

Chapter 2

As we explore these seven Churches, observe their strengths, their weaknesses, their hopes, their successes and their failures; consider how they may have been much like the members of Jesus' Church today. This is not fiction. It is not a fairy tale. These people were real. They were our sisters and our brothers in Christ, separated from us only in time. They laughed, they cried, they fell in love, they experienced heartaches, distress, pain, sadness, happiness and joy. Can we empathize with them and appreciate their lives as we learn about them, and recognize our kinship to them? Perhaps, as we contemplate their lives, we shall even see our own lives more clearly; our relationship with each other, and our relationship to God.

The Letter to Ephesus

- [1] Unto the servant of the church of Ephesus write; These things says he that holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;**
[2] I know your works, and your labor, and your patience, and how you can not bear them which are evil; and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars;
[3] And have borne, and have patience, and for my name's sake have labored, and have not fainted.
[4] Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love.
[5] Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent.
[6] But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
[7] He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; To him that overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

In [Verses 2 & 3] the Lord commended the saints at Ephesus for their steadfastness in maintaining a virtuous membership and for exposing those who were false apostles. The time is coming when his Church will again rise to the occasion and expose such pretenders;

[D&C 64:7c-d] Behold, I, the Lord, have made my church in these last days, like unto a judge sitting on a hill, or in a high place, to judge the nations; for it shall come to pass, that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion; [d] and liars, and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known.

[Verse 4] seems to be somewhat of a “double entendre;” for after having been complimented by the Lord for their works, their patience, their hatred of evil; for exposing false apostles as liars; for their endurance, and for having labored, and not fainted for his name's sake; the Lord reprimands them for having “left their first love.” Was not Jesus their first love? Had they left Jesus! No, this was not the case. The Lord was telling them that they had lost the kind of love they had at the time of their conversion. They still had a zeal of the gospel but that “first love” was no longer there. Oh, the love of Jesus was still there, but it had lost it's fervor, it's effervescence; it's zest!

So, in [Verse 5] the Lord reminds them that they had fallen from this kind of love and urged them to repent, or he would “remove their candlestick (their Church) out of it’s place. They apparently failed to repent somewhere along the way, for Ephesus is no more! Excavation on the ruins of Ephesus began in 1869 and was completed 61 years later in 1930.

Double entendre: a word or expression capable of two interpretations. [Webster]

In [Verse 6] the Lord commends them for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which he also hated. The Nicolaitans were identified by the second century church father Irenaeus, in his treatise “Against Heresies” as they who “lead lives of unrestrained indulgence.”

The root of the word Nicolaitans comes from the Greek *nikao*, to conquer or to overcome, and *laos*, which means people, and which is also the word from which laity is derived. Together the two words literally mean “the destruction of the people” but a good translation would be “those who rule over the people by force,” and it is the earliest form of what is now called a priestly order or clergy, where those of the clergy elevated their status to be higher than that of the membership and their desire was to exercise authority over them. Even today, many in the ministry have inflated ideas of their importance and think themselves to be greater than the members. *see [Romans12:3]

The Promise:

[Verse 7] He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; **To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.**

Notice that this promise is not given only to the church at Ephesus, it is given unto the churches. (*plural*) This promise is just as relevant to the members of his Church today as it was then.

Notice also that the tree of life is “in the midst of the paradise of God.” [Genesis 2:12] And I, the Lord God, planted the tree of life ..., in the midst of the garden; ... That is where it was then and that is where it is today! The tree of life was not cast out of the garden, Adam and Eve were!

[Genesis 3:28-31] And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and partake also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever; [29] Therefore, I, the Lord God, will send him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from where he was taken; [30] For, as I, the Lord God, live, even so my words cannot return void, for, as they go forth out of my mouth, they must be fulfilled. [31] So I drove out the man, and I placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. **Re-emphasize:** Adam was cast out of paradise, **where the tree of life is**, “to till the ground from where he, *not Eve*, was taken.”

[Genesis 4:4] And Adam called upon the name of the Lord, and Eve also, his wife; and they heard the voice of the Lord, from the way towards the garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence.

[3 Nephi 5:4, 7-8] ... they heard a voice, as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; [7] And their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from where the sound came; and behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; [8] And it said unto them, Behold, my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name, hear him.

They heard the voice of the Lord from the direction of the garden of Eden. Generally speaking, if the Lord appears or speaks to someone, it is from above, from the way “towards heaven.” When Adam and Eve heard the voice of the Lord, it doubtless came from above as it did to others.

[**Helaman 2:93**] ... there came a voice, as if it were above the cloud of darkness,

Remember, the tree of life was not banished from the garden, Adam and Eve were! They were exiled from God’s presence, though not out of reach of his love.

[**1 Nephi 3:69**] I beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God.

The Letter to Smyrna

[8] And unto the servant of the church in Smyrna write; These things says the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

[9] I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

[10] Fear none of those things which you shall suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days; be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.

[11] He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.

Unlike the saints at Ephesus these saints were poor, yet they were rich. They may not have had an abundance of worldly treasures but they were rich in heavenly treasures.

In [**Verse 9**] the saints at Smyrna were told of those who said they were Jews but were not, but that they were of “the synagogue of Satan.” The particulars of why they weren’t Jews wasn’t revealed, but we do know that there were false missionaries in Galatia, northeast of Smyrna, trying to persuade the saints to keep the Law of Moses. That’s why Paul stressed in his letters, especially to Galatia, that the gospel of Jesus Christ had replaced the law of Moses. Some scholars say that this was happening throughout the Gentile populace.

“Jews,” above, likely means Christians since “Christianity” began with them.

The saints at Smyrna did not waver however and Jesus truly understood their tribulation and poverty and encouraged them not to fear what man could do to them. For he too had suffered, had endured, and had triumphed. For as Paul wrote; . . . “*Jesus* also became a human being, so that by going through death as a man he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might also set free those who lived their whole lives a prey to the fear of death. It is plain that for this purpose he did not become an angel; he became a man, in actual fact a descendant of Abraham. It was imperative that he should be made like his brothers in every respect, if he were to become a High Priest both compassionate and faithful in the things of God, and at the same time able to make atonement for the sins of the people. For by virtue of his own suffering under temptation he is able to help those who are exposed to temptation.” [**Hebrews 2:14-18**] JBP

Mankind cannot tell God that he doesn’t understand what they are going through, because he sent his Only Begotten Son to take upon himself all the fragilities of man in the flesh.

In [Verse 10] Smyrna was told that they would have tribulation ten days. One of the meanings offered by scholars to this enigmatic statement is that the ten years stand for the ten Imperial Persecutions instituted by the Emperors of Rome, beginning with Nero. Each of the nine successive Emperors continued the Imperial Persecutions at varying levels of severity. The “ten days” of persecution could also mean that their tribulation was to last ten years, using the day-to-year formula the Lord gave in [Ezekiel 4:6] i.e., “I have appointed you each day for a year.” So Jesus said for them, “be faithful unto death and **I will give you a crown of life.**”

The persecution under the reign of Domitian lasted less than two years but was extremely severe. His successor, Trajan, reigned from 98 to 117 A.D. He was not against the Christians but felt that he should uphold the laws of the Empire, for the church was regarded as a secret society, which was forbidden. Under his reign Christians were not sought out but were punished when accused. Simeon, the brother of Jesus and Bishop of Jerusalem, was crucified 107 A.D. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was taken to Rome and thrown to the wild beasts 110 A.D. The next two Emperors, Hadrian; 117-138 A.D. and Antoninus Pius; 138-161 A.D., punished the Christians in moderation. But after them the persecution began to worsen until they were not just executed, they were tortured in indescribable ways and then executed. So, the word moderation, as used here, is merely a relative term because their moderation would surely seem harsh to Christians of today.

But Jesus assured the saints at Smyrna that he would give them a crown of life if they would be faithful unto death. Smyrna is one of the two cities of the seven, still standing. Not only is it still standing, it is the largest city in Asia Minor with a population of around 200,000.

The Promise:

[Verse 11] **He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.**

Explanation of the first and second death will be presented in detail in [Chapter 20]

The Letter to Pergamos

[12] **And to the servant of the church in Pergamos write; These things says he which has the sharp sword with two edges;**

[13] **I know your works, and where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is; and you hold fast my name, and have not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.**

[14] **But I have a few things against you, because you have there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**

[15] **So have you also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**

[16] **Repent; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**

[17] **He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; To him that overcome will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it.**

The Lord identifies himself to the church in Pergamos as “he which has the sharp sword with two edges.” He used the same expression with John in [Revelation 1:16] with a slight variation; “out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.” Paul used the same term as a symbol for the “word of God” in his letter to the Jewish Christians; [Hebrews 4:12] For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of body and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And the Lord once again used the same wording in [D&C 6:1b]; behold, I am God, and give heed unto my word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow:

[Matthew 10:30-31] Think not, that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. [31] For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (Is this the same Jesus we hear preached from the pulpit today? The Jesus of love and of peace?) Of love, yes! Of peace, no! Jesus is harsh against sins un-repent-ed of!

That which is “sharper than a two-edged sword” is the word of God. Paul, describing the whole armor of God, puts it this way in [Ephesians 6:17]; Take the ... sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The word of God, when shared by his disciples, becomes a sword only to those who do not love his word, and are offended thereby. For example, Judas betrayed Jesus because he was offended by his words, for we read that, “Judas Iscariot, even one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests to betray Jesus unto them; for he turned away from him, and was offended because of his words.” [Mark 14:31] Are any offended by his word today? Yes - Those who hate the truth!

[2 Nephi 12:33] Woe unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God.

[Helaman 5:35-40] ... if a prophet comes among you, and declares unto you the word of the Lord, which testifies of your sins and iniquities, you are angry with him, and cast him out, and seek all manner of ways to destroy him; [36] Yes, you will say that he is a false prophet, and that he is a sinner, and of the devil, because he testifies that your deeds are evil. [37] But behold, if a man shall come among you, and shall say, Do this, and there is no iniquity; do that, and you shall not suffer; yes, he will say, Walk after the pride of your own hearts; walk after the pride of your eyes, and do whatsoever your hearts desires; and if a man shall come among you and say this, you will receive him, and you will say that he is a prophet; [38] Yes, you will lift him up, and you will give unto him of your substance; you will give unto him of your gold, and of your silver, and you will clothe him with costly apparel; [39] And because he speaks flattering words unto you, and he says that all is well, then you will not find fault with him. [40] O you wicked and you perverse generation; you hardened and you stiff-necked people, how long will you suppose that the Lord will suffer you; yes, how long will you suffer yourselves to be led by foolish and blind guides; how long will you choose darkness rather than light?

[D&C 1:3a-e] Wherefore the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that **all that will hear** may hear; [b] prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come, for the Lord is near; and the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth; and the arm of the Lord shall be revealed; [c] and the day is coming that they who will

not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people; [d] for they have strayed from my ordinances, and have broken my everlasting covenant; they seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, [e] but every man walks in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxes old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall.

In [Verse 13] the Lord commended the saints at Pergamos for holding fast to his name and for not denying the faith, even in a city where people were so evil that the Lord called it “Satan’s seat,” the place “where Satan dwells.”

In [Verses 14 and 15] he told them a couple of things he had against them which undoubtedly resulted from them allowing Satan to dwell there. Some of the them held to the doctrine of Balaam and also the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Back in [Verse 6] he commends the saints at Ephesus for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but here warns these saint against believing their doctrine, which doctrine he hates. The doctrine of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans had a lot in common, they both attracted people through promises of concupiscent pleasures, i.e. carnal pleasures.

Balak was king of the Moabites who were descendants of Lot through Moab, the son of Lot and his oldest daughter. Chemosh was the god of the Moabites and was worshiped by human sacrifice. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot and his youngest daughter. Their god was Moloch and was worshiped by burning little children.

Balaam was a Midianite prophet. The Midianites were descendants of Abraham and Keturah through Midian, one of her six sons. The Midianites were eventually integrated with the Arabians, who were descendants of Ishmael, Abraham’s firstborn and illegitimate son. Balaam seemed to have been a good prophet at first, but for earthly rewards, he influenced the children of Israel to fornicate with Moabite and Midianite women, for which he and 24,000 Israelites were slain.

In [Verse 16] is written that Jesus said to the church, “Repent; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against you with the sword of my mouth.” In other words, with his word.

The Promise:

[Verse 17] To him that overcome I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it.

[Exodus 16:11-15] The Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, [12] I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel; speak unto them, saying, At even you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God. [13] And at even the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. ...[14] And when the dew was gone, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing. ... [15] And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is **manna**; for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.

[**John 6:47-51**] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on me has everlasting life. [**48**] **I am that bread of life.** [**49**] This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. [**50**] Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. [**51**] But I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

[**John 6:53-58**] Then Jesus said unto them, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. [**54**] Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up in the resurrection of the just at the last day. ... [**58**] This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; **he that eats of this bread shall live for ever.**

Jesus goes on to say “It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” [**Verse 63**] And “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” [**Verse 66**]

Jesus also promised to the saints at Pergamos that; “**To him that overcome I will give a white stone, ... in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it.**”

[**Matthew 21:44, 51-52**] Jesus said unto them, Did you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doings, and it is marvelous in our eyes. [**51**] Verily, I say unto you, I am the stone, and those wicked ones reject me. [**52**] I am the head of the corner.

[**Romans 9:33**] As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offense; and whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.

[**Isaiah 62:1-2**] For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns. [**2**] And the Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

[**D&C 16:4f-g**] Jesus Christ is the name which is given of the Father, and there is none other name given whereby man can be saved; [**g**] wherefore, all men must take upon them the name which is given of the Father, for in that name shall they be called at the last day; wherefore, if they know not the name by which they are called, they can not have place in the kingdom of my Father.

[**Revelation 3:12**] To Him that overcomes ... I will write upon him my new name.

[**D&C 17:7b-d**] All those who humble themselves before God and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, [**c**] and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, [**d**] and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church.

* see [**2 Nephi 13:12-17**] ... those willing to take upon them the name of Christ, by baptism;

[**3 Nephi 12:15-20**] ... Have they not read the scriptures, which say, You must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? **for by this name shall you be called at the last day;** and whoso takes upon him my name, and endures to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day; [**19**]

Therefore, whatsoever you shall do, you shall do it in my name; therefore you shall call the church in my name; and you shall call upon the Father in my name, that he will bless the church for my sake; and **how be it my church, save it be called in my name?** [20] For if a church is called in Moses' name, then it is Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man, then it is the church of a man; but if it is called in my name, then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.

[**Mosiah 3:13**] And now, it shall come to pass that whosoever shall not take upon them the name of Christ, must be called by some other name; therefore, he finds himself on the left hand of God.

[**D&C 76:71-m**] And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one, for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world; for these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas; [**m**] these are they who say they are some of one and some of another, some of Christ, and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias; and some of Esais, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch, but received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets; neither the everlasting covenant;

Can it not be ascertained from these scriptures concerning the “white stone” and the “new name” which would be known by those who receive it, that the white stone is Jesus Christ and those who receive it are those who embrace his word and take upon themselves his name through baptism. The reason we don't know in this life what that name will be is because all those who receive this new name will receive it in a new and perfect language. We can't expect that we shall be speaking English in the glories. Nor can we expect that Germans will be speaking German, etc., for there will be people out of every nation, kindred, and tongue who will learn a new and perfect language so that all shall understand and be understood by each other, somewhat like it was in the days of Adam and in the days of Enoch before the Flood, before the confounding of the languages.

[**Genesis 6:5-6**] Then began these men to call upon the name of the Lord; and the Lord blessed them; and a book of remembrance was kept in the which was recorded in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God, to write by the Spirit of inspiration; [6] And by them their children were taught to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled.

[**Genesis 7:17**] And all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him.

All languages which have been spoken since the tower of Babel have been weak and deficient, and certainly imperfect, for “they were confounded, and left off to build the city, and they hearkened not unto the Lord, therefore, the name of it is called Babel, because the Lord was displeased with their works, and did there confound the language of all the earth; and from there did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face thereof.” [**Genesis 11:6**] And concerning the millennium we read; “... **then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.**” [**Zephaniah 3:8-9**]

We now know him in our language as Jesus Christ, and we are know among men by our given name. But then we shall know him, and know each other, by the names given in “a pure language.” Can it be that we all receive the name we had in the spiritual creation, before we came to earth!

[D&C 76:7j] They who dwell in his presence are the church of the Firstborn; and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fullness and of his grace.

**With pure hearts, pure thoughts, and a pure language, they will serve him with one consent!*

The Letter to Thyatira

[18] **And unto the servant of the church in Thyatira write; These things says the Son of God, who has his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;**

[19] **I know your works, and charity, and service, and faith, and your patience, and your works; and the last to be more than the first.**

[20] **Notwithstanding I have a few things against you, because you suffer that woman Jezebel, which calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.**

[21] **And I gave her space to repent of her fornications; and she repented not.**

[22] **Behold, I will cast her into hell, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.**

[23] **I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searches the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.**

[24] **But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.**

[25] **But that which you have already, hold fast till I come.**

[26] **And to him who overcomes, and keeps my commandments unto the end, will I give power over many kingdoms;**

[27] **And he shall rule them with the word of God; and they shall be in his hands as the vessels of clay in the hands of a potter; and he shall govern them by faith, with equity and justice, even as I received of my Father.**

[28] **And I will give him the morning star.**

[29] **He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.**

The author identified himself at the beginning of the letter as the “Son of God.” He then commended them for certain Christian attributes of which some were being regarded more than others, after which he reprimanded them for allowing themselves to be influenced by the woman Jezebel, who claimed to be a prophetess. For she had taught them and seduced them to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. Some scholars think that she was called “Jezebel” after the wife of Ahab, because she taught and practiced some of the same ungodly acts.

Ahab was king of Israel 875-854 B.C. Of all the kings of Israel he was the most wicked.. He married Jezebel, a Sidonian princess who had a temple built for Baal in Samaria. She maintained 850 prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth, had the real prophets of God slain, and abolished worshiping God. Prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth murdered little children in sacrificial worship. They practiced “foundation sacrifice,” where the first born would be sacrificed and its body sealed into the wall of a new house to bring the rest of the family good luck. Graveyards have been discovered around the temple compound where numerous skeletons of children have been excavated.

The Lord sternly warned Jezebel against her life style, and gave her a space to repent. But she did not repent.

In [Verse 23] the Lord essentially told them that he would reward them according to their works. This concept pervades the scriptures and it is astonishing how so many people fail to find it. Jesus then discloses that not all had embraced this doctrine perpetrated by Jezebel and upon those he would not put any more burden, but admonished them to hold fast until he returned.

The Promise:

[Verse 26] To him who overcomes, and keeps my commandments unto the end, I will give power over many kingdoms; [Verse 27] And he shall rule them with the word of God; and they shall be in his hands as the vessels of clay in the hands of a potter; and he shall govern them by faith, with equity and justice, even as I received of my Father. [Verse 28] And I will give him the morning star.

[Matthew 24:52-54] Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? [53] Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing; [54] And, verily I say unto you, he (the Lord) shall make him (who keeps his commandments to the end) ruler over all his goods.

[Mark 13:56-58] [Luke 12:50-53]

The recipients of the promises recorded in [Verses 26 and 27] are identified by Jesus in Matthew, Mark and Luke, as the “faithful and wise servants.” They shall “rule many kingdoms with the word of God.” * more details in [Chapter 12].

Concerning that part of the promise written in [Verse 28] however, “I will give him the morning star,” is simply a way of promising that “to him who overcomes, and keeps his commandments unto the end,” will be given to dwell with Jesus. For Jesus said of himself in;

[Revelation 22:16] I have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and **the bright and morning star.**

[Numbers 24:17] ... there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel.

As progenies of the children of Israel of old, are we not saddened by this, their recountal;

[Psalms 137:1-4] By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yes, we wept, when we remembered Zion. [2] We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. [3] For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. [4] How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

Though Zion seems forever to be beyond the horizon, our promise is this;

[D&C 98:4f-g] Let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion, for all flesh is in my hands: be still, and know that I am God. [g] Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered, **they that remain and are pure in heart** shall return and come to their inheritances; they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy; to build up the waste places of Zion. And all these things, that the prophets might be fulfilled. * see [D&C 100:3a-f]

