

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

Message 13

Words: 5847

Scripture: Revelation 2:18-29

INTRO: We are studying the seven churches of Asia. Ephesus means to let go, to relax. Smyrna meant bitter, but the name comes from myrrh, which makes a perfume. At Smyrna they suffered bitter persecution, but they became a sweet aroma to God. Pergamos meant a high place and to marry. To marry the church and the world. Thyatira has a number of suggestions, but the idea of unwearying sacrifice may be the meaning.

The promise to the Ephesian church was that the Lord would give to the overcomer to eat from the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God; to Smyrna, that they would not be hurt by the second death; to Pergamos, He would give to eat of the hidden manna and give him a white stone the name of which no one knew but the one that got it; to the church at Thyatira, He would give power to rule over the nations, and He would give him the morning star.

We recommended that Ephesus pictured the early Church in the time of the apostles. Smyrna pictured the church during the time of the persecutions of Rome. It was the church whose name meant bitter but it made a sweet smell to God. No criticism was given to this church. We are now in the fourth century. When we come to Pergamos, the royal city, we enter the time after Constantine supposedly became a Christian. It is the beginning of Roman Catholicism. Thyatira is Catholicism in full bloom, it was or began the time called the pornocracy.

We have looked at the counselee who calls Himself the Son of God, the One who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine brass. We have looked at the city of Thyatira itself and there are two outstanding features. First is its geographical position. It stood where armies would have to pass by it on the way to the capital city and second, it had all those trade guilds. The church was commended for its works, love, service faith and patience. But this church had within it a woman likened to Ahab's wife of the OT named Jezebel and she led the people into deep sin. They were criticized for this by the Lord and that is where we left off in the last message.

5) The counsel (2:24-25)

And so, we have now come to the counsel the Lord will give to this church. We begin with verse 24:

24 Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

When it says, "Now to you I say..." I naturally took that to mean the pastor of the church. But the pronoun 'you' is in the plural in the original. So the question is, what groups are mentioned by 'to you' and 'to the rest which are in Thyatira'? The word translated 'and' is the word *kai* and can also mean 'even'. And I think that is the case here. So it can read like this: *To you, even to the rest who are in Thyatira...* What we learn is some or a number in the church did not go along with the teaching of Jezebel and those are the ones He is now counseling.

Now let me mention something about the words, 'to the rest'. There is in Scripture a doctrine that runs from Genesis to Revelation. It is called the doctrine of *the remnant*. In Noah's day almost the entire number of mankind had become ungodly. Among possibly millions of people, 8 were saved. This is a staggering number when you spend time thinking about it. But these eight were the remnant, and there has always been a remnant. There was a time when Elijah felt he was the only one left, but God said there is a remnant. There were seven thousand others. Jeremiah felt all alone, but there was remnant. When Christ was born, most had strayed from the truth, but there was a remnant. And even today, there is a remnant.

Now the words following the phrase 'the depths of Satan' and, 'as they say' are a little more difficult. Our first question is, as who says? I found there are two good possibilities. It

could mean, 'as they, those who follow Jezebel, say', or the clause, "I will put no other burden on you" is a quote.

If the words, 'as they say' refers to what the followers of Jezebel said, then they claimed to know the depths of Satan. If the words, "I will put no other burden on you" are a quote, then it comes from Acts 15, so turn there.

When the Gospel first went out certain Jews insisted that the Gentiles who were converted had to follow the Mosaic laws, such as circumcision. So Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and met with the apostles and they all met together and discussed this. And in the end, we find their conclusion in a letter they formulated and sent back to the Gentile churches. Acts 15:22-29 says:

22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

23 They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings.

24 Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law" -to whom we gave no such commandment-

25 it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 *We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth.*

28 *For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:*

29 *that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.*

Note the words in verse 28: *For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden...* Now note the words in our passage: *as they say, I will put on you no other burden.* So those words might be a quote from this passage.

So, however that may be, our second question is, what is meant by *who have not known the depths of Satan*? Well, in this passage we get a little further insight into Jezebel's teaching from these words. So this tells us that those who followed Jezebel either claimed to know the depths of Satan or they did know. Their teaching might have gone something like this: "If you really want to know God, you really have to know Satan. So learn his ways and from there you will learn how good God really is. If you have not experienced these sins, you actually have no idea of what good really is."

In light of that, listen to the quote I gave in the last message from Newell. He said of Roman Catholicism: "The confessional teaches children to discover and speak of the lowest abominations of the human heart; the result of which is to familiarize them with such things, stifle conscience, and finally open the flood gates of indulgence of the flesh, especially with Rome's Babylonian priests,

with whom to sin, is, by their teaching, no sin" (56).

Now let me take a little side trip to explain what the situation was at this time as far as the New Testament is concerned. When the book of Revelation was written the churches sometimes only had one or two books of the NT. Revelation was, as I see it, the last NT book to be written. Some evangelicals and the Mormons say that the epistles of John were written last. The Mormons say that to prove that the words in Revelation 22:18-19 do not refer to all Scripture. These verses say:

18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

So they say that these words only refer to the book of Revelation. The book of Mormon would be added later as further revelation from God. And to prove that these words refer only to the book of Revelation they show that 1, 2, and 3 John were written after the Book of Revelation was, so Revelation 22:18-19 cannot refer to the whole Bible, since the epistles of John were written later.

I believe that the last book written was the book of Revelation and these words include the whole 66 books of the Bible. They must not be added to. Now all that to say this, when John wrote the book of Revelation, the other NT books were already written. But very few churches at this time had all the books. The 27 books of the NT were not agreed upon for about another 200 years. So they might

only have had a few NT books at this time in Thyatira.

But the 27 books of the NT were not put together for a long time after Revelation was written. Thyatira may not have had epistles such as Romans. Turn to Romans 6. Maybe they had only a few of the Gospels. But by this time Paul's epistle to the Romans was about 35 years old. And it seems that the doctrine that this woman at Thyatira was preaching may have been around for a long time already.

With that, look at Romans 6:1. Paul says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Now why would he have asked a question like that? It may be that through the teaching of the Gnostics or such groups as the Nicolaitans, such teaching as Jezebel taught was already being circulated. It is possible he was already clearing up the false teaching that was going around already at that time. That was some 30-40 years prior to when this letter was written to Thyatira.

Wim Malgo, referring to these words in Romans says regarding the words, 'the depths of Satan says, "What does this mean, 'the depths of Satan?' Paul explains this in Romans 6:15, 'What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.' In other words, should we do that which is of the devil, so we can experience the redemption even more fully? Shall we penetrate the depths of Satan? The answer is - absolutely NO!" end quote (111). So the teaching of Jezebel may have had the error of turning the grace of God into license as well. And the church at this time did not have the NT the way we have it today.

We come now to the last part of the counsel in verse 25:

25 *But hold fast what you have till I come.*

For those of us who are from our background, these words are most familiar. Hold fast what you have been taught. That meant staying with the church. It also meant to not leave our first love, which was the church we belonged to or grew up in.

In our passage, the Lord is speaking to the remnant, the true believers. And here is something we should always remember with regard to anything which we have proven to be true according to the Bible: hold fast to the truth! Do you remember the meaning of the word Ephesus? It was relax. Let go. That is always the danger of anyone who has truth. The danger of those who don't have the truth is to not let go. The Lord was addressing the true believers here, and they were counseled to hold fast.

Notice now in our text how long they were to hold fast. It is, 'till I come.' These words have been important throughout the Church age. Hold fast to the truth. The problem has always been one of letting go. Find truth, and then never forsake it.

6) The Comfort (2:26-28)

We move on now to the comfort given to the believers in this church. We have this in verses 26-28:

2:26-28 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations, He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

Once again it is the overcomer that receives the comfort. The implication of these words is that one may not overcome. And if one does

not overcome, clearly these promises no longer apply. May I ask you once more, what are you going through in life? What do you bear up under because you are a Christian? Are you tired? Do you feel like giving up sometimes? Take heart. To overcome in a church that allowed a woman to teach what was taught in this church, is a wearying challenge. To stay off certain sites on the internet is just like that. But good things are promised to the overcomer.

Now let me mention something here about overcoming. It is like believing in the NT. When John 3:16 promises eternal life to the one who believes, it is not to the one who has once believed. The word 'to believe' is a present tense as it is almost everywhere salvation is touched on. Study salvation in the NT and it is a present tense salvation. The one who gets saved is to continue believing. He or she goes on believing. The doctrine of salvation has numerous doctrines within it. There is the time when one begins to believe. He is saved. That salvation is justification. Then he goes on believing. That is sanctification, or ongoing salvation. And then there is final salvation. That is glorification. In justification we are delivered from the penalty of sin; death and hell. In ongoing salvation we are delivered from the power of sin in everyday life. In future tense salvation we are delivered from the very presence of sin.

Now, overcoming is just like that. It is in the present tense. It is ongoing overcoming. The promise that starts like this, "To him that overcomes" is given to each church. It is always in the present tense. It occurs once more in Revelation 21:7 which says: "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

Further, in our text, the Lord adds these words: *And he who overcomes and keeps my works until the end...* You see, here is the real perseverance of the saints. They do not persevere because they were elected in eternity past. They persevere because in the midst of difficult circumstances they continue to believe. And the fact that they continue to believe is evidenced by their works, which we have spoken of in the previous message. We must never get the idea that if we do certain works, we will be saved by that. Sheep do not become sheep by acting like sheep, they act like sheep because they are sheep.

Of the overcomer John MacArthur says that an overcomer simply means that one is a Christian. The article I read by him is poorly written but you might get the gist of it. Here is what he wrote or how someone transcribed his message:

There's so much here, it's so wonderful. As in the other letters, John closes with a word to the true Christians and it's a word of promise. "And he who overcomes," and I'm not going to reinterpret that every time, that just means a Christian, 1 John 5:5..., "He that overcomes is the Christian." "To the true Christian who overcomes the evil, who overcomes Satan, enduring to the end, John says our faith is that which overcomes, the one who believes is the overcomer...1 John 5:5...and he who keeps My deeds, that means who obeys," there's two evidences of saving faith. Saving faith triumphs, it never abandons, you never lose it, you never give it up, you always overcome. No matter what comes against you, you never lose your faith, you continue to believe. Who is the one who overcomes the world? But he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world, and you overcome by believing, constant faith.

Here is the key of what he said: "...*there's two evidences of saving faith. Saving faith triumphs, it never abandons, you never lose it, you never give it up, you always overcome.*" From that I understand him to say: If you are a true believer you will overcome. If you don't overcome, you were never a true believer.

Now listen to this carefully. Here is the upshot for the Calvinist. The true Calvinist can never have assurance of salvation. Why not? He does not know until he has persevered to the end that he ever was truly a believer. The only way he can know is that he dies he has not departed from the Lord. But the whole idea of using the word *overcomer* is to encourage the believer to remain steadfast. If he does not remain steadfast and ultimately rejects the Lord, he is not an *overcomer*.

So, what is the promise to the one who overcomes? The Lord says this, "To him will I give power over the nations, He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels as I also have received from My Father..."

Here is a very huge promise. It relates, not to heaven, but to the millennium. For those to whom this is new, here is the order of prophecy. We are now in the Church age. We have been in it for 2,000 years and it is almost over. Then comes the seven year tribulation. The followers of Jezebel are said to be destined to go through this tribulation.

But the Church age believer, to whom all these promises are made, will be raptured and delivered out of this hour of tribulation. At the end of those seven years, the Church age believer will come down from heaven with Christ. Turn to Psalm 2. You see, Christ will

set up the millennial kingdom, and then the believer will reign with Him for 1,000 years. That is what we are talking about here.

We'll read verses 1-9 in Psalm 2:

1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.

5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:

6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

Who is it that will deal with the nations? Jesus Christ. It was to Him God said at His baptism, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." Verse 8:

8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

This is clearly what the promise in our passage is about. In Revelation 19 we see the Lord coming down from heaven with the Church

and then He smites the earth. They are dashed like a potter's vessel.

But the righteous who come through the tribulation will go into the millennium and repopulate the earth. Their children will need to get saved just like every human being before them. And it is these the Lord gives His church authority over. Now when it says in our text He gives them power over the nations, the word is not power, it is authority. He will authorize them to rule the millennial kingdom.

So let me show you this in Revelation 19. You see, in chapters 2-3 we have the Church. She disappears from earth by Revelation 4 and you don't find her again until chapter 19. Those who follow Jezebel, however, go into the tribulation and if you want to see what will happen to them, just read chapters 4-19.

So in Revelation 19, by verse 10 the Church has already become the wife of Christ. So look now at verses 11-21.

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.

And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

So the nations are dashed in pieces. You will remember that the Lord said that Jezebel's children would be killed with death. Those who have not died until this time, will die here. Notice now in chapter 20 what happens next:

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

But those who are saved in the tribulation go into the millennium to repopulate the earth. And they will be ruled over by the overcomer as our verse in chapter 2 said. So look at verse 4:

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Here is the fulfillment of the promise in our passage. But it may extend beyond that and hold true throughout the millennium. Many commentators point out the word 'rule' in the clause 'He will rule them with a rod of iron' is the word *poimeno*. That means the Lord will shepherd His people. It is the verb of the word we use as a pastor. A shepherd had a rod. With it he did many things, one of which was keeping order. I have read that a sheep that was disobedient too often, he might use the rod to break its leg. He would use it to protect the sheep. And the Lord will shepherd His sheep in the millennium with a rod of

iron which He will use on the enemies of the sheep.

Now for those who struggle with the teaching of the millennium, here we have clear evidence that there will literally be such a time. John MacArthur makes the observation that ruling with a rod of iron and breaking enemies in pieces cannot refer to something that happens in heaven, so it must happen on earth, and the only time that could be is in the millennium when Christ is literally on earth.

So Revelation 2:28 now speaks of the overcomers in the church of Thyatira like this:

...and I will give him the morning star.

Well, what does this mean? Well, what is the morning star? So we turn to Revelation 22:16, and it says:

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

Turn to 2 Peter 1. Commentators seem quite agreed that Christ presents Himself to the one who overcomes. Verse 19 says:

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 hearts;

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

Peter points here prophetically to a time when the day will dawn. This day, is the day of the millennium. The light that we have is

shining in a dark place, that is the world in which we live. And somewhere in the future, he says, the day will dawn and the morning star will arise in your hearts. The NKJV speaks here of the morning star. The KJV rightly translates it as the day star. The day star is the morning star as it brings in the day. Christ will be the star Balaam spoke of that will bring in the millennial day. That day could be as close as just a little more than seven years away. The coming of Christ could happen today yet. We are getting very near!

And verse 29 closes our section once more with these words: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

b. Typically

Well, that brings to an end our look at the historical purpose of this letter to Thyatira. We now ask, what kind of church does Thyatira typify? It typifies a church with a lot of energy. All kinds of activity. There are some godly Christians who are living for the Lord. But theologically they are tolerant to such a degree as to almost make them unrecognizable as a true church. They are intimidated by a powerful woman who is way off track, but they do not have the courage to deal with her and she is seducing, not professing believers, but those the Lord calls His own servants.

We learn further that this woman and those who follow her will go through the tribulation. That is because many of them never became believers in the first place, and some who did, and were servants of the Lord were seduced by the teaching of this woman.

In those days there were not more than one church in a city, and so those who are in this church who have not fallen for this false teaching are encouraged to hold fast. This word to 'hold fast' is *krateo*. The Online Bible says it means to have power, be powerful, to be chief, be master of, to rule. So it

is basically to overcome in the midst of it all. May I ask you is there something you need to hold fast to? It is biblical but it is a burden that you need to bear up under? The word we have come across several times in these studies already is *hupomenee*, to have patience, bear up under. Do not give up. Hold fast.

c. Prophetically 590-1054.

We want to consider now the time period pictured by the church of Thyatira. Up until this time period I had no trouble seeing what time period each church represented. And I have found myself in agreement with the commentaries. The time periods seemed quite plain as I studied the history. But when I studied this church once more, I could not bring myself to agree with the commentators. Maybe I am missing something yet. Most see the time period covered by this church as going from 590 AD to 1517. That brings us to the time when stirrings of change began, and Catholicism came under serious question, and the winds of the reformation were beginning to blow. Martin Luther was born in 1483 and lived until 1546.

Here is what gives me trouble. The next church we will study is Sardis. It is the dead church. Revelation 3:1 says, "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.'" Most teachers take the time period covered by Thyatira as 590-1517. That means that Sardis, the dead church, is the time period in which the reformation took place. That does not seem right to me. I think the common view that the church age represented by Thyatira, around 590 AD agrees with history. But the closing date I would suggest is 1054. I think it is after this that the church for the most part was dead. But I confess that my understanding of Church history is minimal.

If the time period I suggest is close, during this time period we have the rise of the Roman Catholic

Church. In 607 we have the first pope. At first the name Pope was used for bishops, but it then came to speak of the one head over the bishops, the supreme head.

I was recently asked, "When did Jesus mean when He said call no man on earth father." I do not think it means you should not call your real earthly father, father. Scripture says, "Honor your father..." The word for father is the same, pater. I think the teaching is exactly that of what the Pope is called. They call someone their father who is not their father. Robertson's Word Studies says:

Call no man your father... Jesus meant the full sense of this noble word for our heavenly Father. "Abba was not commonly a mode of address to a living person, but a title of honor for Rabbis and great men of the past" (McNeile). In Gethsemane Jesus said: "Abba, Father." {#Mr 14:36 } Certainly the ascription of "Father" to pope and priest seems out of harmony with what Jesus here says. He should not be understood to be condemning the title to one's real earthly father. Jesus often leaves the exceptions to be supplied.

Regarding this time period, let me quote from Dr. Harold Willmington:

During this time we have the rise of the papacy in the Roman Catholic Church. The word pope means father and at first was applied to all bishops but later only to the Bishop of Rome. During this time period there were many popes, many who were very evil.

Monasticism began at this time. For example Paul the simple prayed 300 times a day, moving stones from one pocket to another to keep count. Anthony the founder of the hermit life ate only salt and bread and never washed or cut his hair. Symeon lived for 20 years on a 60 foot pillar 3 feet in diameter and never once came down. Paul of Thebes lived in solitude for 90 years. Pachomius slept on a rock for 15 years. St. Paula renounced wealth and became a

nun. She was described as "always crying, fasting, and filthy." Benedict controlled his lustful nature by rolling himself naked in a briar patch, end quote.

During this time Mariolatry seems to have taken a firm hold in the Catholic faith. From what I have gathered, this was a matter Mother Teresa encouraged during her life-time.

Let me insert here that in this church age we have the beginning of the worship of Mary. And note that in Thyatira was a woman who led the people into idolatry. This Mary that the Catholics worship is not Jesus' mother. It is a demonic woman who poses as the mother of Jesus.

We not further that to this church, the Lord addressed Himself as the Son of God, not the Son of man. Strauss makes the connection that this may be because during this time the Catholic church began to worship Mary, through whom Jesus became the Son of man. Could this be part of the reason He called Himself the Son of God here? Could be.

During this time period many false teachings entered the church. Tim LaHay gives the following:

*607 - Boniface III made the first pope
709 - kissing the pope's foot
786 - worshipping the images and relics
850 - use of holy water
995 - canonization of dead saints
998 - fasting on Friday and during Lent*

d. Personally - apply this section to each believer spiritually

Well, no doubt there are many various applications to be made to many different believers personally. But I would say an overall application would be is not to tolerate false doctrine.

CONCL: So we bring our studies of the church of Thyatira to a close. This church was commended for her works, her love,

service, faith and patience, and that her works expanded. But we learned that though this seemed like a very loving and energetic church, she tolerated that woman Jezebel to teach and seduce the believers there. The Lord in His great grace gave her time to repent, but she refused and she will go into the great tribulation.

The Lord said He would also kill her children with death and the churches would know that He is the One who searches the kidneys and the hearts. I would interpret that as all the thought processes of every believer. He knows and is concerned about every thought in our hearts.

To those who overcome He will give authority over the nations. They will rule with Him in the millennium and He will give Himself to them. When the trumpet sounds and believers get caught up to heaven, or if we should die before that, in that very moment all of life's trials will fade away and absolutely everything endured in this life will be worth it.