

Sunday March 3rd 2024
From Time to Time – Part 23

1). Re 3:10 *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! **Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.***

We had seen last time that even for those faithful Christians pictured through the church of Philadelphia, there was still a possibility that the position of rulership within Christ's Millennial Kingdom to which they aspired remained in jeopardy through the ministrations of the ever-present old man, the man of the flesh. And that the old man, the man of the flesh, is the only one able to take our crown we had established firstly, through the type of the Amalekite taking Saul's crown on Mount Gilboa and secondly, through the type of Doeg the Edomite killing the priests of the Lord at Nob. With both of these individuals being descendants of Esau, a foundational type for the man of the flesh. And with respect to the old man, the man of the flesh, pictured through the Amalekite and Doeg, we find this in –

Eph 4:22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.....

Our old man does not improve, in fact according to the verse from Ephesians Chapter 4, he continues to be corrupted through fleshly desires that are deceitful. And this would be good for us to keep in mind so that we are not deceived into thinking that there is something redeemable in our old man – *Ro 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*

1 Th 3:5 *For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.*

Then if we go back to the verses from Revelation Chapter 3, we see that to safeguard against our unredeemable old man from taking our crown we are to hold fast what we have. And we had seen last time that what we have is our hope, a hope we do not presently possess but a hope that is certain, nevertheless – Ro 8:22 *For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. [patient endurance – same word translated as ‘persevere’ in Re 3:10]*

Our hope is seen in these verses as ‘the adoption, the redemption of our body’, a simultaneous event that is inseparable from the salvation of the soul, all of which have to do with the coming Day of Christ’s glory and a position of rulership with Him as a firstborn son in the Kingdom Age. And this will be realized in the heavens following the determinations of the Judgment Seat – Col 1:5 *because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth.....*

And from these verses in Colossians, we see that our hope ‘which is laid up for you in heaven’ has come to us as a result of hearing the Word of the Truth of the gospel, the gospel of the glory of Christ – Tit 1:1 *Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the*

*truth which accords with godliness, 2 **in hope of life for the age** which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, 3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, [the gospel of the glory of Christ] which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.....2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation [of the soul] has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, [putting to death the deeds of the body through the ‘metamorphosis’] we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, [as a result of having our minds renewed] 13 looking for the blessed hope [life for the age, adoption as a firstborn son, the redemption of the body, the salvation of the soul] the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [at which time our hope will be realized] 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

*And then we find this in – 1 Th 5:8 **But let us who are of the day be sober, [not drunk with wine in which is dissipation but continually filled with the Spirit by letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom] putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, [at the Judgment Seat] but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.....***

At the end of v8 we are admonished to put on as a helmet, the hope of salvation. And as a helmet is a piece of armor that protects the head, we should understand this as keeping our mind protected from going in a contrary direction through having the hope of the salvation of the soul ever before us as our mind is renewed. And this would be the same as holding fast what we have that the old man may not take our crown.

a). During this present age we are to wear as a helmet the hope of salvation, the hope we have received from hearing the gospel of the glory of Christ, the Word of the Kingdom, the mystery entrusted to

Paul, and to hold fast to it, and should we do so, then in that future Day the helmet will be replaced with a crown – 2 Ti 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, [the spiritual warfare] I have finished the race, [patiently endured until the end] I have kept the faith. [held fast the Word of the Truth of the gospel] & Finally, [having done these things] there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. [the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ]*

Holding fast to what we have, our hope of life for the age, the salvation of our soul, adoption as a firstborn son with the rights of primogeniture, is what we MUST do throughout the time that remains of our pilgrim journey as we patiently endure, so that we would prevent the old man from taking our crown at the time of our judgment. Arranging and organizing our lives in such a way that we follow the instruction and direction of the wisdom that comes from above and not the wisdom that comes from below. Putting on the new man by putting off the old. Not being conformed to this world but being transformed by the renewing of our mind.

b). Now, none of this is new to us and some of us will have heard these things in various forms many times. However, hearing and knowing these things are not enough of themselves –
Heb 4:1 *Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel [of the glory of Christ] was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith** in those who heard it.*

Not only then must we hear the things God has brought forth to us from above, through the gospel of the glory of Christ, not only must we know them, but we must also believe what God has said through the gospel that gives us the hope, because we cannot hold fast to that which we have not believed – Heb 2:1 *Therefore we must give the more*

earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, [salvation of the soul] which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

To give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard would go hand in hand with holding fast what we have, but without having faith with respect to this, we will drift away, and as we drift away so the wisdom from below, the wisdom of men will become our guide. The old man, the man of the flesh will gain or retain the ascendancy in our life and the crown that could have been ours will be lost and the Lord will not change His mind about it – Heb 12:12 *Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.*

But for those who do give the more earnest heed to the things they have heard, for those who will hold fast what they have, for those with faith to the saving of the soul there is a different conclusion entirely - Heb 12:22 *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

And as encouraging and exciting as these verses are for us, there must be no room for complacency. Now is not the time when we are to rest. The Rest awaits us in the Seventh Day, not now. The verses from Hebrews Chapter 12 then continue – Heb 12:25 *See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

God who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us in the person of Son. And what He has spoken to us through the One who is appointed heir of all things, the gospel of the glory of Christ, we are not to refuse – Heb 3:12 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”*

Today is the day when we must hear His voice and believe what He has said in anticipation of that future tomorrow when the darkness will give way to the light – Mt 13:43 *Then the righteous will shine forth*

as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

2). To return to the old man, the man of the flesh for a moment, we will remember that he encompasses the sin nature we were born with. A nature in the likeness of Adam following the fall – Eph 2:1 *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

At the end of v1 of Ephesians Chapter 2 we see clearly that before we received spiritual life we were ‘dead in trespasses and sins.’ And these trespasses and sins we once walked in as we conformed ourselves to the pattern of this world under the direction of the prince of the power of the air, that fallen spirit being that we know as Satan, not being able to do otherwise. And from these verses we cannot help but see the inextricable connection between the old man, the man of the flesh, the direction that this world is headed and the enemy of our soul.

a). And it is this same fallen spirit being who continues to work among those who are by their new creation in Christ, sons, but are sons of disobedience having been corrupted by the deceitful lusts, choosing to consistently walk in the flesh, continuing to walk in the trespasses and sins from which they had been delivered, rather than the walking in the Spirit, making them children of wrath. The very thing that God did not appoint us to. Children of God then, who will receive the wrath of God at the Judgment Seat because of not putting to death the deeds of the body through the ‘metamorphosis’, through the renewing of the mind and the new man, by the ‘epignosis’ knowledge brought forth from above – 2 Ti 4:10 *for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.....[age]*

The children of disobedience are then those, like Demas, who have turned away from the wisdom from above, the gospel of the glory of Christ, to the wisdom from below with its satanic origin.

b). And we had seen last time a graphic depiction of the wrath of God at the Judgment Seat through the account of Saul hacking Agag, king of the Amalekites, in pieces before the Lord – 1 Sa 15:33 *But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.*

And the same event pictured again through David having the Amalekite who killed Saul on Mount Gilboa put to death in his presence – 2 Sa 1:14 *So David said to him, "How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?" 15 Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, and execute him!" And he struck him so that he died. 16 So David said to him, "Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD'S anointed.'* "

Then to these two Judgment Seat depictions we can add yet more examples of what Scripture says awaits the Christian who allows the man of the flesh to take his crown- Mt 13:41 *The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will **cast them into the furnace of fire.** There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

In Matthew Chapter 13 we see the Christian who has practiced lawlessness, followed the dictates of the old man, being cast into the furnace of fire. For the Christian who appears before the Lord without a wedding garment we find this parable – Mt 22:12 *So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand*

*and foot, take him away, and **cast him into outer darkness**; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

And the same is said for the unprofitable servant in the Parable of the talents – Mt 25:30 *And cast the unprofitable servant into **the outer darkness**. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

And then from John's account of the judgment of the church – Re 2:11 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."*

If the Christian who overcomes is not hurt by the second death, then the Christian who is overcome, whose old man takes his crown, will be hurt by it. And Scripture tells us what the second death is – Re 20:14 *Then Death and Hades were **cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.***

And so, the Christian who is overcome rather than being an overcomer has an inseparable connection with the lake of fire, the furnace of fire, the outer darkness. And all of these descriptions from the type of hacking Agag to pieces to being hurt by the second death, are figurative rather than literal descriptions. Nonetheless the severity of the outcome for the Christian who has not dealt with the old man during this time of preparation is pretty clear. And all can be brought together for us in - Heb 10:30 *For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

And this whole picture concerning those who walk consistently in the Spirit, who hold fast what they have, who give the more earnest heed to the things they have heard, having faith to the saving of the soul, who are overcomers compared to the sons of disobedience who walk consistently in the flesh, replacing the wisdom from above for the

wisdom from below allowing the old man to take their crown, who are overcome rather than being overcomers, is summarized for us in the familiar verses from - 1 Co 3:11 *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [the starting point for every Christian]* 12 *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, [consistently walking in the Spirit] wood, hay, straw [consistently walking in the flesh],* 13 *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.* 14 *If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, [works emanating from the man of the Spirit, therefore, from faith to the saving of the soul] he will receive a reward.* 15 *If anyone's work is burned, [works emanating from the man of the flesh, therefore, apart from faith, works based on the wisdom from below] he will suffer loss; [the loss of his soul/life for the age] but he himself will be saved, [he will not be completely destroyed along with his works] yet so as through fire. [being pulled from the fire naked and ashamed]*

These are things that we know very well. But just to make sure, it won't hurt to repeat that within our present context consistently walking in the Spirit will be the inevitable result of the continual renewing of our mind by the 'epignosis' knowledge brought forth from above as we hold fast what we have and give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard. It will be the inevitable result of the continual work of the Spirit producing the 'metamorphosis' in us as we receive and believe the 'epignosis'.

b). To consistently walk in the flesh for us would be to neglect the renewing of our mind, to neglect to govern our life by faith, to neglect to believe what God has said and organize our lives accordingly, leading us instead to a reliance on our sight, what we determine with the natural eye, the wisdom from below, thereby doing what seems right in our own eyes – Pr 16:23 *The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds learning to his lips.* 24 *Pleasant words [the wisdom brought forth from above, the 'epignosis' knowledge, the*

*gospel of the glory of Christ] are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. 25 **There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.***

And in v25 from Proverbs 16, we can see the individual being deceived by the way that seems right to him. This way can appear to us as being benevolent or at worse just neutral. But neither of these is correct. To follow this way to its conclusion will result in death for the age, suffering loss, being pulled from the fire naked and ashamed. No benevolence or neutrality to be found.

c). We will remember that Jesus said – Jn 14:2 *In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

If we are to have a place with the Lord in the Kingdom of the heavens when He comes to receive us to Himself at the Judgment Seat, then we must follow the Way which He, the Word of God, has set for us. Because in following His Way, the wisdom brought forth from above, the ‘epignosis’ knowledge, the renewing of our mind and our new man, is where the Word of the Truth of the gospel is to be found, which if believed, will lead us to life in the age to come –

Mt 7:13 *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way [that seems right to a man] that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult [in the sense of being pressed, as a grape] is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

I don’t know whether we are aware of when it was that those in pursuit of the Kingdom were first called Christians. But we can find it

in – Acts 11:25 *Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. 26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. **And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.***

Prior to this time, they were known as those of ‘the Way’ –

Acts 9:1 *Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of **the Way**, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

And they were called this because they followed the One who said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’. These were the ones who had believed that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God and in the antitype of David’s brothers and all his father’s house going down to him at the cave of Adullam, they separated themselves to Christ to wait for His Kingdom – 2 Pe 1:16 *For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart.....*

We will return to this next time if we remain and the Lord is willing, and we have prayed.