternal: "And as with Abraham, who was called the friend of God." What an honorable title! So, here Moses said, I'm going to be God's friend. I will not be the friend of the world.

**King David**

Then there was King David. He was another man who understood where the real role models in life were to be found. 1 Samuel 13:13-14: "And Samuel said to Saul, 'You have acted foolishly as Israel's first king. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God which He commanded you. For now, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for himself a man after His Own Heart." What an honorable title that is! David was a man after God's Own Heart – after God's Own Thinking. That's what heart means: "And the Lord has appointed him as ruler over his people because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you to do." So, Saul, who could have had it all, lost it all.

**The Apostle Paul**

Then, in the New Testament, we have to think of the apostle Paul as a great example of a man who said, "I'm going with God, and He is going to be my whole life." Reversionism was not for the apostle Paul. In Galatians 1:14, Paul writes, "And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries, among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions." Here he points out the fact that he was head and shoulders above his peers as an example in religious devotion.

It is always sad when a young person, instead of being head and shoulders above, is way under other people in his example of the life of a Christian. Here was Paul. He said, "When I was young, I was an example to my contemporaries of my peer group. The rest of the kids looked up to me because I was God's friend." In Acts 22:3, Paul says, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the Law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you are all today."

**The 12 Apostles**

And then there were the 12 apostles. But repeatedly we see that three of them were really close to Jesus: Peter; James; and, John. To them, nothing in life mattered. Nothing in life counted for anything: only to be God's men.

So, the great hazard of the Christian life is something that saints have always faced over the centuries – this business of spiritual reversionism. Even Peter fell into this when he denied that he was one of the Lord's people. And certainly Ananias and Sapphira did that in the early church because of their greed for material things, and their willingness to lie to God, and to the congregation. Then there was John Mark who was willing to desert in the midst of the spiritual battle on the missionary tours. And then there was Demas who fell into reversion because he fell in love with the great life of Thessalonica, and shoved off there for the good life. And there were many others.

These people all lost touch with reality in their degenerate spiritual condition. Their real values were gone. The old sin nature took charge. They lived a good life, but they had nothing when it was over. They thought very highly of themselves, but God had a very low estimate of them.

Now, we have been using, as a classic example of this degenerative potential of Christians, the letter to the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:14-20. We have seen that this church, this group of believers, was condemned by Jesus Christ because of their carnal status. They were extremely materially well-off (very rich people), but totally bankrupt spiritually. They had great indifference toward God, and He was disgusted by them. They thought that they were favored by God because of what they possessed. But instead, God said, "I don't favor you at all. What you are is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind. And you have a naked condition spiritually.

So that's where we came: down to Revelation 3:18. Now, the question is: how does one get back out of this terrible valley of spiritual degeneration? And verse 18 begins the process of recovery. Jesus said to this church, and again I remind you, this is a group of believers. This is not speaking to unsaved people. This whole passage is often distorted by applying it to unsaved people: "I advise you." Here is a constant appeal indicated from the Lord Jesus Christ. And the very fact that He advises them indicates that they can change the condition into which they fallen spiritually: "I advise you to buy from Me." Here he is telling them to purchase something from Him immediately that they need. And the way you buy what they needed, which was spiritual insight, is through that grace system of perception. Again, I can't go through that again here, but it was that system which God has given by which, no matter what your IQ is, you can rise to the highest levels of biblical understanding.

1 Corinthians 2:16 says that: "The Bible is "the mind of Christ." So, what these people need to have is to have God's thinking. That's where they've deviated and gotten themselves in trouble.

Now, the Laodiceans were choosing all kinds of bargains. They were big business people, and they enjoyed being prosperous, and they took great pride in their prosperity. That's why, when they had that terrible earthquake in Laodicea, and the emperor said, "I'll help you rebuild the city," they were very proud to say, "Your majesty, we don't need your help. We are a wealthy people. We'll rebuild the city ourselves." And they did. The Laodiceans were, therefore, proud of their prosperity, but they were in total spiritual declension (decline). What is being told here to these people is the same as the Isaiah 55:1 passage in the Old Testament that, to the Jews who in their reversion, the prophet Isaiah said, "Ho, everyone who thirsts come to the waters. And you who have no money: come; buy; and, eat. Come buy wine and milk without money and without cost." How can you do that? Well, he's talking about spiritual things, for which all you need is a teacher, and a mind willing to learn.

**Nakedness**

So, he tells them to come, and through the study of the Word of God is the implication of the analogy, that you may become rich, or that you may become somebody who is a plutocrat, so to speak: "That you may become rich, and that you may enjoy white garment." The white garment has to do with righteousness – godly living. You may clothe yourselves with that, and the shame of their nakedness might be removed from them.

So, instead of the terrible condition that they're in, neither hot nor cold, and that they are wretched: "I would advise you to buy from Me." What He asks them to buy is gold. Gold in the Bible is a symbol of the glory of God, and therefore, the analogy here is: come and buy the glory of God. And that goal which is refined by fire, means that it's tested. Whatever doctrine says – that will keep you in good stead: "This has been refined by the fires and testing of experience in order that you may become rich;" that is, so that you may have real wealth, which is spiritual wealth. It is the duty, of course, of the pastor-teacher to constantly stress that this is where your real wealth is. The Bible says: "Living with contentment, with such things as you have. That is great wealth. That is great riches. And the appeal there is to something more than what you're going to leave behind when someday you die.

So, the Christian with spiritual wealth is the one who is really rich. And that spiritual richness also reflects itself in physical condition, so that life is a prosperity on all levels.

The white garment of verse 18 is that symbol of the righteousness of godly living. This is not the righteousness of salvation. They already have that.

In Laodicea, they were famous for a black wool cloth. People bought it from all over the world. It was shipped out. It was very popular all over the empire. This is in contrast to the white garment that Christ will give those who have this wealthy outward adornment. This is so that you may be clothed. You may have wrapped around you something to hide your nakedness. And what is the nakedness? The nakedness is what he's been talking about. It is the fact of your own reversion. And never forget that people will see your nakedness spiritually. One of the first signs of nakedness is that people don't show up in church. They're erratic. That's one of the first signs that they've become spiritually naked, because now they are no longer feeding upon the Word of God. They are at a point of certain arrogance where they think they're making it, or they have degenerated to where they're willing to feed on trivialities; inspiration; and, challenge, rather than the real things of the Word of God.

This nakedness is revealed to discerning Christian eyes in a variety of ways. So, He says, "I don't want to see you in that condition, because you should be ashamed of yourself for people to see that you have that kind of nakedness."

Another point of nakedness is the fact that somebody who used to have a great testimony no longer has it. The Lord's Supper night comes around, and people stand up, and our hearts would be blessed by what they say. But you have nothing to say anymore. They would be very devoted workers. If something needed to be done, they were there. They had the capacity. You could count on them. Suddenly, their nakedness is shown by the fact that they're no longer there serving. They've got a problem. They now are preoccupied in other places. This is a shameful condition for a Christian to have.

So, He said, "We're going to cover this up. And the problem is your perspective." So He said, "I want you to get some eye salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see." Now, to fully appreciate this analogy, it is necessary for me to tell you that Laodicea was famous in medicine in the ancient world for an eye salve that they had developed. It was in a powdered form, and they would mix it with grease, and they would rub it on the eyes, or they would put it in water and they would flush the eyes out. There were a great deal of eye problems in the ancient world for a variety of reasons. In fact, some of the things that the apostle Paul says, like when he says here: "You see what large handwriting I've used to sign my name at the end of this book as this letter to you" suggests that he had some kind of eye problems. But Laodicea because, as I've already mentioned, had this great medical center, one of their specialties was taking care of eyes. So, people could relate to this immediately. They know about good eyesight. And here, they're being told, "Get the salve." And what is the salve? It's the Word of God again. Get the Word of God as your spectacles, then you'll be able to see accurately. And rub this on. In the Greek language, this indicates that this is the purpose of God – that we rub the Word of God on our eyes to see things God's way.

Then in Revelations 3:19, He makes this dramatic appeal, "Those whom I love." And the word "love" here is the Greek word "phileo" (fil-eh'-o), P H I L E O. You may remember that that's the word for emotion. God says, "Those that I get really enthusiastically emotional about; those whom I love; and those who are really very dear to Me, I reprove." This is a legal word. This is a word that a judge uses in judging a case – those that I really get enthusiastic about. Why would God get enthusiastic about some believers and not others? Because they're like that list of people we started with today, whose whole life is God. That's it. There's nothing in life but God. Everything revolves around being God's man or God's woman. They have nothing in life that's of significance to them. What they have in life is only significant in being used to be God's man or to be God's woman.

When you get an Enoch like that, God takes him to heaven. And when you get a Noah like that, He preserves him through disasters that are unthinkable and unimaginable.

Here, "Those that I get really enthusiastic about," God says, "in My love, I will reprove you. I'll let you know that you're out of line." And then He says, "I will discipline you." And this particular Greek word means "to teach you:" "I will spank you, I will discipline you. I will alert you to what you're doing."

Now, that is the great tragedy in reversionism – that it does not happen overnight. It begins by a little step down; a little step down; and, a little step down, and God jerks your chain and says, "Wait a minute." And He brings some biblical principle to your mind, and you realize that you're stepping out of bounds, and you ignore it. Then it becomes easier to go the next step. But He says, "I'm going to keep reproving you. I'm going to keep disciplining you. I'm going to keep calling you back to what you should be zealous for." And what does He want you to be zealous for? "I want you to be zealous for repenting. Therefore, I don't want you to be lukewarm anymore. I don't want you to be cold like an unbeliever. I don't want you to be hot like some charismatic who's out in goony land, completely out of touch with spiritual reality. I want you to be solid in the Word of God. And I want you to be true to Me." There's nothing so terrible as people who should be loyal to one another who are not – people who should be very true to one another, who are not. This can be children who are not true to their parents. This can be husbands and wives, not true to each other. People who are not true to their families. That kind of disloyalty is offensive, even to unbelievers.

So, the Lord says, "I want you to be zealous for Me and for righteousness, and therefore I want you to repent." This Greek word is "metanoeo" (met-an-o-eh'-o), M E T A N O E O means to change your mind, and to start the recovery back up. These people have gone all the way down in the valley of reversionism. They are, as God says, "totally disgusting to Him." Now He is told him, "Confess; admit; and, recognize where you are – that you deviated from the Word of God. You haven't been feeding upon the Word of God. And you didn't know how to handle your prosperity." That's one of the great tragedies of the Christian life. Many Christians know how to handle their poverty, but their prosperity eats them up. They're not able to remain stable with that. And that's what happened to Laodicea. When they were poor people, they were great people. Now, when they had prosperity, and they could have been greater people, then they fell by the wayside. So, the recovery process begins by changing your mind; admitting what they have done; recognizing their condition; and, starting back up.

Then we come to Revelations 3:20 to sum it all up: "Behold." This is a word that is significant in the Greek language. It looks like this, "idou" (id-oo'), I D O U. Anytime you see that in the Greek Bible, it's a signal that something very important is about to be said. So, I can tell you that right here, in verse 20, this "idou" tells you that something of great significance is about to come to pass. It happens to be as a command. So, God is saying, "Pay attention now. I'm going to tell you something – one of those very important things that you should never forget." It really is a way of saying, "Wake up." And it is addressed to these Christians who are in Laodicea in their deep reversionism.

"I stand." Here you have the picture of Jesus Christ standing. This word looks like this in the Greek Bible: "histemi" (his'-tay-mee) H I S T E M I. "Histemi" means "to stand at the door." But in the Greek language, it is in a tense which indicates that Jesus Christ is standing, and standing, and standing. He started standing a long time ago at the door of your heart. He started when you went out of bounds spiritually – when you fractured your fellowship with Him. Right away, He stands at the door and says, "Woo, woo, wait a minute." And he knocks: "Are you in there?" And the perfect tense beautifully says that he's staying, and staying, and staying. He's not going to walk off and abandon you. But here you are – out of fellowship. He's standing there, and he's actively appealing to you to do something: to open the door. "Behold, I stand at the door." Here the heart of the reversionist Christian is pictured as a door. Jesus Christ has been denied the place of temporal fellowship.

The picture is this: There is a large circle. That represents your salvation. There's an inner smaller circle. That represents your walk with God. We call this outer circle eternal fellowship. That's a relationship with God. We call this inner circle temporal fellowship. It's our experience with God day-by-day. And what he is talking about is that the Christian who, when he trusts in Christ as savior, is immediately put into the inner circle of fellowship with God. You are the apple of his eye. But when you sin, then you step out of that inner circle into this outer circle of carnality. You never step out of the outer circle. You never go all the way out. But what you are doing here, when you are in the inner circle, is producing divine good works, and you're living a godly life. Ephesians 2:10 and 1 Timothy 4:7 describe that.

However, when you're in this carnality circle, all you're kicking out is human good and sins, and all of that is evil. Isaiah 64:6 says, "It's filthy rags." Mark 7:21-23 describe terrible things that a Christian can do, and it all spews out of this carnality circle. Now, here is where you are, and Jesus is saying, "I want to come in. I want you to come in here with Me, into that inner circle where you are really My person. You're My boy. You're My girl. You're My Man. You're My woman."



So, this is the picture of Christ standing, and He's knocking at that heart's (mind) door, asking that believer to pay attention. Reversion has hardened him against the Lord. And Christ is asking to be welcomed back into the life. He is knocking. He is appealing in various ways. Sometimes it is by the pressure of discipline. Sometimes it is by one thing or another that comes into your life unexpectedly. To all of this, you should wake up and say, "Hey, He's telling me something." And when we confess, as per 1 John 1:9, we come right back into that inner circle. This is where you are as a spiritual Christian. This is where you are led by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, He says in Revelations 3:20, "If anyone hears My voice." Now, in the Greek Bible, this "if" is third-class condition. As most of you know, that means: maybe you will; and, maybe you won't. There are four kinds of "ifs" in the New Testament. You have to know which one each one is. This is third-class: "If anyone's going to hear." And He means to change your mind about the Word of God. You're going to hear His voice, and you will then decide to open the door. That's a potential thing that you may do. How do you open the door? You confess, and say, "I was wrong. That was a terribly immoral thing I did. I should have done that. I could have done that. I refused to do that." Whatever it is, you get back on track with God the Father. You get out of this outer circle, and you get back into the inner circle where you're walking with God.

This is a terrible place to be. There's nothing but trouble out there. The sin nature controls, and that's no good. You are a carnal Christian. That's no good. A spiritual Christian is where you want to be. That's where life is really great.

So, if you will open that door by confession, then what will Jesus do? "I'll come in to him." What He does is that He forgives immediately; He forgets; and He walks right back into your life. And you and God your Father are on good terms.

And then He says, "I will dying with you." When you sit down and eat a meal together with a person, it's a sign of great personal fellowship. It's a relationship. It's a great expression of camaraderie.

Now, don't tell me that it's not a matter of great madness for any Christian to be out of touch with divine viewpoint without the application of the Word of God when there is nothing but disaster to be out there. Here is Christ asking you to come back into fellowship. Why would you want to stay out there in the world? This is where the world wants to be, and the consequence is total delusion. Here's where the world is going. 1 Thessalonians 5:3: "While they're saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." You don't have to consult anybody to know that Israel is wrong in thinking that it can gain peace for itself by exchanging part of its land. How do you know that? Because you know doctrine. You know that peace is not going to come to Israel. And the Word of God says that about the time they think they've made it, the antichrist is going to come in and crush them.

So, when you have the Word of God, you're head and shoulders above everybody. You are the smart one – not the yo-yos out there who are trying to figure it out. And it all comes from being in fellowship, not in reversionism.

There's also Matthew 24:22. Here's what it is to stay out of touch with God. And you must decide whether that's the lifestyle you want: "Jesus said, 'Unless those days had been cut short, no life would've been saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days shall be cut short." What's He talking about? Well, He's talking about the tribulation – that seven years left of Daniel's history that was never fulfilled. Things are going to become so bad, and people are going to be dying so quickly, that, in three-and-a-half years, half the world's population, the Bible says, will die. That means 3 billion people on current status will be gone in three-and-a-half years. And He says, the things that will be happening will be so terrible that there won't be anybody left alive unless that time is cut short, and Christ returns. That's what it means to be in reversionism – this kind of light.

That's where the world is headed with all of its sophistication – all of these role models that they hold out there. Why would you want to be enthusiastic for that?

Well, in verse 21, we tie it up. Here's the reward. Revelation 3:21: If you say, "I've had enough of this walking out of fellowship, and I've had enough of this reversionism," Jesus says, "I'll open the door." And in verse 21, He says, "He who overcomes." This is a technical phrase in the Bible for the person who is born-again: "He who overcomes, I will grant him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father on His throne." How did Jesus overcome? By becoming saved? No, He overcame because He already was a believer, and He stayed that way. And you are a believer. And to act like that means that He will permit you to share ruling authority in the millennium.

I was talking to the boys around the campfire. I told them, "We're coming down four years to the end, probably, of just about 6,000 years of human history. God works with the number seven." Several of them shouted out, "That's the perfect number – seven." They knew exactly what we were talking about. And I said, "Wouldn't it be interesting if the next 1,000 years (that next millennium) is the millennium that the Bible talks about where Christ is going to be the ruler of all the people on the face of the earth, and all nations? And what do you think you're going to be doing, boys?" And I told them, "What you're going to be doing is running the kingdom. Some of you people sitting around this campfire are going to be the authorities who are going to be ruling. Some of you are going to be ruling cities." I said, "Anybody got a choice?" And they started shouting out: "Chicago, New York, Miami." One guy wants to go to Hawaii. I said, "Does anybody want to be in charge of Lake Murray?" No. They seemed to have had their fill of Lake Murray. But they got the picture.

You are going to share a reigning authority with Jesus Christ. For doing what? For being His friend. For God being able to look at you like he did at David, and say, "You are the apple of My eye." He looked at Abraham and He said, "He was called a friend of God." He looked at Enoch and said, "I want you up here in My heaven. You don't belong on this earth. You're too good a guy." That is because God is everything: "He who overcomes, I'll grant him to sit with Me on My throne as I also overcame, and I sat down with My Father on His throne." Jesus is now not on His throne, of course. He is sharing His Father's throne in heaven. His throne is the one announced when He was born to Mary – the throne of the kingdom of David, which is on this earth. And that's coming.

Then we have the comforting of Revelations 3:22. No matter how far down you go, you can go back up: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." You have an ear. Go positive. Pay attention. And the information that you'll receive in the Word of God will take you right back to the top of super-grace living.

God, our Father, we are grateful to You for the fact that Your hand has been so graciously upon us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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