

An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages

Chapter Seven The Sardisean Church Age

Revelation 3:1-6

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He That hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy.

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Sardis

Sardis was the capital of ancient Lydia. It passed from the hands of Lydian monarchs to the Persians and thence to Alexander the Great. It was sacked by Antiochus the Great. The kings of Pergamos then succeeded to the dominion until the Romans took over. In the time of Tiberius it was desolated by earthquakes and plagues. Today it is a heap of ruins and uninhabited.

This city was at one time very important commercially. Pliny said that the art of dying wool was invented here. It was the center of wool-dying and carpet weaving. It had a goodly amount of silver and gold in the area and it is said that gold coins were first minted there. It also had a slave market.

The religion of this city was the impure worship of the goddess Cybele. The massive ruins of the temple may still be seen.

You will recall that in the Pergamean Age I mentioned that the Babylonish concept of "mother and son" known as Semiramis and Ninus became the Cybele and Deoius of Asia. The attributes attached to these two are most enlightening as we view them side by side.

He was the sun god; she the moon goddess.

He was the lord of heaven; she the queen of heaven.

He the revealer of goodness and truth; she of gentleness and mercy.

He the mediator; she the mediatrix.

He with the key that opens and shuts the gates of the invisible world; and she with an identical key doing likewise.

He as the judge of the dead; she as standing at his side.

He being killed, raised and ascended into heaven; she carried there bodily by the son.

Now in Rome this same god is given the title of our Lord: he is called the Son of God while she is called the mother of God.

Now that is what we found back there in the other two ages, where the 'mother and son' concept took on such tremendous proportions. But now notice that even as it was back in Babylon that the worship of the son began to lose out in favor of the worship of the mother, so, she literally began to take the place of the son. We see in this age that the pagan worship of Sardis was the worship of the woman. It is Cybele alone, not

Cybele and Deoious. The mother has literally taken the place of the Son, endowed with the merits of Godhead. All one needs to do is go over her various titles and recall the lovely attributes accorded Mary by the Roman Church to understand where the religion of this age came from.

Two things really struck me with force as I looked into this worship of Cybele. One was the fact that she wore a key like Janus which gave her the same authority as Janus, (key to heaven and earth and the mysteries) and the fact that the worshipers whip themselves until blood spurts from their bodies, which thing is done right today by the Catholics who feel they are suffering like the Lord.

The fact that this is the age of the first real break with papal Rome that actually flourished, no doubt caused the Jezebel prophetess to consolidate and emphasize her doctrine of Maryolatry in decided opposition to the Protestants who denied her any part whatsoever in the plan of Salvation apart from her favor with God as the virgin chosen to bear the Babe. As Luther crystallized the doctrine of justification by faith they held to works, penance, prayers and other unscriptural means. And as the freed Christians glorified the Son, the Roman Catholics increased their deification of Mary until the twentieth century saw (in opposition to most high ranking Roman theologians) Pope Pius literally exalt Mary to glorification in a resurrected body. That doctrine is absolutely the Babylonish one of the son carrying the mother bodily into heaven.

No wonder this fifth age goes right along with the other ages and will do so until it ends in the lake of fire where the whore and her children are killed in the second death. There it is, Maryolatry, the worship of Cybele. By the way, did you know that Cybele was the Astarte that Jezebel was priestess to and caused Israel to stumble by the licentious rites that she conducted? Yes, that is who she was in the Bible.

The Age

The Sardisean or fifth church age lasted from 1520 to 1750. It is usually called the Age of the Reformation.

The Messenger

The messenger to this age is the best known messenger of all the ages. He was Martin Luther. Martin Luther was a brilliant scholar of gentle disposition. He was studying to be a lawyer when the lingering illness and death of a near friend caused him to become serious concerning the spiritual condition of his life. He entered the Augustinian convent at Erfurt in 1505. There he studied philosophy and also the Word of God.

He lived the life of severest penance but all the outward acts could not banish his sense of sin. He said, "I tormented myself to death to make peace with God, but I was in darkness and found it not." The vicar-general of his order, Staupitz, helped him to gain the insight that his salvation would have to be the experience of an inner work rather than a ritual. With this encouragement, he further sought God. Later he became a priest. As yet he was not saved.

He became an avid and deep student of the Word and of the great theological works extant. He was sought out as a teacher and preacher for his depth of knowledge and great sincerity. To fulfill a vow he had made to himself he went to Rome. There he saw the futility of the church's imposed works that were to bring salvation, and the Word of God struck home to his heart, "The just shall live by faith."

On his return home the evangelical truth of this Scripture flooded his mind and he was set free from sin and born into the kingdom of God. Soon after this he was elevated to Doctor of Divinity and commissioned, "to devote his whole life to study and faithfully expound and defend the holy Scripture." This he did, and with such effect that his heart and the hearts of those around him were deeply fixed upon the truth of the Word. The Word soon came into open conflict with the abuses of church creeds and doctrines.

Thus when Leo X became pope, and John Tetzel came to sell indulgences for sin, Luther had no choice but to rise up against this anti-Scriptural teaching. First, he thundered from the pulpit against it and then wrote his famous 95 theses which on October 31, 1517 he nailed to the door of Castle Church.

In a short time Germany was ablaze and the reformation was on. Now let it be remembered that Martin Luther was not the only one who had protested the Roman Catholic Church. He was but one of many. Others had denied the popes their self-granted temporal and spiritual power, and even amongst the popes there were minor

temporary reforms. Yes, there were many others who raised issues, but in the case of Luther, God's time was ripe for a definite move that would be the beginning of the restoration of the church to an outpouring of the Holy Ghost at a much later date.

Now Martin Luther, himself, was a sensitive Spirit-filled Christian. He was definitely a man of the Word for he not only had a profound passion to study it but to make it available to all in order that all might live by it. He translated the New Testament and gave it to the people. This laborious work he did himself, correcting a passage as much as twenty times. He gathered around him a group of Hebrew scholars amongst whom were Jews and translated the Old Testament.

This monumental work of Luther is still the work upon which all successive works of the Scripture in Germany have rested.

He was a mighty preacher and teacher of the Word, and insisted especially in his first years of public eminence, that the Word was the sole criterion. Thus he was against works as a means of salvation and baptism as a means of regeneration. He taught the mediation of Christ apart from man as was the original and Pentecostal concept. He was a man given to much prayer and had learned that the more work he had to do, and the more sorely he was pressed for time, the more of his time he gave to God in prayer in order to ensure satisfactory results. He knew what it was to battle with the devil and it is said that Satan one day visibly appeared to him, and he flung the ink well at him, bidding him go. Another time two fanatics came to him to induce him to join with them in banishing all priests and Bibles. He discerned the spirit within them and sent them off.

It is recorded of Dr. Martin Luther in Sauer's History Vol. 3, page 406 that he was, "a prophet, evangelist, speaker in tongues, interpreter, in one person, endowed with all nine gifts of the Spirit."

What stirred his heart by the Holy Ghost, and which was the little green shoot that signified that truth was coming back to the church as it was known at Pentecost, was the doctrine of justification: salvation by grace, apart from works. I recognize that Dr. Luther did not believe only, and preach only, justification, but that was his major theme as indeed it had to be for that is the basic doctrine of the truth of the Word. He will be forever known as the instrument in the hand of God who revived this truth. He was the fifth messenger and his message was, "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." Surely we admit that he knew and did teach that we are to go from faith to faith. His marvelous understanding of sovereignty, election, predestination and other truths show him to be a great man in the Word, yet I say again, as do historians, God used him to bring to the people God's standard against works—"The just shall live by faith."

Now as I mentioned already, this age has been called by the historians, the Period of Reformation. That is exactly right. That is what it was. It had to be that for Martin Luther was a reformer, not a prophet. Now I know the history book calls him a prophet, but it doesn't mean that the history book is right, for there is no record of Martin Luther qualifying as a true prophet of God in the grand Scriptural sense of that word. He was a fine teacher with some of the manifestations of the Spirit in his life and we praise God for that. So he was not able to lead the church back to the whole truth as would a man like the apostle Paul who was both apostle and prophet.

Now as time went on we find a great change in the way he conducted the affairs in which he was involved. At first he had been so gentle, so fearless, so patient and constantly waiting on God to work out the problems. But then vast numbers began to come to his banner. Their purpose was not a truly spiritual one. Rather they had political motivations. They wanted to break the yoke of the pope. They disliked sending money to Rome. Fanatics rose up. Soon he was dragged into political affairs and decisions that actually lay outside the realm of the church except that the church through prayer, preaching and conduct might set up a standard to be heeded. These problems of politics mounted until he was forced into an untenable position of mediating between lords and peasants. His decisions were so wrong that an uprising took place and thousands were killed. He meant well, but once he had let himself be entangled again in a Church-State Gospel he had to reap the whirlwind.

But for all that, God used Martin Luther. Let it not be said that his intentions were wrong. Let it only be said that his judgment failed. Truly if the Lutherans could get back to his teaching and serve God as this gracious brother served Him, then that people would surely be a credit and praise to the great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Salutation

Revelation 3:1,

"These things saith He That hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars."

Once again as in the previous four ages the Spirit is revealing our gracious Lord to us by setting forth His wonderful attributes. This time as He is standing in the midst of the church, we see Him as the One with the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. We know who the seven stars are, but we will have to find what the seven Spirits refer to.

This same phrase is found four times in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 1:4,

"From the seven Spirits Which are before His throne."

Revelation 3:1,

"These things saith He That hath the seven Spirits."

Revelation 4:5,

"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God."

Revelation 5:6,

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as It had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

To begin with, we know for a certainty that these verses are not teaching a new and contrary doctrine to John 4:24a "God is A (one) Spirit." But this is like I Corinthians 12:8-11 wherein we find ONE Spirit manifesting Himself in NINE ways. Thus we know that the seven Spirits of God mean it is the one and same Spirit coming forth in a sevenfold way. Now in Revelation 4:5 these same seven Spirits are called 'lamps of fire burning' before the Lord. Since John always used nothing but Old Testament symbols in the Revelation we go to the Old Testament and find from Proverbs 20:27 that *"the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord."* These seven Spirits are found to be associated with man. John the Baptist in John 5:35 was called a 'burning light' which should actually be translated as 'burning lamp.' Again in Revelation 5:6 the seven Spirits are identified as seven eyes.

In Zechariah 4:10,

"For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven, they are the eyes of the Lord."

It is very evident that the word, 'they' refers to men. Thus we see that the eyes of the Lord in this instance are men—of course they will be anointed men, full of the Holy Ghost, for God's ministries are not in the power of men but of the Holy Ghost. Putting our Scriptural discoveries together it is evident that the seven Spirits of God refer to the continuous ministry of the same Holy Spirit in the lives of seven men with whom God identifies Himself very closely. They are His eyes, and they are His lamps. Who these seven men are can easily be seen because the next phrase calls them the seven stars which are already known to us as the seven messengers to the seven ages. How beautiful that is. See, the star was meant to reflect light at night, for the sun has gone. Just so the messenger (typified as a star) to each age was to reflect the light of the Son. They all did this by the Holy Spirit.

Paul was the first messenger and he said in Galatians 1:8 that if any angel, any messenger, any vicar, no matter who he was—if he preached any other gospel than what Paul preached, let him be accursed. Paul knew that after he was gone grievous wolves would come in. He knew that Satan, himself, could appear as an angel of light so how much more his ministers. So he warns that this Gospel would always be the same. Now Paul had baptized in Jesus Name and rebaptized where people had not been so immersed. He set the church in order and taught the proper use of the gifts of the Spirit and confirmed that they were to remain in the church till Jesus came. Thus the next messengers, all the remaining six, would by the same Holy Ghost, burn with the same fire and give the same light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the signs would follow them. Did Irenaeus qualify? Yes. Did Martin? Yes. Did Columba? Yes. Did Martin Luther? Most assuredly. Did Wesley? Yes sir, he had a great ministry and even prayed for his horse to get well and it did. There you are. Seven church ages and seven messengers

who were alike, and Paul pronounced a curse on anyone who said he was a messenger but had a different gospel and lived in a different light.

Now does that last statement of mine bear up with the rest of the Word? Yes. It says in the Word that if any man adds to this book or takes from it, he would be plagued and judged unto condemnation by God.

God said,

"I will add the plagues written in this book or I will take his part out of the Book of Life."

Revelation 22:18.

So we see that the Seven Spirits actually refer to the One Spirit of God working out the will and Word of God in different generations. I would like to illustrate that from the Word. The Spirit of God was mightily upon Elijah. Then that same Spirit came upon Elisha in a twofold effect. Then centuries later, the same Spirit Which we call the Spirit of Elijah in order to describe Its ministry, came back upon John the Baptist. One day that same Spirit identified by the same manner of ministry will come upon a man for the end of the Gentile church age.

Again: the Scripture says that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power and He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil. As Jesus went away He told His disciples to tarry until Pentecost at which time the very same Spirit that was upon Him would come back and fall upon them and fill them. Then that 'called out' body (the church) would be in His stead upon the earth, taking His place. And because that same Spirit That was in Him would be in them, they would do the very same works. And any people that is truly the Body of Jesus Christ (the true church) will manifest the same works as did Jesus and the Pentecostal church because the same Spirit will be in them. Any other church that does not have the Spirit and the manifestations is going to have to account to God.

It also says here that these seven stars, or seven messengers to the seven ages are in His hand. He is holding them. You know right away that if they are held in His hand they are associated with His power. That is what the hand signifies. It signifies the power of God! And authority of God. Not one of them came in his own power and authority. That is what Paul said. No man would dare to. It takes the authority of God and the power of the Holy Ghost. The Gospel is preached by the authority of God in the power of the Spirit. These men were all empowered by the Holy Ghost. They all stood up to the world. They could do that. They were full of God. They were SENT or authorized by God NOT by self or other men.

Now they had what the world could not have. Jesus said that when He went away He would send His Spirit Which the world could not receive. That is right. The world, or world systems could not receive Him. That is what organization is—it is world system. Show me a world system church that is full of the Holy Ghost. I want to see it. If you can show me such a church you are finding a mistake in the Word. No sir. Not one of these messengers was organized. Either they were put out or got out because they were convicted of the sin of organization. How can the Holy Spirit possibly be in organization when it is organization that takes the place of the Spirit and denominations take the place of the Word? Remember, "Organization" is "DEATH". It just can't be any other way. If the world takes over, the Spirit departs.

Yes, the Spirit is not seven Spirits but ONE. He will always be the same and act the same. And the seven messengers will have the same Spirit and teach the same Word and have the same power. And if the church is the true church it will have the very same Spirit and Word and acts of power that they had at Pentecost. By experience it will be a Pentecostal church; and there will be tongues, and interpretation and prophecy and healings. God will be in the midst of her and God will declare Himself in the midst of her as He always has. Hallelujah! And she will be UNorganized. Don't forget that.

Now we can see that Jesus Christ is revealing Himself through the ages by His Spirit in the messengers. They are as Moses was to the children of Israel. As he had the revelation for his day, so each messenger had God's revelation and ministry for that day.

Thus when we see that the messengers are in His hand, we see the Lord identifying Himself with these men and granting them His power. It is not enough that He has associated Himself with the whole church, which we saw when He was seen standing

amongst the seven golden lamp-stands. Nor is it even enough that we see the five fold ministry of Ephesians 4 (apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors). For in each age the church goes astray, and it is not just the laity but the clergy group—shepherds are wrong as well as sheep. Then God brings Himself on the scene as the Chief Shepherd in the ministries of these seven men to lead His people back to the truth and the abundant power of that truth.

God is in His people—all of His people, for if any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. And He is the Word. That would be the Word recognized in the people. But He has placed a special leadership in these men of His own choosing and through the determined counsel of His own will. They appear once in each age. It is the same Spirit in them. What a far cry is this from the heresy of Rome. They have a man of their own choosing—one after the other—none producing the power of God—none abiding in the Word of God—each one differing from the one before him and adding what he desires as though he were God. God is not in it. But He is in His messenger and he who would have the fullness of God would follow the messenger as the messenger is a follower of the Lord by His Word.

"He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars."

Revelation 3:1.

As this same Lord identified Himself with man in the incarnation, He is again identifying Himself with man by His Spirit within man. "These are mine," saith the Lord. The seven Spirit-filled messengers are the Lord's. They may be repudiated. They may be questioned. Indeed, to human minds they may not even seem to qualify—nevertheless, they are the messengers for their age. God used an Abraham (he lied), He used a Moses (he rebelled), a Jonah (he disobeyed), a Samson (he sinned), a David (he murdered). He also used a Joshua, and a Joseph. And those with severe blemishes far outnumber those whose histories seem to be perfect. ALL WERE, AND ARE HIS. None dare deny that. He used them by and through the Holy Spirit that He put within them. To their own Master they stood or fell. And in them all was accomplished the sovereign will of God. Let external history attempt to refute this, it still stands. The Eternal God still walks amongst the golden lamp stands and sends His messengers by His Spirit with the Word to the people of every age.

The Denunciation

Revelation 3:1b,

"I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead."

Revelation 3:2b,

"For I have not found thy works perfect before God."

Now here, indeed, is a very strange thing. In every age to this point the Spirit has first of all praised the true believers, and then denounced the false vine. But in this period there is evidently such wanton disregard for the Lord and His Word that the entire message to this fifth age rings with condemnation.

"I know thy works."

What were these works that came up before the Lord and caused His displeasure? Well, you know that each age lapped over into the next age, so we have a continuation of the works of the fourth age into the fifth. These works as you are well aware were:

The leadership of the Holy Spirit was superseded by a human hierarchy.

The pure Word of God and its free benefit to all men was deposed for creeds, dogmas, church orders, etc.

The worship in the Spirit and Gifts of the Spirit and all that which pertains to true community fellowship of the saints was cast aside for liturgy and literal idol worship, pagan feasts, etc.

Maryolatry was assuming a greater place in the Christian worship, until she had actually assumed a place of Godhead and the Son was brought from His lofty position of over all to being subservient to a man called the pope, who termed himself the vicar of Christ.

Those who fought this terrible anti-Christ church were destroyed. Those who stayed with it found themselves the pawn of the church whether they be peasants or kings. Their lives were not their own, and neither were their lives Christ's, but they belonged

body, soul, and spirit to the Church of Rome. They talked about the blood of Christ, yet they purchased their salvation with money, and bought forgiveness of sins either by gold or penance. The wealthier of them found it a happy situation when Pope Leo X allowed them to buy indulgences for sins not yet committed so that they with ease of conscience could plan their awful crimes and then proceed to carry them out, knowing that the pope had already remitted their sins. The Word of God was kept from them, so who was to know the truth! Since truth comes only from the Word, the people were shut up in a dungeon of the Roman Church, awaiting death, and after death the judgment. But the great whore, drunk with the blood of martyrs and with no thought of the judgment, reeled savagely on to kill men with both spiritual and physical death.

Now toward the end of the fourth age which would be the beginning of the fifth age also, the invasion of Constantinople by the Turks sent the learned scholars of the East with their Greek manuscripts to the West. The purity of the Word and the teachings of true believers were thus disseminated. And not only were these fine teachers of great importance but also the invention of what became the basis of our modern printing presses was discovered, facilitating the production of books. Thus we find the great hunger and demand for the Bible could be answered.

God raised up many mighty men of which Luther was but one. Calvin and Zwingli were two other luminaries and besides these were many, many more who are not so well known. However, though all this was not in vain, the mighty work of God was actually hindered by these very men. For one thing, they did NOT oppose the Church-State marriage of the Nicene Council but actually fostered that union.

The defense of the Gospel by the state was welcomed though there was no Word for it. And though we can see "the wrath of man praising God," in such events as Henry the Eighth taking up for the reformation and the rejection of papal authority, it was a far cry from the truth of Pentecost and protection of an omnipotent God.

In spite of Luther's constant teaching against outside interference in local church matters he was not able to clear men's minds of the "Bishop, Archbishop" concept of church government. Thus the church took one step in the right direction but still remained shackled, so in short order she was again imprisoned in the same dungeon whence she had attempted to escape.

Still the cup of the abominable works was not yet full. Not only did Luther through poor judgment incite to battle and thereby cause the death of multitudes; but Zwingli's party persecuted unto prison the godly Dr. Hubmeyer, and though it did not commit him to the stake, it was actually responsible in great measure for his eventual death by fire. And Calvin did no less, for he demanded the arrest of Servetus who had seen and taught the oneness of the Godhead. The State then tried this brother, and to Calvin's dismay he was burned at the stake.

If there was ever a time of denominational zeal it was at this tragic time. The words of Comenius describe much of this era. Comenius wrote the "ONE THING NEEDFUL." He compares the world to the labyrinth, and shows that the way out is by leaving what is needless, and choosing the one thing needful—Christ. The great number of teachers, he says is the reason of the multitudes of sects, for which we shall soon have no names left. Each church reckons itself as the true one, or at least as the purest, truest part of it, while among themselves they persecute each other with the bitterest hatred. No reconciliation is to be hoped for between them; they meet enmity with irreconcilable enmity.

Out of the Bible they forge their different creeds; these are their fortresses and bulwarks behind which they entrench themselves and resist all attacks. I will not say that these confessions of faith—for we can admit in most cases that they are so—are bad in themselves. They become so, however, in that they feed the fire of enmity; only by putting them away altogether would it be possible to set to work on healing the wounds of the Church. "To this labyrinth of sects and various confessions another belongs; the love of disputation... What is attained by it? Has a single learned strife ever been settled? Never. Their number has only been increased.

Satan is the greatest sophist; he has never been overcome in a strife of words... In Divine service the words of men are usually heard more than the Word of God. Each one chatters as he pleases, or kills time by learned disquisitions and disproving the views of others. Of the new birth and how a man must be changed into the likeness of Christ to

become partaker of the Divine Nature (II Peter 1:4), scarcely anything is said. Of the power of the keys, the Church has almost lost the power of binding, only the power of loosing remains... The sacraments, given as symbols of unity, of love, and of our life in Christ, have been made the occasion of bitterest conflict, a cause of mutual hatred, a centre of sectarianism...

In short, Christendom has become a labyrinth. The faith has been split into a thousand little parts and you are made a heretic if there is one of them you do not accept... What can help? Only the one thing needful, return to Christ, looking to Christ as the only Leader, and walking in His footsteps, setting aside all other ways until we all reach the goal, and have come to the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13). As the heavenly Master built everything on the ground of the Scriptures so should we leave all particularities of our special confessions and be satisfied with the revealed Word of God which belongs to us all. With the Bible in our hand we should cry: I believe what God has revealed in this Book; I will obediently keep His commands; I hope for that which He has promised. Christians, give ear! There is only one life, but Death comes to us in a thousand forms. There is only one Christ, but a thousand Antichrists... So thou knowest, O Christendom, what is the one thing needful. Either thou turnest back to Christ or thou goest to destruction like the Antichrist. If thou art wise and wilt live, follow the Leader of Life.

But you, Christians, rejoice in your being caught up,... hear the words of your Heavenly Leader, 'Come unto Me.'... Answer with one voice, 'Even so, we come'".

Now I just said that this era gave tremendous growth to the denominational spirit. If the Corinthian attitude of "I am of Paul, I of Cephas" was ever exhibited, it was now. There were Lutherans, Hussites, Zwingli's party, etc. Such fragmentation of the Body was deplorable. They were living a name but were dead. Certainly they were dead. They died the minute they organized. The great groups organized and tied themselves in matrimony to the state. That did it. They were finished. Here were those Lutherans who had criticized the Roman Church. They knew the unrighteousness of political and spiritual unions—yet Luther (as when Peter was overbalanced by the Judaizers) went right ahead and made the state instead of God, the defender of the faith. This is the first denomination of repute that came out of the harlot, but when Luther died it was not long until it had a hierarchy like the one it had fought. This move of God, by the time the second generation came along was right back under the wing of her mother. She had gone back and did not even know it. They had taken on their own name above His Name. They were living their own name, too.

And all the denominations are doing that very thing today. They are living their own name, and not the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is easily seen for every church is known by the way it worships but none are known by the power of God. There is your test. And I want you to notice right here that this era did not have the signs and wonders amongst them. They gave up the power of God for the power of the state. They clung to their own name; they made their names great. It was that old spirit of getting everyone into its fold. Today the Baptists want the Methodists to come over to the Baptists. The Methodists are out to proselytize the Presbyterians. And the Pentecostals want them all. Each claims to offer the most and to hold out the greatest hopes—a sort of door to heaven, or at least, the way to a more abundant entrance. How tragic it all is.

This denominational spirit has made all the denominations write their manuals and teach their creeds, set up their offices and church governments and then each claims that she, and she alone, truly speaks for God as she is the best qualified. Now if that isn't exactly what the pope and the Roman Church are doing! They are right back there with their mother, the harlot, and don't know it.

In closing our comments on this verse, "thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead," I cannot impress upon you too strongly that this age, though it brought the reformation, was most sternly rebuked by God instead of being praised, because IT SOWED THE SEED OF DENOMINATION THAT ORGANIZED RIGHT BACK TO THE HARLOT, after God had opened a door of escape. When the move away from the Catholic Church took place, it was not truly Spiritual as a whole, but more political. Most of the people took up with Protestantism because as I have stated, they hated the Roman system of political and financial bondage. Thus, instead of this being a great Spiritual move with all the earmarks of Holy Spirit influence as when God used purely Spiritual means to accomplish His ends at Pentecost, it was indeed a WORK WHEREIN THE WRATH OF MAN PRAISED GOD, and the results paralleled the history of Israel when she left Egypt and

wandered in the desert, not making it to Canaan Land. However, much was accomplished in that where the yoke of Rome was even partly broken, men could now receive the Word of God and yield to the influence of the Spirit without such great fear as formerly. This opened the door to the great missionary age that followed.

The Jezebel of Thyatira was in no mood to give up her hold upon the people, and thus we see her daughter Athaliah raise her head in the Sardisean Age with the hopes that she would be able to strangle the true seed by her schemes of organization.

The Warning

Revelation 3:2,

"Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

I wish it could be said that the Sardisean Age was a restoration instead of a reformation. I cannot say that. The Word does not call it a restoration, but certainly calls it a reformation. Had it been a restoration, that age would have been another Pentecostal age. But it was not. The best that could be said of it was, *"Strengthen that which remains, that is ready to die."* There was something missing. My, yes, there certainly was. This age had justification, but it had missed sanctification and the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. That is what God's original plan was. That is what they had at Pentecost. They were justified, they were sanctified, and were filled with the Holy Ghost. Why, listen to me, the reason for being justified and sanctified is to the end that you might be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

That is the reason that there is a church. It is the temple of God filled with God, even the Holy Ghost. The same Spirit that was in Jesus while He was here on earth, causing Him to do the mighty works which He did came back upon the church at Pentecost so that they did the works that He did. This age did not have those works. Oh, they had the written Word, (but not the revealed Word). This was the reformation period. But fear not little flock, God said, "I will restore," and this reform was going to be the start of it. He was going to (according to His promise) take the church back from the depth of Satan in the Dark Ages to the Depth of God that they had at Pentecost and in the first few years of the existence of the church.

Now be careful, and get this. It says in this second verse that I read, "For I have not found thy works perfect before God." Do you know what the meaning of 'not perfect' really is? It is 'unfulfilled.' This age was an unfulfilled age. It was just the start of getting back. That is why I said the Bible called it Reformation—not restoration. It had started out in the doctrine of justification which meant salvation was all of God. Oh, how Luther preached the sovereignty of God and election. He knew it was all of grace. He separated the church from rule by ecclesiastical hierarchy. He tore down the idols. He cast out the confessions to the priests. He denounced the pope. It was wonderfully good, as he started, but God had said 1500 years before, "Luther, you are going to start things, but your age will see it all unfulfilled, I am leaving that to later." Hallelujah, our God reigneth! He knows the end from the beginning. Yes, Luther was His messenger. It didn't look like it, as we examine the flaws. But there was a man called Jonah, he had flaws in his life too. He was a prophet though you and I might not want to say so on the basis of how he acted. But God knows them that are His and He has His way just as He did with Jonah. He had His way with Luther in that age, and He will have His way until the consummation.

Now this was an unfulfilled age. It was an age of reformation. But that is how God wanted it. I want to illustrate that to you the way I did to a very wonderful Lutheran brother who is a president of a very fine seminary out West. I had been invited to his place to have dinner with him and to speak to him concerning the Holy Spirit. He was puzzled about many things and he said to me, "What have we Lutherans got?"

I said, "Well, you have Christ."

He said, "We want the Holy Ghost. Do you think we've got It?"

I said, "Potentially, you are believing unto It."

He said, "What do you mean, potentially? We are hungry for God. We read a book on Pentecost and the gifts of the Spirit, so some of us flew out to California to see the author. When we got there he told us that though he had written the book, he did not have the gifts. Now when we saw the operation of gifts in your ministry we wanted to

talk to you, for you must know something about them."

Now this brother's seminary is out in the country and surrounded by many acres of farm land on which the students can work and thereby pay their way through college. He also has factories that go along with the farm to give added employment. So using his fields to illustrate my case I said, "Once there was a man who went forth on his own ground to plant a field of corn. He pulled up the stumps, cleared off the rocks, ploughed and disked it and then planted his corn. Each morning he looked out across the field; but one morning instead of barren ground he saw myriads of little blades coming up. He said, "Praise God for my field of corn." I then asked him, "Did the man have corn?"

He said, "Well, in one way he did."

I said, "Potentially, yes; and that was you Lutherans in the reformation, putting forth your blade, see? The corn began to grow. (After it had rotted in the ground during the Dark Ages). After several joints there were fine large stalks, and one day a tassel of silk appeared. That tassel of silk looked down at the blades and said, "You old formal Lutherans haven't anything. Look at us, we're the breeders, the great missionaries. Our day is the missionary era." That tassel age was the Wesleyan Age. They were the greatest missionaries and even excelled us in our age. What did that age do? It scattered like pollen in the breeze.

"Now what is the next step? Logically we think that is the actual forming and harvesting of the grain—the completed cycle. But not so. There is another stage. That stage is when the husk or chaff is formed to cover the seed. And that is exactly what happened in this Spiritual cycle. At the turn of the twentieth century, in the start of the Laodicean Age, there was widespread belief that the Holy Ghost was falling exactly as He did at Pentecost. People were talking in tongues and claiming to be baptized with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. But I have walked in the grain fields many times, and there in late summer I have plucked the heads of wheat and rubbed them in my hand to get some grain, when to my surprise there WASN'T ANY CORN OF WHEAT IN THAT CHAFF, THOUGH INDEED IT SURELY LOOKED AS IF WHEAT WERE THERE. This is a perfect picture of the so-called Pentecostal move.

And that this is a proven fact is found in that these people ORGANIZED ON A DOCTRINE and bound themselves right back as did the organization ahead of them, proving that instead of being the real seed, they were the chaff or protecting cover for the wheat seed which should come. This chaff stage was the danger period that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:24, "*deceiving the very elect if it were possible.*" Oh, man felt that this husk, the so-called Pentecostal Age was the true seed. But it proved to be just the carrier to carry the life over into the age in which the true restoration comes and the Wheat Bride is manifested in the power spoken of by Ezekiel 47:2-5,

"Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over."

"And the way that it was done was by God's perfect will and programming. The Lutherans had the Holy Ghost potentially under justification; the Methodists had It potentially under sanctification and today It is brought back, a restoration—the Holy Ghost is here."

"Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die."

Now the ideas expressed in the two words, "watchful" and "strengthen" are these. To watch contains not only the idea of being awake but to be alert. To be otherwise insinuates danger and loss. To strengthen means more than just to give strength, it means to fix and establish for permanency. These two commands refer to what is left of the TRUTH which itself is ready or "about" to die. This expression of the Spirit comes before me as an illustration. A group of slaves, in total bondage physically and morally

have risen up and escaped from their captors (indeed that is what Sardis means: the escaped ones). They are pursued and their great and glorious gains are all but lost. They have not been retaken, but about all that can be said is that they have escaped—not clean escaped as some were according to the Word. They had lost much of their liberties.

Now the Lord says, "You are potentially back in captivity; see that you don't go back. To keep from going back become alert and remain ever watchful concerning the things of your captivity or you will lose all. Strengthen yourself now in what you have left in such a manner as to permanently establish what you have and thus ensure against future loss. This will be your opportunity to fulfill what you have not fulfilled." But did they go on? No sir. They did not heed the voice of the Spirit and another age went into captivity and so God raised up others who would carry out His will. God by-passed the Lutheran denomination as He has all others, and they will never come back. God had to go on and in a new age bring further truth and a little more restoration.

Judgment

Revelation 3:3,

"Remember therefore how thou has received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know the hour I will come upon thee."

I want to read another translation (Wuest) of this verse,

"Be remembering, therefore, in what way you have received (the truth as a permanent deposit) and what way you heard (it) and be safeguarding (it), and have a change of mind at once."

It is very evident from this verse that God had given them truth as a permanent deposit. It was received and is irrevocably theirs. It now remains to be seen what they will do with it, whether they will regard it or not. And that is true. They had been given the basic truth of the whole Gospel, "The just shall live by faith", "*Salvation is of the Lord.*" They had heard the truth of the Bible which cast down the doctrines of Rome and set at naught all papal authority. They knew the truth that the church does not save. They understood the Lord's supper. They had light on water baptism. They put out the images. Truth? Why there never was an age with any more men with so much light to shed. They had enough illumination to completely overhaul the old system or start out fresh and let God lead them, line upon line and precept upon precept. They received the truth. They wanted it and heard it.

But the question was, how did they hear it? Did they hear it to build upon or was it with the same attitude that many Greeks had—something to discuss and theorize over? Evidently the rich Word of truth was being heard in an academic manner, rather than for practical outworking, for God was demanding a change of mind concerning it. If this is the Word of God which indeed it is, then it must be obeyed. Failure to obey would bring judgment. When the guards of the sacred temple were found sleeping, they were beaten and their garments burned. What shall the Lord do to those who in this age have relaxed their guard?

"I will come on thee as a thief."

Ancient Sardis was constantly harassed by bandits that swooped down from the hills and pillaged the people. Thus they knew only too well what the Spirit was saying in that the coming of the Lord is as a thief. Vigilance and preparation alone will suffice to be ready for His coming. Now we know that this is a message for the false vine, for the coming of the Lord will be as it was in the days of Noah. The eight saved were well aware of the impending flood, and being aware were prepared and saved. But the world of the ungodly was swept away. Though they daily were in contact with the righteous and heard the truth, they turned it aside until it was too late. Those completely carnal people in that ancient period type out today the nominal Christians whose lives are full of earthly things, and take pleasure in them to such an extent that they have no desire for the Spiritual, and are not at all aware of, nor readied for His appearing.

The Eulogy

Revelation 3:4,

"Thou has a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and

they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy."

Of course the word 'names' means 'people' as it says in Acts 1:15 concerning those in the upper room, "the number of names together were about 120." But to me it goes far beyond just signifying people; it brings out that truth that is set forth in every age which was spoken to us by our Lord with great emphasis. It is this: the church system of these ages is made up of two vines, true and false. God in His own sovereign purpose has put them all together, calling them the church.

See in this age how He has rebuked them saying, "*unto the church which is*"—not "churches are" in Sardis,—but lumping them together—"the church which is"... "*I know thy works... you are dead... your works are unfulfilled...*" And then He goes on—"Thou (this church in Sardis) hast a few people in you that are right, and not wrong like the majority. These walk in clean garments and they are worthy of Me." Now these people that were the true saints of God were walking "all pleasing unto the Lord." Their garments were clean. You see in those days the garments would sweep along on the road and pick up dirt and defilement. These were watching how they walked so that they were not corrupted by the world. They were in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. They were holy and without blame before Him. Thus they were fulfilling their purpose for that is what Ephesians 1:4 says is the purpose of God for us, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him."

Now from this verse which shows the elect of God to be a "Few Names," you can see clearly what we have been teaching about this age. It was chaotic. It was UNFULFILLED. It was split scores of ways, and God rebuked it almost in its entirety. It was weak and sickly and ready to die. It was not the glorious era that carnal minded Protestant historians have tried to make it. One quick look at that tree saw it was cankered and blighted, denuded of leaf and barren of fruit except for some deformed and wormy fruit that was fast dropping to the ground. But hold a moment! Look closer. There at the top, in the light of the sun, were some 'first fruits'—a 'Few Names'—perfect in Him for they were born of Him, filled with Him and walking with Him by His Word.

Thank God for 'those few.'

"And they shall walk with Me."

That is what God says He will bestow upon them for this upright walk. That is part of their inheritance that He has reserved for them. If they were willing to walk with Him through the toils and snares of life and be an honor to Him, He was going to reward them. He is not forgetful of our labour of love. God will always recompense us for our efforts to please Him.

Yes, they had walked through the world and had not partaken of it. They had not let the world systems overcome them. When the illustrious names of that age had yielded to the blandishment of the state and chosen political mindedness rather than Spiritual mindedness and were on their way back into the world, these few stood for the Word of God, and thereby honored the Lord. Now He would honor them in return. For they shall walk with Him in white. They had identified themselves with Him on earth and now He would identify Himself with them in the New Jerusalem. And how marvelous will be that identification! It makes me rejoice and yet it makes me weep to think of His condescension, for you will note that He is not dressed in another color different from the saints, as earthly leaders would so do. No, they are like Him; He is like them. They are like Him, even as John said; for "they see Him as He is."

"*For they are worthy.*" Do you realize Who is saying this? It is Jesus, the Worthy One, Himself. This is the only One Who is accounted worthy to take the book out of the hand of Him Who sits upon the throne. And now this Worthy One is saying to His saints, "You are worthy." Here is this One, the only One qualified to judge, (and indeed all judgment is committed unto Him,) and He says, "You are worthy."

These words are as astounding as are the words in Romans 8:33b,

"God says I am righteous."

(Way Translation.) There in the white light of God's righteousness, hear the sweet voice of Jesus as He says, "These are Mine. They are righteous. They are worthy. They shall walk with Me in white."

The Promise To The Overcomer

Revelation 3:5,

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and His holy angels."

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

This is actually a repetition of verse 4, wherein is made reference to the few who have not defiled their garments. We used to have a saying years ago that no doubt was taken from this verse. It was, "Keep your skirts clean." It meant: don't get involved in questionable things; others will be involved and you might be tempted to be involved, or someone might even try to involve you; but stay clear of it all by steering a course away from it. Now God is going to reward those who follow this advice. They are going to be clothed in white even as He is clothed in white. Peter, James and John saw Him on Mount Transfiguration and His clothes were as white as light. That is how the saints are going to be clothed. Their garments will be shining, exceedingly white.

You know we are living in the end time. It is in this age that the churches are going to come together. And as they are even now controlling world politics, they will soon control the finances of the world. Then, if you don't belong to the world organization of churches, you won't be able to buy or to sell. You will lose all. Those who stay true to God and keep their garments clean from the defilement of this 'world-system' of church orders will be physically bereft. There will be presented to them a great temptation to give in. Preachers will give in with the excuse that they will serve God within the framework of the antichrist beast-system. They will give in to the flatteries and blandishments of the hierarchy. And the people will follow these false shepherds right into the slaughter. But in the judgment they will all be found naked. They will not be given those white robes; neither will they walk with Him. You can't walk in the spotted garments of the world, holding hands with the devil here, and then expect to be with God. It is time to wake up and hear the voice of God crying, "Come out of her (organized religion) My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues." Amen. God is speaking. Shun the religions of this world like you shun the plague. Leave off walking with the world and make your garments white by repentance and the blood of the Lamb. But do it now, for tomorrow may be too late.

"And he that overcometh, I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life."

Once again we come to a most difficult portion of the Word. This verse superficially regarded will be used by both the Arminians and the Calvinists to suit their purposes.

The Arminians will declare that this verse assuredly annuls John 6:37-44,

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.

For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him That sent Me.

And this is the Father's will Which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, Whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

No man can come to Me except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

Arminianism makes the will of the Father, not a sovereign purpose, but merely a complacent desire as He stands back to see what all men do with His good and gracious gifts, and even life eternal.

The Calvinists do not see that. They see in this verse strong consolation given to the suffering, burdened saints, that no matter how evil are the times, how terrible the persecution, because the overcomer is one, "who believeth that Jesus is the Christ," he will not have his name removed from that book. Some also say that this 'Book of Life' is not the 'Lamb's Book of Life.' But as usual, when one regards a verse superficially, he comes up with a superficial understanding.

The possibility of the removal of a name from the records of God deserves more than a casual study, for up until now most students have merely drawn a conclusion that God

places the names of those born again within the Lamb's Book of Life at the time of their rebirth; and if for any reason that name must be removed, the space on the record will simply be a blank as it was before a name had been placed there. This is one hundred percent opposite to what the Word actually teaches.

At the very start of our study, let it be known that there is NOT ONE Scripture that teaches that God is presently compiling a record of names. This was all done before the foundation of the world, as we will point out shortly. Also, it is not a question of simply involving ourselves with two groups of people both of whom had opportunity to receive eternal life, wherein one group received it and had their names placed on record while the others who refused did not have their names so placed. We will actually show by Scripture that multitudes who were not even born again will go into eternal life. As strange as this may sound, it is certainly true. We will also show that there is a group of people whose names having been placed on that record before the foundation of the world, CANNOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE THOSE NAMES REMOVED; but will also show that another group WHOSE NAMES WERE ON THAT RECORD BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD WILL HAVE THEIR NAMES REMOVED.

To begin with, there is no basis for the claims that the 'Lamb's Book of Life' is not the same as the 'Book of Life.' The Book of Life might be called the Lamb's Book of Life, or Christ's Book of Life, or even Thy Book and Book of the Living. Only names are written in it.

Revelation 13:8,

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, (the beast) whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Revelation 17:8,

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

Revelation 20:12-15,

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

"

You can see that though there are other books mentioned, there is always the reference to ONE book containing names. In the Revelation it is called the 'Lamb's Book of Life', or the 'Book of Life.'

Now where is this book located? Luke 10:17-24,

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy Name.

And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I Thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for it seemed good in Thy sight.

All things are delivered Me of My Father: and no man knoweth Who the Son is, but the Father: and Who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.

And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not

heard them."

The Book of Life is definitely located in heaven, and will appear at the great White Throne judgment. In these verses Jesus said that their NAMES were written in heaven. They were written in the Book of Life, for that is where names are placed. Jesus was speaking to the seventy (verse 17), but He was also speaking to the twelve (verse 23). These had all been rejoicing that devils were subject to them in Jesus' Name. Christ's rejoinder was, "Rejoice not that spirits are subject to you, but rather that your names are written in heaven (Book of Life)." You will note here that Judas was one of those who were casting out devils in Jesus' Name, but we know that he was a devil, the son of perdition.

John 6:70-71,

"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve."

John 17:12,

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

John 13:10-11, 18,

"Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit, and ye are clean but not all.

For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean.

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me."

Now if language means anything at all we must admit that Judas was chosen by Jesus (John 13:18), yet he was not clean. (John 13:10-11), Judas was also given to Jesus by the Father. John 17:12. (Let it be noted here that the "choosing" and giving is the exact parallel as in the illustration of Moses and Pharaoh, Jacob and Esau, for though Esau and Pharaoh were both fore-known, they were predestinated to wrath, while the end of Moses and Jacob was glorification. I Peter 2:8-9a shows both reprobates and elect "even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient: where-unto also they were appointed. But Ye are a chosen generation.") Judas was numbered with the twelve and actually had a part with them in the ministry previous to Pentecost.

Acts 1:16-17,

"Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry."

The part that Judas obtained amongst the twelve and then lost was neither inferior to the ministries of the other eleven, nor was it a devilish foreign ministry interjected amongst the ministries of the others.

Acts 1:25,

"That he may take part of this ministry and apostle-ship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

Judas, a devil, lost a God-given Holy Ghost ministry, and killed himself and WENT TO HIS OWN PLACE. His name was even in the Book of Life. But his name was blotted out.

Now before we pursue this thought on Judas, let us go back to the Old Testament and see where God did the same thing. In Genesis 35:23-26, the sons of Jacob were twelve in number and their names were as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; Joseph and Benjamin; Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. These twelve sons' descendants become the twelve tribes of Israel with the exception that Joseph did not have a tribe named after him, for in the providence of God there were to be thirteen tribes, and Joseph's two sons were given the honor of bringing the twelve to thirteen. You know, of course, that this was necessary as Levi was separated unto God for the priesthood. Thus when Israel left Egypt and God gave them the tabernacle in the wilderness, we find the tribe of Levi ministering to twelve tribes named Reuben, Simeon, Issachar, Judah, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The order of the host names them thus in Numbers 10:11-28. There is no mention of Joseph or Levi. But when we look at Revelation 7:4-8, where it says "there were sealed one hundred forty-four thousand of ALL the tribes of the children of Israel," it names them thus: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin. We are back to the twelve tribes with Levi and Joseph named amongst them, but with Dan and Ephraim missing.

The question now arises, why are these two tribes deleted? The answer lies in Deuteronomy 29:16-20,

"For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which ye passed by;

And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them:

Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;

And it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:

The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven."

Herein is pronounced the curse against idolatry, or spiritual fornication. The tribe that turned to idolatry was to have its name blotted out. And the history of the two tribes whose names were blotted out because of idolatry is found in I Kings 12:25-30,

"Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence and built Peniel.

And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other one put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan."

Hosea 4:17,

Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone.

Note particularly that the punishment for idolatry was that the name of that tribe was to be blotted out 'from under heaven.' Deuteronomy 29:20. It does not say that it would be blotted out 'in heaven,' but from under heaven. And that is exactly as it is, for now Israel is back in Palestine, and soon the Lord will seal 144,000 of them. But from that number Dan and Ephraim are missing.

Revelation 7:4-8,

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of ALL the tribes of the children of Israel.

Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."

(Note, Dan and Ephraim missing).

Now with this see Daniel 12:1 which refers to these one hundred and forty-four thousand being sealed during the sixth seal and the time of the Great Tribulation or

Jacob's trouble.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered every one THAT SHALL BE FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK."

However, after this period of tribulation, (during the millennium,) as seen by Ezekiel in 48:1-8, and 22-29 we see the tribes back once more in Divine order. But, from the time that Ephraim and Dan joined themselves to idols, they died, and those tribes have no more recognition. Now I realize that since the destruction of Jerusalem, all records of all tribes have been lost, so that no one can say for sure what tribe he is from, BUT GOD KNOWS. That great God Who is bringing Israel back to Palestine knows exactly which tribe every true Israelite is from, and from all the assembled one hundred forty-four thousand Dan and Ephraim will be missing.

Here are the tribes of Israel. Ezekiel 48:1-8 and 22-29,

"Now these are the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; a portion for Dan.

And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Asher.

And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Naphtali.

And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Manasseh.

And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Ephraim.

And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Reuben.

And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Judah.

And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, etc.

Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the PRINCE.

As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side unto the west side, Benjamin shall have a portion.

And by the border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west side, Simeon shall have a portion.

And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar a portion.

And by the border of Issachar from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun a portion.

And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad a portion.

And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, etc."

Another illustration that we might take is the story of Israel leaving Egypt for Canaan land. God's purpose in this age was to bring Israel OUT, and to take them IN, to the end that they might serve Him. Thus when they left Egypt they ALL came out under the blood of the sacrificial lamb; they ALL went through the waters of baptism in the Red Sea; they ALL enjoyed the mighty miracles; ALL ate of the manna; ALL drank of the rock; and in so far as obvious external blessings and manifestations were concerned they ALL partook in like and equal manner. But, when they came to Moab those who joined in the feast of Baal-Peor all died. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness, for it was there that they refused the Word of God and turned from it. Now this is what Hebrews 6:1-9 speaks of, which was brought out so carefully in the Pergamean Age. You can't go along with just part of the Word, you have to take ALL the Word. There are people who seem involved in the things of God almost one hundred percent. They are like Judas. No one but Jesus knew exactly what kind of a person Judas was. So the day came that Judas did exactly what Israel did at Baal-Peor. He decided that he wanted to join with the false vine forces—enter into the financial, political organization of anti-Word, anti-

Christ religion and he did so. He was fooled! The other eleven were not. They could not be, for they were of the very elect. So when Judas left and betrayed the Lord, his name was removed from the Book of Life. (Revelation 22:19).

Now I am sure that you have noticed that those whose names were in the Book of Life were a part of the religious order of that day that centered around the true God and worship of Him, though they did not worship according to Truth (Word). Like Judas they didn't go all the way. See how Judas was chosen of God. He was instructed in truth. He shared knowledge of the mysteries. He had a ministry of power granted unto him and he healed the sick and cast out devils in Jesus' Name. But when the show-down came, he sold out for gold and political power. He did not go up to Pentecost to receive the Spirit of God. He was devoid of the Spirit. Make no mistake about it, a person that is truly baptized by the Holy Ghost into the body of Christ receiving the fullness of the Spirit will be in the WORD ALL THE WAY. That is the evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost. Judas failed. Multitudes fail right there. And when they fail to go on in that Word, their names are taken off the Book of Life.

In order to further clarify this removal of a name from the Book of Life we ought to extend our thoughts to Israel in the days of Moses.

Exodus 32:30-34,

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sins.

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sins—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.

And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.

Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold Mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them."

It is more than evident that names have been, and will be removed from the Book of Life ere time shall be no more. In this particular place it was because of idolatry, even as when Dan and Ephraim lost their rights as tribes for worshipping the golden calves. All who worshipped the idols had their names removed from the Book of Life.

When Israel rejected the leadership of God in the pillar of fire, and turned to worship the golden calves their names were removed from the Book of Life. Exodus 32:33. (*Whosoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.*) If such turning to idols demands the penalty of the removal of names from the Book of Life, then most assuredly Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah would demand as severe a penalty. This is exactly so.

In Psalms 69 which sets forth the humiliation of Jesus it says in verses 21-28,

"They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.

Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

Pour out Thy indignation upon them and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

For they persecute Him Whom Thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded.

Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into Thy righteousness.

Let them be blotted out of the Book of the Living, and not be written with the righteous."

When the Jews rejected Jesus there was a literal turning away of God from them to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:46-48,

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

This is not to suggest that there will be no more names from the tribes of Israel remaining in the Book of Life, for many of these (but not multitudes) through the principle of election will be in the Gentile church age and come into the body of Jesus Christ, showing that their names did indeed remain in the Book of Life. Also, as we will show, according to the fifth seal multitudes of martyred Jews will be given white robes and eternal life by the Lord. Also the hundred and forty-four thousand will be sealed at His coming, proving that their names were not deleted either. But it is even as most accurately set forth in Psalms 69 that it is the wicked or unrighteous rejecters of Christ and the destroyers of His people whose names are removed.

As Israel (chosen people of God) in majority forfeited their rights in the Book of Life by rejecting Jesus, so the majority of the Gentile church will also come into condemnation with the resultant removal of their names from the Book of Life by rejecting the Word and thereby entering into the world ecumenical movement which is the image erected unto the beast.

There is another point to see here. In the great White Throne judgment there will be a separation of people. The Book of Life will be opened and another book will be opened.

Matthew 25:31-46,

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:

And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left.

Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger and ye took Me in:

Naked and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee? or thirsty and gave Thee drink:

When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?

Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: Naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not:

Then shall they also answer Him saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison and did not minister unto Thee?

Then shall He answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Revelation 20:11-15,

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works,

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.
"

There will be both the righteous and the unrighteous in this judgment. It says so. THESE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT BE THE BRIDE FOR THE BRIDE SITS WITH HIM IN JUDGMENT.

I Corinthians 6:2-3,

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"

Revelation 3:21,

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

See, the bride is with Him in the throne. As she is to judge the world she has to be sitting in the judgment with Him. That is exactly what Daniel saw.

Daniel 7:9-10,

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

See, it is the same scene, for the thousand thousands who are ministering to Him are the bride, for who ministers to the husband but the wife?

The question now arises, why are these righteous ones in the judgment? There is no other place that they can come up, for there are but two resurrections and since they could not qualify for the first resurrection they must come up in the second which is a resurrection unto judgment. The ones who qualify for the first resurrection (the bride) are not in the judgment. John 5:24, *"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life (that is, the believer is already the recipient of eternal life which he has in his possession now) and shall not come into condemnation (shall not come into the judgment, is what it really says) but is passed (permanently) from death unto life."* But notice carefully, Jesus must have yet another group in mind who at a certain resurrection will receive eternal life. They will receive it at the resurrection, NOT HAVING PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED IT AS A MEMBER OF THE BRIDE.

John 5:28-29,

"Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Now we all know that John 5:28-29 is NOT THE RAPTURE for only the dead in Christ will arise from the graves at that time along with the living bride who still is on the earth.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17,

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

But it says in John 5:28-29 that ALL are going to come forth from the grave. This is

the very same resurrection that is spoken of in Revelation 20:11-15 wherein THE DEAD were brought before the Lord and judged according to their works, and all whose names were not in the Book of Life were then cast into the lake of fire.

We now face the question as to why they should be given eternal life at the judgment since the Epistles seem to conclusively point out that one must possess the Spirit of Christ or perish. Though it seems thus, we must not discredit the words of Jesus Who most pointedly sets forth that there are some found in the Book of Life who will either receive eternal life before the general resurrection or after it.

Paul does not evade this truth for he most clearly says in Philippians 3:11,

"If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead."

Now this statement is most peculiar. We all know that we are ALL going to be in a resurrection whether we want to be or not. All will be resurrected. So Paul could hardly be saying, "If by ANY MEANS I might attain to a resurrection of the dead." The truth of the matter is, he is not saying that. The literal reading is, "If by any means I might attain to the 'out-resurrection' from among the dead." This is not the attaining to the general or second resurrection, but attaining to the first resurrection, of which is said, "Blessed and Holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years." The first resurrection has nothing to do with the second death. That is at the end of the thousand years when ALL THE REST of the dead live again. And in that day there will be those who come forth to eternal life and those others who are caught in the second death. Now we do not need to guess about those who in the second resurrection are given life. We are told it is given to them on the grounds that they have been kind and good to the "Brethren". Those who are raised and cast into the lake of fire will be so treated because of their mistreatment of the "Brethren". Since this is the Word of God we simply accept it. There is no argument here, just a simple statement of fact.

To further clarify, notice specifically the words of Matthew 25:31-46. It does not say that a shepherd is literally separating sheep from goats, but it is AS a shepherd dividing sheep from goats. These are not sheep in this particular area of time (White Throne Judgment). The sheep are in His fold, they heard His voice (Word) and they followed Him. THEY ALREADY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND CANNOT COME INTO THE JUDGMENT. But these do NOT have eternal life, and they are in the judgment. They are allowed to GO INTO eternal life. But upon what grounds do they enter into life eternal? Certainly not upon the fact that they already have His life as does the bride, but they receive it because they were kind to His brethren. They are not His brethren: that would make them joint-heirs with Jesus. They are NOT heirs to anything but life. They share no throne, etc. with Him. THEIR NAMES MUST HAVE BEEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE AND NOT REMOVED. Now because of their love of the people of God they are recognized and saved. No doubt these served and helped the children of God. Perhaps like Nicodemus and Gamaliel they stood for the children in a time of trouble.

If this seems to smack of "restoration," watch carefully now, for the wicked are NOT restored, but turned into the lake of fire. The names of many of those destroyed were in the Book of Life also; but they were blotted out because they failed to honor the people of God who were the living manifested Word (living epistles) for their day.

Now let us be very clear here. These are not nations being judged and going into the millennium because they have harbored and helped the Jews. That is very clear because of the conclusion of these verses. *"And these (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment (lake of fire), but the righteous into everlasting life."* There is no record of TWO judgments set where the wicked are cast into the lake of fire. Only the beast and false prophet are judged at the end of the great tribulation. No, this is the White Throne judgment, and they are judged according to what is written in the books.

It is the second resurrection that the "souls under the altar" as set forth in the fifth seal (Revelation 6:9-11) are given white robes, and of course eternal life, or there would be no point of white robes.

"And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that

they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Now note particularly that none of these under the altar were killed for the testimony to Jesus. They were not like Antipas who was slain for holding fast His Name. These are not born again ones, with eternal life as their possession. They come up in the resurrection and receive life because of their stand on the Word. And notice how these are crying out for vengeance. They cannot be bride material. The bride turns the cheek and cries, "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do." These are Jews. They have to be because they are in the fifth seal, and it is in the fourth seal that the Gentile bride is gone in the rapture. So these Jews aren't born of His Spirit. They don't even believe that Jesus is the Messiah. But as they were blinded by God for the Gentile's sake, God gave them eternal life on the grounds that though they could not come to Him, yet they were truly faithful to all the Word they knew, and died for it as multitudes died under Hitler, Stalin, etc., and will yet die.

It is the second resurrection wherein the five foolish virgins come up. Notice that they were virgins. They did not have the Holy Spirit so they missed being in the bride, while the five wise who had oil became a part of that bride. But these people, being a separated, God-loving people, and trying to abide in the Word, according to what they knew of it, and being a help in the work of the Lord will come up at the end of time. They will miss the millennium, which you can begin to see by these truths is much more important and wonderful than we have ever thought or believed.

All these people had their names in the Book of Life and their names remained. But whose names did not remain? Those of the world system churches who fought the bride will be those whose names are removed. That is who will lose out. They will be cast into the lake of fire.

Now let us go another step, but before we do let us review our case thus far. First of all we know most assuredly that the purpose of God stands in election. It was purposed in Himself. It was God's purpose to bring forth a people like unto Himself that would be a Word Bride. She was chosen before the foundation of the world IN HIM. She was fore-known and beloved before she was ever brought forth during the ages upon the earth. She was redeemed by His blood and can NEVER come into condemnation. She can never be in the judgment because sin cannot be imputed unto her.

Romans 4:8,

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

But indeed she shall be with Him in His throne of judgment, judging the world and even angels. Her name (each of her members) was written in a section of the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world. Secondly, there is another class. Their names are also in the Book of Life and they will come up in the second resurrection. Such are the foolish virgins and the righteous as are spoken of in Matthew 25. In this class also are those who do not worship the beast or become involved in the antichrist system but die for their faith even though they are not in the bride, not having been born again. But they will come up in the second resurrection and go into eternal life. Thirdly, there are the borderline Christians such as we saw in Israel coming out of Egypt. These had their names in the Book of Life and their works written in the books. These having failed to obey God and being void of the Spirit, though even the signs and wonders were amongst them, will have their names removed from the Book of Life. Amongst this group will be the ones like Judas who though entirely void of the Spirit, but are religious, will have manifestation in their lives, and though on the books were not the elected IN HIM. Such also as Balaam will be in that group. Fourth and finally are the ones whose names have never been or will ever be written on the books.

Such are found in Revelation 13:8 and Revelation 17:8,

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

Jesus said that a certain group would accept one who came in his own name. That one is the antichrist. And that is exactly what it says of them in Revelation 13:8, and 17:8.

These were ordained of God but not unto election. And with this group is such that are as Pharaoh.

It says of him,

"Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up. Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction."

Romans 9:17 and 22.

None of these would be placed on the records of life. I am not saying that there is no record of them. No doubt there is some kind of a record of them, but NOT IN THE RECORDS OF LIFE. Their purpose of existence has been dealt with slightly in the rest of this book but we can add two more Scriptures.

Proverbs 16:4,

"The Lord hath made the wicked for the day of evil."

Job 21:30,

"The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath."

Since this portion of the Word is hard for the human mind to grasp, it must be accepted and believed by faith. Some will be offended by what I have set forth because they fail to understand the sovereignty of God which sets forth that GOD IS GOD, and because He is God one cannot defeat His counsels or thwart His will and purpose; but He, being omnipotent, is ruling in ALL affairs and is doing whatever He will with all His creation because all were created for His good pleasure. Therefore, as Paul says, *"If God should take of one lump of clay and make of that same lump one vessel unto honor and another vessel unto dishonor, who can be offended and cry against Him?"* That He has the right to do this on the grounds of creation alone, we cannot deny. Yet He went even further, for according to Romans 14:7-9, we have the irrefutable proof that Jesus paid the purchase price of the whole world, and therefore He can do as He wills with His own.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord BOTH OF THE DEAD AND LIVING."

(Ownership; NOT relationship is meant here.)

This is also set forth in John 17:2,

"As Thou hast given Him power OVER ALL FLESH, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."

Now, if we impute omniscience to God, we must also accept that He is perfect in wisdom and righteousness. This plan of election and reprobation is the wisdom of God revealed in all ages even, as it says in Ephesians 1:3-11,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all Spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him. In love

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;

Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all WISDOM and prudence,

Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself,

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him;

In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Thus if God has so designed that there be those whose names are placed in a section of the Lamb's Book of Life and cannot be erased for they are the names of His bride, then we must accept that. If it also states that there are those whose names were placed in the record of the Book of Life but in the foreknowledge of God they were to fall and have their names removed we must accept that. And if there are those whose names were NEVER placed upon a record of life, we must accept that, also. And if there are those who will enter into life eternal after the White Throne judgment solely on the grounds of being good and kind and just to the elect of God who are His brethren, then we cannot but accept that. FOR WHO KNOWETH THE MIND OF THE LORD THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? Rather let us be subject in faith to Him Who is our Father and live.

To understand this subject even more clearly it will now be wise to approach it from the standpoint of the church through the ages. Up until now we have been thinking in terms of the removal of the names of individuals. Now we want to consider, not the individuals, but the groups represented in the church. To do so we will liken the church through the ages to the wheat plant. A grain of wheat is planted to the end that a single grain of wheat will reproduce and multiply itself through a certain process during a certain period of time. That single seed will die, but in dying, the life that was in it will come up into a plant which in turn will be the bearer or carrier of that life which is to come back to originality in a multiplied form. Jesus the great Royal Seed died. That matchless One Who is the life of the church stands in the midst of the church for all seven church ages giving His life to the church (the carrier or bearer) to the end that His very life will be reproduced in bodies like unto His in the resurrection. It is at the resurrection that the Royal Seed will see many royal seeds like unto Himself, and they will be even as He is, for says John, "we shall be like Him." This is what John the Baptist was referring to when He said that Jesus would gather the wheat into the garner. That was the resurrection where the redeemed who had been elected unto eternal life came in.

Now then, the record of this wheat plant whose end is to reproduce the original seed in multiplied form is THE BOOK OF LIFE. I repeat: the history or record of this wheat plant is the Book of Life of which a part of the Book of Life is the RECORD OF ETERNAL LIFE. (A section of the Book of Life). This is convincingly seen by examining the wheat plant. A bare seed is sown. Soon a blade is seen. But that is not the wheat yet. Then it grows into a stalk. This is not yet wheat. Life is there, but not the wheat. Then at the end of the stalk is a little spike that sends out a tassel. Still a wheat plant but no wheat yet. Then the plant is pollenized, and we see the chaff grow. This looks mighty like the wheat but it is not yet seed. Then forms the wheat in the husk. It is now back to what it was originally. Now the ripened wheat is harvested.

Jesus Christ died. He gave His life. That life was to come back upon the church and bring many sons like unto Himself unto glory in the resurrection. But as the wheat seed had to have a carrier to bring forth multiplied wheat seed, even so there had to be a church which would be the carrier of the life of Christ. As the blade, stalk, tassel, and husks were the carriers for the seed but NOT the seed itself, so the church corporate through the ages has been the carrier of the true SEED though not the Seed itself. That is why we can say that the Book of Life is the WHOLE WHEAT plant.

Let's go over that again. Here is that original seed that was planted. It produced a blade. That wasn't it. It produced a stalk. Not it either. Here come husks in which the wheat is to form. That isn't it. The tassel appears. THEN POLLEN FALLS ON THOSE PISTILS. PART OF THAT PLANT IS QUICKENED. SOMETHING OF THAT ORIGINAL SEED THAT CAME UP THROUGH THE REST OF THE PLANT TURNS INTO SEED. Why didn't the whole plant go into seed? Because it was created to that end. Just part of that plant can go back to being seed because just part of that WHEAT PLANT IS ETERNAL LIFE WHEAT.

You have a perfect type of that in Israel leaving Egypt. They came out about two million strong. ALL escaped through the sacrificial blood. ALL were baptized in the Red Sea; ALL came up out of the water enjoying Holy Spirit manifestation and blessings; ALL ate angel food; ALL drank of the rock that followed them. Yet except for a very few they were naught but carriers for the children who should follow them and go into Canaan land. All Israel is NOT Israel. And all but a tiny minority had their names blotted out of the Book of Life.

We have the same right today in the church. Names are going to be blotted out of the

Book of Life. No names will be blotted out of the Book of Eternal Life for that is another record though contained in the Book of Life. THIS IS THE RECORD: GOD HATH GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. HE THAT HATH THE SON HATH LIFE (ETERNAL) AND HE THAT HATH NOT THE SON HATH NOT LIFE (ETERNAL). And those who have that life were in HIM before the foundation of the world. THEY WERE CHOSEN IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. That GREAT ROYAL SEED, Jesus Christ, was planted (He died) and that life that was in Him came up through the wheat plant and is reproducing itself in multitudes of wheat seeds having the same life in them, and being like the Original because by Spirit they are original.

Now we can see why the redeemed (bought back by original owner) bride (she was in Him as Eve was in Adam) cannot ever have her 'member-names' taken off the record. She is part of Him. She is in the throne. She can never be judged. Every one in the bride is a member of Him and He loses none. But that is not so concerning "the all" in the Book of Life. For amongst them are even those like Judas etc. who have a part in the record but their names are removed. We can see those who come in the last days, and after having done wonderful works, Jesus will say that He never knew them. It is not that He was not aware of them. His omniscience precludes that; but they were not fore-known as in the bride; and neither were they fore-known as amongst the righteous of the second resurrection. They bore no fruit (because they were outside the Word—did not abide in it) and they, therefore, were sentenced to death. Then as we have previously shown there are those who stood for the bride and were an aid and comfort to her. Those had their names remaining on the Book of Life and go into life everlasting. Finally there are those such as Pharaoh who never had their names on the Book of Life and these are cast into the lake of fire also.

Thus the grain of wheat that became a plant for the harvest is the record of the church. And even as not all the wheat plant is wheat seed, and as not all the plant is used in the harvest, so with the church:—all the church is not the bride, and neither is it all given eternal life, but a PART of it is gathered into the garner, and a PART of it is kept that it might enter into eternal life in the second resurrection, and PART of it which is accounted chaff is burned in the lake of fire.

And this is exactly what John the Baptist and Jesus said, for John said that the wheat would be garnered and the chaff burned. Jesus said, "Bind the tares, and then gather the wheat." The ecumenical move will bind the tare churches together, for the tares must be bound FIRST, and though their end is burning, they are not burned at their binding but are reserved to a later date, which is at the end of the thousand years, or the second resurrection. But once the tares are bound the rapture can take place and does so at some time between the binding and the revelation of antichrist. Then will come the day when ALL stand together as seen in Daniel. The King will be there with His bride and in front of them will be the multitudes who are to be judged. Yes. ALL are there. All the books are opened. A final disposition of ALL is made. The harvest is indeed over. The books once opened are closed.

In concluding this subject for this time, let me refer to a statement made at its beginning wherein I said that not one Scripture spoke of the Lord PRESENTLY compiling a record of names. That is indeed so. However there is a Scripture pointing a future compilation. It is in the eighty-seventh Psalm. This Psalm speaks of the Lord writing up the names of all those born in Zion. On no account can it be presumed that God has to wait until the end of ages or that period of time dealing with Zion in order to know who all might be born in Zion. Again, that would preclude omniscience. Surely He knows who all comprise that number. But what is it? Is it not simply the revised roll wherein God simply places in a new record those names which remained after the second resurrection and pertained to Zion? Surely, that is it.

"And I will confess his name before My Father and His angels."

Roll call in heaven! "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thy hands." The Great Shepherd is calling His sheep by name. The creative voice of God is calling them forth from the dust or changing their atoms even though they had not fallen asleep. It is the rapture. It is the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb and His bride.

But the rapture is not the only roll call. There at the second resurrection, at the great White Throne judgment, will names be confessed before the Father and His angels. Now

I have been told by those who know, that the sweetest sound to a human ear is the sound of that person's name. How people love to have their names before the public. How they love acclaim. But no earthly voice will ever sound your name as sweetly as will the voice of God if your name is in the Book of Life and remains there to be revealed before the holy angels. What a day that will be when we hear Jesus say, "Father, they confessed My Name before men in the days of their earthly pilgrimage. Now I will confess their names before Thee and all the heavenly angels."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Once more the Spirit hath spoken. Once again we have reviewed the record of what the Spirit said to another age. And we have found the record correct. Another age has gone by and it was fulfilled exactly as He said it would be. What a consolation that is to us who hope to be in the last day bride, for it causes our hearts to leap for joy that He is faithful and will perform His every promise. If He was faithful and true to those of the Sardisean Age, then He is just as true to this our age. If they by His grace and power will be received and commended by Him, then so will we. Let us go therefore, to perfection and meet the Lord in the air, and be forever with Him.



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Sermons By
William Marrion Branham
"... in the days of the voice ..." Rev. 10:7