***Restoration

RV08-02***

Please turn in your Bibles to Revelation 2. We're going to finish the letter to the Ephesians, the first of these seven letters which we have in the opening part of Revelation. These seven letters represent the church here on earth during the period from the day of Pentecost until the rapture. After we complete Revelation 3, which concludes these seven letters to seven actual churches that existed in Asia Minor at the time, you will not find the church again in the picture. The rapture will have taken place, and the tribulation period begins here upon the earth.

So we are now looking at the first of these seven letters, all of which give us instruction concerning church problems today, and how we should cope with them. Each of these churches represents a problem that already existed right there in the first century A.D. These were problems that existed with churches and with individual believers within those churches.

**Remember**

This brings us to Revelation 2:5. Here we have the solution which the Lord Jesus Christ demands of the Ephesian congregation in dealing with this problem of drifting off from its original mental attitude of "agape" love. The verse begins with the word, "Remember." "Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen." The word "remember" is the Greek word "mnemoneuo." It means "to call to mind." It is in the present tense which means that this is to be their constant frame of reference. It is in the active voice. The Ephesian Christians themselves must do the recalling. It is in the imperative mood which indicates that it is a divine command from the Lord Jesus Christ. The word, "therefore," is the Greek word "oun." It expresses the next thing which they must do – a sequence of events. The next thing they must do in dealing with the Lord is to call to memory something about their past.

So he says, "Remember, therefore, from where." The words "from where" are the Greek adverb "pothen." It means "from whence" they have fallen. That is, the relaxed mental attitude which once characterized them: "From where you have fallen:" The word "fallen" is "pipto." The word here refers to their spiritual reversionism. It is in the perfect tense which means that their reversionism (their backsliding) began somewhere in the past, and is still going on. It is active voice which means that the Ephesians themselves are responsible for letting things break down like this. It is indicative mood. It's a statement of fact.

So the first step of restoration, the Lord indicates to them, is to recall the spirit of mental attitude love which once characterized their local fellowship, and the Christian camaraderie they once enjoyed from whence they have now drifted into carnality.

**Repent**

"Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen, and repent." The word "and" indicates the second step of their restoration. First, they are to remember. The second step is to repent. The word repent is "metanoeo." This word means to change their mind. We would say, "About face." They were to change their mental attitude back to a relaxed mental attitude, and reverse their direction. It's in the aorist tense, which means the specific point of time when they decided to do this. It's in the active voice, which means that the individual Ephesian Christian must make this move. Again, it is imperative, a divine command from the Lord Jesus Christ, indicating that this is a matter of such serious consequence that it is not optional. When our mental attitude is sinful, we know it, and we can change it.

**A New Lifestyle**

Then He adds the third step of their action when He says, "Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen, and repent." And then the third step: "And do the first works." The word "and" indicates the addition now of restoration of their relaxed mental attitude to full capacity. The word "do" is "poieo." It means "to adopt a way of living." It is in the aorist tense. It is looking at the new lifestyle as a whole. It is active voice again. The Ephesians have to do it. And once more we have that imperative mood. It's a divine command of Jesus Christ: "Do right." And this is specifically by doing the first works. That is the "deeds," the "ergon." This means the first practices that were characteristic of them in relationship to this mental attitude. It is a call for a return to a conduct resulting from an established, relaxed mental attitude in their souls. The weakening of their "agape" love was evidenced by their evil acts. The previous two steps of the divine restoration will result in acts commensurate with "agape" love.

If they don't do this, the rest of the verse brings us to threatened discipline. The Lord says, "Or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your lamp stand out of its place, except that you repent." "Or else" means "but if not," and "repent" is understood: "If you do not repent, I will come. The word is "erchomai." It refers here to the arrival of Jesus Christ in exercising judgment on that local church. He is watching. This word is in the present tense. Their current status of things will be that the Lord will come. It's in the present tense in its effect. Here it is a futuristic presence. Actually, it's something that He's going to do in the future. But it is so certain in the future that it's actually put in what is a present tense connotation. Then it's indicative – a statement of fact.

**Removal**

Then He says, "I'm going to come unto you," which is the Ephesian congregation. The word "quickly" is actually not in the Greek Bible. And when He comes, He says that He "Will remove." The word is "kineo." This means "to set in motion." That's where we get our English word "kinetics" – a source of power which is in motion. The word "cinema" also comes from this Greek word "kineo" because it's things that are moving – the moving pictures. The word here means to move the Ephesian local church from its place of ministry; that is, the lamp stand will be extinguished, and the church will cease to exist in that location. The ministry will be discontinued. The word "kineo," for "remove," is in the future tense; that is, if there is no correction by them. It is active voice. Jesus himself will do the removing. It is indicative mood – a statement of fact. What will be removed is their lamp stand, their "luchnia," which is the symbol of that local church in its ministry of divine viewpoint enlightenment. "They will be removed out." The Greek preposition is "ek." It means from within. That is, it refers from the locality of the church: from within the geographic locality in which they exist – the place that they exist. That is the city of Ephesus.

This is going to be done, it says, "Except that you repent." The word "except" is made up of two Greek words: "ean;" and, the negative "me." These words indicate to us that this "if" is a third class condition, which is "maybe you will, and maybe you won't:" "Except that you repent." Maybe they will repent, and maybe they won't. If they do, one thing will happen; and, if they don't, another thing will happen. Of course, the ultimate act that is demanded of them is represented by the word "repent," which is again "metanoeo," which means "to change their minds." This is a mental attitude change which brings them back to a relaxed mental attitude. It's in the aorist tense – the point at which they make that move to change their mind and correct their mental attitude love deficiency. It's active. *They* must do it. It's in the subjunctive mood to indicate that it's potential. They may or they may not do it.

That brings us down to verse 6 where we read: "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans which I also hate." The word "but" is the Greek word "alla." "Alla" is used here in opposition to the negative that you had back up here in verse five, which is translated by the words "or else." "Repent and do the first works:" works that flow from mental attitude love. "Or else:" there is the negative, and that negative is the negative "me." The negative in verse 5 is opposed by this one in verse 6: "But, or else, I'm going to do this." "But" is almost like a word of grace: "While I am threatening to do something very serious to you, I do want to recognize this." And that's the connection between those two. Though the loss of their original relaxed mental attitude is serious, there is a promising thing about them. And He's going to recognize this promising thing about them in spite of the serious defect which is beginning to creep into the congregation.

"But this you have." The word "have" is the Greek word "echo." So this indicates here possession of a certain attitude. It is in the present tense. Therefore, it means that this was constantly true of the people of this congregation. They had a certain attitude that was commonly true of them. It is active voice which means that the people themselves held this attitude. It wasn't just their leaders. It wasn't just on a doctrinal statement that, "This is what we stand for." The people themselves actually had this attitude about them. It is indicative – a statement of fact. The spiritual principle that you see here, and that you should note, is that of being aware of the positive qualities and the positive acts of people who are guilty of doing something wrong: of disloyalty; or, desertion. While we recognize that someone is spiritually in the wrong; someone is breaking a spirit or principle; or, someone is acting in a wrong way, we just wipe them out as if that person did not, at the same time, have qualities which are commendable, and which God appreciates, and which God is even using. In other words, these fractures of weakness do not mean that the person is of no value to God, because all of us have these fractures. And it is devastating if we do not recognize that about ourselves, and expect that kind of grace treatment from others, because we need it. Therefore, we should exercise that grace toward others.

Here is what the Lord is doing. He has put His finger on what can be (and what is) a very serious shortcoming in this church: mental attitude bitterness and ill will developing. He has warned them that it can have the direst consequences for them as a local congregation. But then He turns right around and says, "But I want to recognize that even though this is bad, you do have another mental attitude that I admire. And He's going to point to another attitude of mind that they had, which to Him (to God) was very, very important. They were guilty, and they were already on the road to discipline. Now they were to be restored as far as God was concerned, and not to be destroyed. If we don't recognize that, while people are in error, they still have commendable qualities with the Lord, then we destroy them instead of restoring them.

**Hatred**

The commendable quality is introduced by the word "that." This is the Greek word "hoti" which introduces this commendable quality. This is the finger pointing to that quality to identify it for us. What is this quality? It's a quality of "miseo." That means "hate." This is a word that expresses negative feelings. The use of this word "hatred" in Scripture falls into about three general categories:

1. **Animosity**

Sometimes the bible uses the word "hate" in the sense of animosity. We are most acquainted with that use of the word.

For example, in Luke 6:22, we have it used in this sense of animosity: "Blessed are you when men shall hate you (have an animosity toward you), and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake." The Lord said, "Blessed are you when men shall hate you in terms of category number one: animosity. They will neutralize you. They'll separate from you. They will isolate you. Animosity expresses itself by isolating people by just cutting off contact with them; by just cooling them; by just freezing them; by refusing to have anything to do with them; or, by refusing to include them. That is animosity. It's a basic type of hatred.

You have the same type of hatred expressed in John 3:20. This is another example of it, where we read: "For everyone that does evil hates the light. He neither comes into the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." People who want to do what's wrong want to avoid enlightenment because they have animosity toward enlightenment. When people get into spiritual troubles, and they do not want to really correct their spiritual troubles, they have an animosity – a hatred for the light. And they don't want to hear the enlightenment.

So the word "hatred" is used in the Bible, first of all, in this sense of animosity.

1. **Revulsion**

It is also used in a second sense of revulsion. You have this, for example, in Romans 7:15: "For that which I do, I don't understand. For what I want to do, I don't do. But what I hate, that I do." The apostle Paul here is looking at himself and saying, "I don't understand what it is about me. Here I am, a Christian. The things that I want to do, I don't do as a Christian. The thing I'm propelled to do, I avoid. But the things I hate; the things that revolt me; and, the things I have a revulsion for: those are the things I find myself doing." And he goes on in this chapter and says, "What's wrong? What in the world is this in a human being that would drive him, as a believer, to do the things that revolt him?" Well, the word "hatred" is used sometimes in this sense of revulsion.

You have a good example of this in Jude 23, where we read, "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garments spotted by the flesh." They even hated the clothes that they wore in the process of their evil. You look upon their clothes, and you have a loathing revulsion for the very garments they wore in the process of the act of sin. The second way that the word "hate" is used is in terms of revulsion.

1. **Preference**

Then there's a third way, and that is in terms of the idea of preference. We have this in several places. For example, we have this used in Matthew 6:24 in terms of preference: "No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate (prefer) the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." You have a preference for God, or you have a preference for money.

Luke 14:26: "If any man come to Me and does not hate his father and mother (not prefer his father and mother) and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and his own life, also, he cannot be My disciple. You have to make your choice. If you are going to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, you must prefer Him above all of your human associations and above all of your human relatives. He has to be number one with you. The word "hate" here is used in terms of preference.

You have this in John 12:25: "He that loves his life shall lose it. And he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." He who hates it (prefers life eternal to his life here) is going to have eternal life.

You have a splendid example of this that we're going to come to later in Romans 9:13 relative to Jacob and Esau, where God says, "As it is written, 'Jacob, I have loved, but Esau I have hated.'" Here the expression is, "Jacob I preferred, and Esau I did not prefer." The word "hate" is used in the sense of not preferring.

So when we come to the word "hate," we have it in this word "miseo" in these three meanings: animosity; revulsion; and, preference. You have to apply which one of these is meant in any certain Scripture so that that Scripture really makes sense. Otherwise, sometimes it sounds like the Bible is saying something bad.

Well, here it is used in the second meaning. It is used in terms of revulsion. It is in the present tense so that it is said of the Ephesian Christians that they had a constant attitude of revulsion toward something. It is in passive voice, which means that these Ephesians themselves felt this way. This was their own choice of attitude. It's indicative mood, so that tells us that here's a statement of fact being given to us.

So while the Ephesian believers had become weak on their mental attitude love, they were rightly strong in their revulsion of evil. They had a strong revulsion against evil, but that doesn't always connote that they had, at the same time, a strong attitude of love for their true objects. This was their problem. They had sometimes mental attitude bitterness toward objects that they should have been very cordial toward. They got twisted up. But the Lord said, "While you're wrong on your mental attitude love, I must commend you for the fact that you have a revulsion toward something that you should have a revulsion toward (a godly hatred). But it has to be based on doctrine so that it does not, at the same time, destroy your mental attitude love.

**The Nicolaitans**

The things that they needed are called "deeds." This is the Greek word "ergon," which stands here for certain practices. They were practices of a certain group of people that here in the Scriptures are called "nikolaites." We rightly translate this rightly as the "Nicolaitans." Now, who in the world are the Nicolaitans? That is a tough question. We know that it was some kind of a religious sect of New Testament times, but little is known about it. You find this group referred to again in another one of these letters here in Revelation 2:15, where we read, "So you have also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans," which thing I hate. That is speaking to the church of Pergamos.

Here, in the church at Ephesus, the Nicolaitans had come on the scene. The thing that the Ephesian Christians are revolted by (the thing they hate in terms of revulsion) is something that these people are doing. It is something that is characteristic of the Nicolaitan group.

Such ancient records that we have about these people indicate that it was a religious group which was practicing hedonism. Hedonism means doing whatever gives pleasure: constantly pursuing pleasure – whatever kind it is. However you get it, all day long, life was devoted to pleasure, and along with it, a natural handmaid was immorality. One of the early church fathers has written about the Nicolaitans. They abandoned themselves to pleasure, leading a life of self-indulgence. What these people evidently did, whatever else we may conclude about them, putting these bits of information together, it seems evident that they were a group of people who were doing something in an immoral sense (in an evil sense) that was taking advantage of the doctrine of grace. Grace tells us that we have freedom, and evidently, they abused grace to justify deeds of licentiousness.

In Romans 6:14-15, Paul says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but you are under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." This attack was constantly being leveled at Paul in the New Testament world as he went about his ministry. He said, "I am for grace. I am for personal freedom. I know what the grace of God is." This is what he preached. The Judaizers came behind and said, "Well, what you're telling us is that we can live like the devil, and we can sin because we have grace. We don't have to worry about sin. If we do something wrong, all we have to do is confess it, and we're clean. We can do anything." Paul says, "Is that what grace means? God forbid." What Paul meant by "God forbid" is, "Heaven help you." If you try that game with grace, God will come in with discipline and judgment upon you that will knock the top of your head off. You won't know what has happened to you. The discipline will quickly get you straightened out that grace does not mean license to sin.

However, the Nicolaitans were a religious groups who were apparently doing just exactly this. Consequently, they became a group of people (and probably were believers) who had so distorted the doctrine of grace that they just went down into the most abject kind of carnality.

Here's how 2 Peter 2:18-22 describe just that kind of situation: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that are just escaping from them who live in error (particularly new Christians). While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage. For if they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in it, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than in the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it happened to them according to the true proverb: 'The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.'"

The Bible describes, in the strongest kind of imagery, what has happened to people who, once they have come to the enlightenment and the Word of God, turn back, as apparently the Nicolaitans did, to practicing evil.

In the church at Ephesus, the Lord was happy to observe that they would have nothing to do with that kind of moral conduct. They did not seek for ways to justify it. They certainly did not tolerate any doctrines that sought to justify that kind of action. When you get to the church at Pergamos, the Nicolaitans were operational there too, but there they not only tolerated their deeds; there, their doctrines, as well, had been accepted.

There's one other interpretation of who the Nicolaitans were, and I just want to mention that to you. I think that this interpretation of a hedonist, licentious, immoral group is closer to the truth, but it is possible there is one other interpretation, and that comes simply from what the word itself means. There is some merit in looking at the word and saying, "Well, what does the word mean?" That is because, in the Bible, names do describe people in situations. The first part comes from the Greek word "nikao." "Nikao" means "to conquer." The second part, "laites," comes from the Greek word "laos." "Laos" means "people." So what you have here is "conqueror of the people" or "conquering of the people." We may translate it as "rulers of the laity." One other explanation of who these people were is that they were a "priestly class" which was arising – an ecclesiastical order which was arising to dominate the people in the congregation. This includes this false separation into clergy and laity. That's one other possibility. I think the other one has a stronger case.

But in any case, whichever it is, the Lord says that what these people are doing, the people in Ephesus hate. Then He says, "Which I also hate" (Jesus Himself also hates). Again, He uses the word "miseo." This is again connoting revulsion. The attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ toward the immoral deeds of these peoples was present tense – a constant revulsion. It is active. It was the Lord's own response. It is indicative, so here we have a statement of truth. This is a strong expression then, from the Lord Jesus against deeds of abomination; deeds of degeneration; and, deeds of impunity. God strongly expressed his hatred to Israel of moral evil. This had always been an area of warning by God to His people. There are few things that God is more revolted by than by immorality.

Jeremiah 44:1-4 read: "The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt, who dwell in Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of the Pathros, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel. You have seen all the evil that I brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah. And, behold, this day they are a desolation, and no man dwells in them, because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke Me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they did not know, neither they, you, nor your fathers.'" And you know that anytime they served the heathen gods, it was always accompanied by sexual immorality. "Yet, I sent you all my servants, the prophets, rising early and sending them saying, 'Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.'"

Again and again, God's repeated words were that they would not listen to my prophets. God says, "Oh, don't do this abominable thing I hate – these immoralities." Yet the people would not listen to Him, and consequently, He brought destruction upon them.

When David deals with this subject of hatred (those who oppose God's standards, and those who oppose God's views of right conduct) puts it in a fantastically strong light. It makes some people nervous to read Psalm 139:20-22: "They speak against You wickedly and Your enemies take Your name in vain." And David says in verse 21, "Don't I hate them more, O Lord, that hate You, and aren't I grieved with those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them my enemies." David says, "The people who are immoral, and who do these abominable things that You condemn and that You hate, God, I hate what they do, and I hate the people who do it." David goes one step further when he adds to it that he hates them with a perfect hatred. That means it's a righteous and proper hatred. He hates the agents. He hates the product.

**He that has an Ear, Let him Hear**

The Nicolaitans were under the very strong condemnation of God. So whatever else was wrong with the Ephesian Christians, this was a good thing – that they were revolted by this kind of conduct, and they would not compromise with evil. Verse 7 then first gives a call to hear: "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches." "He that has" is the Greek word "echo." "Echo" is a call now to a personal response of individual Ephesian Christians. There is a spiritual weakness here in this local church. It can only be corrected as individual believers correct it in themselves. The only way their "agape" love quality is going to get back to where it should be is for individual believers to get into the Word, and to get it up there again. The object of what the individual Ephesian has is his "ous," his "ear." This is referring to the physical organ. This refers to the capacity to receive spiritual instruction. They didn't have Bibles to read. The instruction came to them orally through their ears, and everybody has ears, so everybody has the capacity to be instructed. You may look around, and you'll notice that everybody here has ears. So nobody can say I can't be instructed. If you're under the sound of instruction of the Word of God, you're capable of being instructed.

And what he says here now is that everybody who has ears, thereby, has the capacity to hear and to learn the Word of God. The words "echo ous" (having ears) say that they constantly have it. It is active. It is physical capacity. Here's a principle stated – a participle. To do what? With that physical organ, to hear. The word "hear" is the Greek verb "akouo." This means to listen, and it means to respond. It's an act of positive volition to the call to repent of the lack of a relaxed mental attitude, and to do something about it. This time it's in the aorist tense. It is the point at which a believer in the Ephesian church was ready to confess this sin in himself to the Lord. It's active. The believer had to make the move to decide to change this thing about himself. It is imperative mood because it is a command from God. This time, to the individual believer, if you've got an ear to hear, you hear what I say, and you respond with positive response.

Responding to whom? Listen to the Spirit – the "pneuma." The 'pneuma" here is God the Holy Spirit. The grace system of perception (God's provision for our learning spiritual things) was necessary to rebuild their relaxed mental attitudes. But the grace system of perception cannot function apart from God the Holy Spirit. He is the teacher. I don't care how many human beings you have who explain the Bible to you. Ultimately, when you learn something spiritual, it's because God the Holy Spirit (working through the grace system of teaching) has taught you something.

There are many Scriptures that stress this to us: John 14:26; John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; and, 1 John 2:27. So we are to listen to the master teacher, the Holy Spirit, who said ("lego"). This word refers to the contents of the Holy Spirit's instructions, and it is stressing the content – not the actual words, but stressing the contents of what He gives. It is present tense – constantly what He is saying. It is active. It is what He personally is giving us. It is indicative – a statement of fact. And He is saying this to the churches – to the "ekklesia." This word means "an assembly," and it refers here to local church organizations; specifically so to local churches in the city of Ephesus, which constituted the Holy Spirit classrooms. God's work during the church age (during the church dispensation) is done through local churches. If the church as a whole is spiritually weak and carnal, then the work of the Lord is hindered. He that has ears (the individual believer) has to listen to what God is trying to say to them as a church. Then the church as a whole is corrected.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 pretty well sum up what John is trying to say here: "'Wherefore, come out from among them and be separate,' says the Lord, 'and don't touch the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' said the Lord Almighty." That's what He's asking these people to do – to come out from their carnality, and to be separated unto Him, and to correct their mental attitude love weakness now.

All seven of these letters close with an admonition to hear instruction; that is, this phrase: "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. These words actually echo the words of the Lord Jesus. He used them after the parable of the sower and the seed in Mark 4:9. That's the very thing He said: "Those of you that have listened to Me, if you've got an ear, and if you have the capacity to hear spiritual things, hear it and act upon it." It is also used after the parable of the lamp in Mark 4:23. It is used after diagnosis of the nature of the human heart in Mark 7:16. This formula actually reinforces the promise of Jesus to a special blessing that He has declared at the very beginning of this book in Revelation 1:3: "To those who read, hear, and keep the words of this book."

So the one who hears the Holy Spirit is the one who obeys His direction about returning to "agape" love and all its results.

**The Promise to Overcomers**

Let's close this with the promise to overcomers: "To him that overcomes." The overcomer again is the "nikao" – that verb we looked at a little while ago, which means "to conquer." It's a military term. It means to be victorious. Who is the overcomer? 1 John 5:4-5 tell us that. We do have to read that. It says, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is He that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

So when it speaks about the overcomer, he is talking here about born again believers. The one who overcomes is not someone who has special power as a Christian, or who learned some special secret for spiritual victory. Every believer here right now is an overcomer. That is your normal position as a believer. How victorious you are in practice, within the angelic conflict, is going to depend upon such things as a relaxed mental attitude. This is what was threatening their practical victory, though in position, they were overcomers. Notice 1 John 2:13-14 once more: "I write unto you fathers because you have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you young men because you have overcome the wicked one." Here these, who are already born again, and thereby overcomers, are being overcomers in their performance. "I write unto you little children, because you have known the Father."

Verse 14: "I have written unto you fathers because you have known Him from the beginning. I have written onto you young men because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you. You have overcome the wicked one." Why did they, in practice, overcome? Because the Word of God was abiding in them. To these who overcome, there is a promise. The people who do not overcome, of course, are the lost people, the unbelievers. Revelation 21:7-8 indicate that. He's going to give them something: "I will give" is "didomi." "Didomi" is in the future tense (in the future). It is active. The Lord Jesus is personally going to give this. A grace gift of some kind is indicated: "I'm going to give you the opportunity to eat." The Greek word for "eat" is "esthio." "To eat" here means to enter into the benefits of something. This something is, "Out of (or from) the tree of life. It is aorist – at a point in time. The point in time is when you arrive in heaven. It is active. You personally participate in this. It is infinitive, which indicates that this is the Lord's purpose – for you to eat of a certain tree called the tree of life, which in the Greek is the "xulon," which actually is "the word of life," and it's the word "zoa" which is the principle of life, or the kind of life that God has: the tree of life.

Well, where is the tree of life? You will first find that in Genesis 2:9. Remember that in the Garden of Eden there was the tree of death (we may call it), because it was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you ate from it, you died. There was another tree that was the tree of life. We don't know whether Adam and Eve ever eat of this tree, but apparently this tree had the qualities of preserving physical life. If the tree of life were available to you today, you would never die. It was this particular tree that Adam lost access to. Genesis 3:22-24 tells us that God put an angel to protect man from this tree. Why? Because does God said, "If we don't do something, Adam, who is now the slave of sin, will eat of that tree, and he'll live forever physically in the condition of slavery to sin," and We will never be able to solve the problem – to release him from that control and that enslavement.

**Heaven**

So the tree of life now, here in this text, is a symbol for eternal life onto believers. We see that the tree of life actually reappears in the New Jerusalem. Revelation 22:2 tells us that. "It bears fruit for the abundant health and life of the nations, but only the overcomers (these who are believers, who at one time often suffered on the earth) are going to eat of the tree of life (Revelations 22:14). This tree is "in the paradise of God." The Greek word is "paradeisos." "Paradeisos" is a Persian word. The Jews picked it up in their Babylonian captivity; they took it into Hebrew; and, we took it out of Hebrew into Greek. "Paradeisos" means "the garden of God." It is a word that is applied to the pleasant abode of the dead. Luke 16:22 talks about it. That's where Lazarus went – to the paradise of God. It was called Abraham's Bosom in the case of Lazarus. The Jews called it that also. In Luke 23:43, Jesus promises to the thief: "I'm going to take you into paradise that very day. In 2 Corinthians 12:4, Paul says, "I was caught up into paradise." He died, and he had gone into paradise. This is the third place you have in the New Testament. In three places, this word "paradise" here is referring again to the pleasant place of the dead. We would call it, of course, "heaven."

Paradise was once a compartment of the place called "Hades" in the Greek, or "Sheol" in Hebrew. Ephesians 4:8-10 tell us how Jesus went to Hades (the paradise part of Hades), and how He announced that they who had been captive in that place were now free, and He took them to heaven. Paradise is now being transported into the third heaven, and that's what this is referring to – that we are going to eat of the tree of life. Because we are born again (we are overcomers), we are going to enjoy eternal life in the paradise of God. It is a place to which all believers now go at death (2 Corinthians 5:8). And it is the paradise of God. It is His place. So it's the third heaven. That is the promise that is before us as overcomers.

So the Ephesian church had a very serious problem relative to its mental attitude love; it was, nevertheless, commended for its attitude toward revulsion of evil; and, it was called upon to change and to get that love back up there where it should be, so that their Christian service and their relationships were flowing out of that kind of mental attitude "agape" love. The result for these people would be that in the future, they would enjoy being in the presence of the third heaven – God's garden of paradise, and that they would enjoy eternal life because the tree of life would once more be available to them, and they would have bodies which would live forever, completely free of sin, and completely free of any kind of decay at all. This was the promise held out to the church at Ephesus. Check your mental attitude love. That's what it's all about.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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