

Fueling Station 9: The Divine Coach

Christ's evaluation of His church:

The Key To Rewards (positive and negative)



A key significance in understanding the race to the kingdom is found in the word “overcome”. Remember in our article “life is a test”, it was Gods idea to put a serpent in the garden and a forbidden tree. Both of these were for the purpose of proving our love and allegiance to God. If we proved our love for Him we would “overcome” the tests and temptations presented to us, and if we failed and listened to the voice of the enemy then we were “overtaken”. The “One” who was found to have perfect love and allegiance was Jesus, who proved to “overcome” the temptations of the evil one and not be “overtaken”. This victory by Jesus as an overcomer made Him our “forerunner” in this race to the kingdom. He has given us by His victory everything we need to prove ourselves as an “overcomer” and receive the victors crown at the end of our race. This is the reason for His evaluation of our “works” on the Day of recompense.

“Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.”

Revelation 3:11-12 NKJV

“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be His God and he shall be My son.”

Revelation 21:7

3528 nikáō(from 3529 /níkē, "victory") – properly, conquer (overcome); " to carry off the victory, come off victorious.' The verb implies a battle" (K. Wuest).

In order to mete out rewards, one must come under scrutiny or evaluation also referred to as judgment:

“I am He who searches minds and hearts and will give to each one of you according to your works”

Revelation 2:23

Ecclesiastes 12:13,14

“13 When all has been heard, the end of the matter is: fear God and keep His commandments, for this applies to every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, every hidden and secret thing, whether it is good or evil.”

*It is important to notice the consistency throughout the Bible, Jesus came to fulfill all things!

The list of rewards to “the one” who overcomes in the church “age” of wilderness wanderings to the kingdom:

When the Apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos, our Lord gave him revelation concerning His judgement. Just like Peter says in his writings that judgement begins at the house of God, John received as first priority, the scrutiny of Christ over His body or “house”. John was given both the highs and the lows, rewards and losses, of seven existing churches in Asia Minor. This evaluation is timeless because it reveals God's heart for His people throughout all ages!

#1 Reward : Eat from the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

Revelation 2:7 ESV

*Paradise is the same word for Garden in Greek and can only mean one thing, that the same place Adam and Eve were kicked out of, the overcomer gets back!

“through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

Revelation 22:2 ESV

“As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”

Song of Solomon 2:3-4 ESV

#2 Reward : Not be hurt by the “second death” but given the “crown of life”

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.”

Revelation 2:10-11 ESV

*Notice a reward is not receiving a negative consequence! We believe that the crown of life and the second death is an either/or for the church. We believe that the crown of life means you go into the presence of God instead of the “great tribulation” which is designed for everyone to repent of areas of themselves they have not “died” to yet.

#3 Reward : Hidden manna to eat & a white stone w/ a new “personal” name.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.”

Revelation 2:17 ESV

*We believe the “hidden manna” are the secret words of Jesus to those in His inner circle very similar to the Priests that got to eat from the alter in the Holy Place, and the white stone was a prize awarded to athletes who were victorious in the “Olympic games” of those times. The stone gave the victor access to the awards banquet where their names were announced.

#4 Reward : “power over the nations” & “the morning star”

“The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star.”

Revelation 2:26-28 ESV

*The morning star is the last star to be seen before the sun comes up, representing the “Wyatt Earp” of the night sky wearing a “star” on his chest and having the authority to uphold the Law! Most Astronomers say this is the planet Venus which interestingly enough is extremely hot and spins in the opposite direction of the earth and most other planets.

#5 Reward : Walk with Jesus in white/be clothed in white garments & not be blotted out of the “Book of Life” but have your name confessed before the Father and His angels!

“Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in

white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.”

Revelation 3:4-5 ESV

*White garments not only represent purity and holiness but back in those days only the wealthy could afford bleach for washing. They were also the garments given to Priests who served in the Temple. Any Priest who had soiled their garments were “blotted” out from serving in the Temple. Having your name confessed before Gods mighty angels probably means that even the angels became subject to you!

#6 Reward : Open door that no one can shut, others will worship you and will know that Jesus loves you, keep you from the “hour of trial” which shall come upon the whole earth, make you a pillar in the temple of My God, never having to go out, write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God-the new Jerusalem and Jesus’ new name!”

““I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.”

Revelation 3:8, 10-12 ESV

*The new name may be a reference to the name written on Jesus thigh “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”. This name, along with the admonition that you will also be worshiped, probably means you will be like Queen Esther given the crown and royal signet ring authority of the King. Esther was also given an “open door” before the King which meant personal access. The Queen will also be able to escape the hour of trial which is the great tribulation coming on the entire earth. For this reason and the fact that the “name” of the New Jerusalem is the “wife” of the Lamb, is the reason we believe that only the true bride will go in the rapture!

#7 Reward : I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne! Revelation 3:20,21

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

Revelation 3:20-21 ESV

*The privilege of dining at the Kings table and ruling from His throne certainly reminds us of King Arthurs knights of the round table. The fact that it was the same privilege Jesus was given with His Father speaks volumes!

The Positive “works” of the Church Christ mentions are noteworthy:



“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.”

Revelation 2:2-3 NKJV

“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

Revelation 2:9 NKJV

“I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”

Revelation 2:13 NKJV

“I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.”

Revelation 2:19 NKJV

“You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”

Revelation 3:4 NKJV

““I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 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.”

Revelation 3:8, 10 NKJV

*Read over those again and listen to the heart of our Lord and the “works” of His kingdom that He enjoys!

The negative consequences of being “overtaken” and not pleasing God:



#1 Removal of lamp stand from its place.

“Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.”

Revelation 2:5 ESV

*The lampstand was positioned in the Holy Place along with the shewbread or bread of the Presence, and the altar of incense before the curtain to the Holy of Holies in Gods Temple. Remember that curtain was ripped in two when Jesus died, giving us access through Him to God. If the “overtaken” do not repent, this incredible privilege will be removed.

#2 Can and will be hurt by the second death.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.”

Revelation 2:11 ESV

*as stated earlier, we believe this to be analogous to the sanctification process of dying to self and living for God. The second death may mean that those who have yet to finish this race of sanctification will “rise unto judgement” during the great tribulation.

#3 Fight against you with the sword of my mouth. Revelation 2:16

“Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.”

Revelation 2:16 ESV

*When Jesus comes back, He has a sword coming out of His mouth. This happens at the final battle of Armageddon. Remember the parable of the Talents and the sheep and goats, when the master returns and speaks boldly to those who were “overtaken”!

#4 Cast into a sickbed and into great tribulation unless they repent, and kill her children with death.

“Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.”

Revelation 2:22-23 ESV

*Remember when the Apostle Paul warns the church of the example of the Israelites in the wilderness and what God did to those who did not please Him. Paul said those examples were for our instruction. We believe the greatest of all wilderness experiences will be in the great tribulation or the times of Jacobs trouble for those who were “overtaken”. God is not mocked, what a man sows that shall he also reap!

#5 He shall rule them with a rod of iron and they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels.

“and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.”

Revelation 2:27 ESV

*The fact that the overcomer in Christ gets the privilege of ruling with a rod of iron, by default, the overtaken become the ones who are ruled!

#6 I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

“Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.”

Revelation 3:3 ESV

*The other warnings in the Scripture about Jesus coming as a thief, again, always refer to having to undergo great tribulation!

#7 I will blot their name out of the Book of Life.

“The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.”

Revelation 3:5 ESV

*An obvious prevention equals an obvious possibility! The question remains what is meant by the book of life? First of all to have your name blotted means it was definitely written in the book to begin with. “Life” is what we are racing for in Christ, which would be all the intimacy, land, and privileges with Him during His millennial reign!

#9 Jesus will make you come and worship before the feet of the overcomer and know that He loved them.

“Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.”

Revelation 3:9 ESV

*Paul argues in the book of Romans that not all Jews are Jews! It is only the “circumcised” of heart that are really Jews. He also warns those who have been grafted in can be cut off again. This warning was given to the church and this is no different. Anyone who overcomes has the privilege of ruling and anyone “overtaken” will bow before them!

#10 I will vomit you out of my mouth.

“So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.”

Revelation 3:16 ESV

*As stated earlier from the book of Leviticus, this refers to being cast out of the Promise Land!

#11 The shame of your nakedness will be revealed.

“I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.”

Revelation 3:18 ESV

*Just like Adam and Eve were ashamed when they sinned and “knew” they were naked at that time, so the “overtaken” will carry that same shame with them. We believe that might last through the great tribulation or possibly throughout the millennium!

#12 I will rebuke and chasten.

“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”
Revelation 3:19 ESV

*”Those whom I love” proves once again that these punishments are for His church!

Reasons for negative reward:

“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”
Revelation 2:4 NKJV

*Leaving our first love we equate to the disciple Peter going back to fishing after Jesus went to the cross. Anything that we put before our devotion to be a disciple of Christ including a secular job shows we have lost our first love!(see article: love in all its fullness)

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.”
Revelation 2:14-15 NKJV

*In short, Balaam was supposed to pronounce a strong warning to the Israelites making their way to the promise land for adopting pagan practices, he didn’t, and the people of God fell in the wilderness. Also, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans is all about headship among Gods people which lead to their downfall. There is no greater answer to the understanding behind the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans than in this article below.

<http://www.bibleone.net/BF07.htm>

“Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. “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.”
Revelation 2:20, 22, 24 NKJV

*It is important to note that sexual immorality is written at the top of almost every list of sins given to the church as examples for Gods disapproval. Eating food sacrificed to idols is a close second. What these have in common are two deep desires of the flesh that take Christians captive from the heart and truly cause spiritual adultery, replacing Jesus as our first love for other lovers. Understand that pornography and gluttony are rampant in every culture of the world!

““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. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”

Revelation 3:1, 4 NKJV

*alive or dead have nothing to do with being a true Christian or being reborn, but everything to do with works of faith that please God or do not. Also, concerning defiled garments please see article on garment theology.

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—”

Revelation 3:15-17 NKJV

*hot water is great for purification and cold water is great for refreshment but lukewarm water has no use in Gods kingdom. We believe the western church especially has adopted this “rich” attitude and neglected to fear of God remembering He will hold everyone to account for their works!

The Standard put forth by the Apostle Paul:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, 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.”

II Timothy 4:7-8 NKJV

*We believe overall, that Pauls statement to “fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith” is what will be evaluated. The “fight” we were supposed to fight is sin. The race we were supposed to finish were our works of righteousness, and the faith we were to keep is our trust in Gods promises. If we do these things like Paul did, we will also love Christs appearing on “that Day” and be “rewarded”!

Questions for reflection:

1. Parents, teachers, and coaches have molded and shaped our lives growing up. How do these examples match the roles of Jesus?
2. Would you say that most Christians look to Jesus more for comfort than to run a race? Give some reasons why this might be the case.
3. The Holy Spirit has one main role noted by Jesus and that is to be our personal “helper”. Look at the greek definition of this word and define in your own words what you believe to be His role:

3875 paráklētos (from 3844 /pará, "from close-beside" and 2564 /kaléō, "make a call") – properly, a legal advocate who makes the right judgment-call because close enough to the situation. 3875 /paráklētos ("advocate, advisor-helper") is the regular term in NT times of an attorney (lawyer) – i.e. someone giving evidence that stands up in court.

4. “Normal” life is stressful enough without “running a race” for God. Contemplate the verse below and reflect on its implications for your life and the call to discipleship:

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Matthew 6:33-34 NKJV

*Remember be a good Berean and be diligent in studying the scriptures to show yourself approved and encourage others to do the same!



Additional Scripture that may support refining and cleansing in the great Tribulation:

Hebrews 6:8 “But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed and its end is to be burned.”

*This sounds like take part “in the lake of fire”.

John 15:6

“If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” (abide = remain. If we remain in Christ)

Philippians 3:8-11

“8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Other judgement/evaluation verses:

Romans 11:21-22 “For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you will also be cut off.”

2Cor.5:10

“10 For we [believers will be called to account and] must all appear before the [a]judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be repaid for what has been done in the body, whether good or bad [that is, each will be held responsible for his actions, purposes, goals, motives—the use or misuse of his time, opportunities and abilities].”

Colossians 3:24-25

“Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.”

*I get what is come to be my own by earning (komizo = greek for repaid) Recompense is another word for this, to receive back what one is due.

1 Peter 4:17 “ Judgement begins with the house of God”

*Just like the book of Revelation begins with Christ’s evaluation of His churches!

Revelation 22:12 - “And behold, I am coming quickly and my reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”