

Through the Bible

REVELATION - I

Zac Poonen

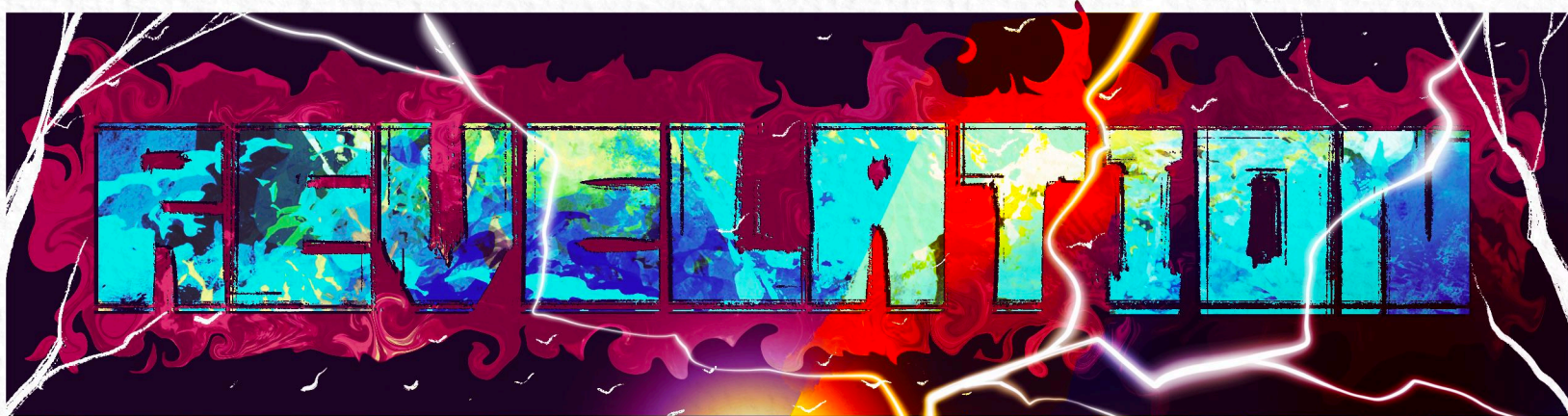


Illustrations by Vinay Kuruville

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

69, PARADISE ENCLAVE, BELAHALLI
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THE WORD
REVELATION
MEANS "AN
UNVEILING". GOD
PULLED THE
CURTAIN AWAY
AND SHOWED JOHN
THREE THINGS.

1. AN UNVEILING OF
CHRIST HIMSELF
IN HIS GLORY
(CHAPTER 1);

2. AN UNVEILING OF
CHRIST AND HIS
CHURCH -- THE
INNER STATE OF
SOME OF THE
CHURCHES
(CHAPTERS 2 AND
3);

3. AN UNVEILING OF
CHRIST AND HIS
KINGDOM -- HOW
THINGS WILL BE AT
THE CLOSE OF
THIS AGE
(CHAPTERS 4 TO
22).



1:19 ALSO DIVIDES THE BOOK OF REVELATION INTO **THREE** PARTS: THE THINGS WHICH YOU **HAVE** SEEN (CHAPTER 1), THE THINGS WHICH ARE AT **PRESENT** (CHAPTERS 2 AND 3), AND THE THINGS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE **FUTURE** (CHAPTERS 4 TO 22).



THIS REVELATION WAS **GIVEN NOT ONLY** FOR JOHN, BUT FOR **ALL CHRIST'S BOND-SERVANTS** (1:1). **BOND-SERVANTS** IS ANOTHER WORD FOR "**SLAVES**". GOD HAS HIS SLAVES AND HIS SERVANTS. GOD HAS **SERVANTS** WHO WILL SERVE HIM AS LONG AS HE **CARES** FOR THEM AND **PROVIDES** FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER AND MONEY FOR THEM.

A **SLAVE** OF GOD HOWEVER HAS GIVEN UP **ALL HIS RIGHTS**. IF GOD GIVES HIM FOOD AND SHELTER AND MONEY HE IS **HAPPY**. IF GOD GIVES HIM **NOTHING**, HE IS **STILL** HAPPY. HE WILL **JOYFULLY** CONTINUE TO BE A SLAVE - AS THE SLAVE IN EXODUS 21:5 SAID, "I **LOVE** MY MASTER. I WILL **NOT** GO OUT FREE."



IF **THAT** IS OUR **ATTITUDE** TOWARDS GOD, THEN WE WILL **UNDERSTAND** THIS BOOK. OTHERWISE WE MAY USE OUR **CLEVER BRAIN** AND STUDY THIS BOOK ALL OUR LIVES AND GET MANY **FANCIFUL INTERPRETATIONS** OF THE **SYMBOLS** IN THIS BOOK -- BUT WE WILL BE TOTALLY **WRONG**.

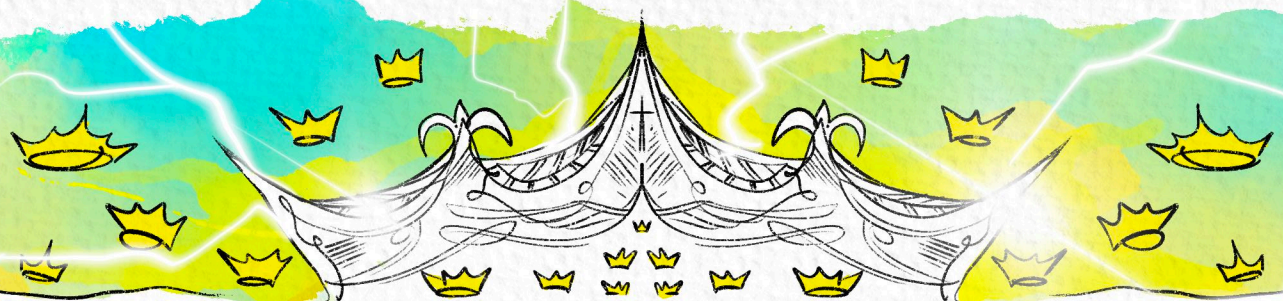
1:1 ALSO SAYS, "HE **SIGNIFIED** IT" (KJV). THE WORD '**SIGNIFIED**' MEANS "SHOWED BY **SIGNS**," THAT INFORMS US THAT THE **WHOLE BOOK** WILL BE FULL OF **SIGNS**.



IN 1:3, WE READ, "**BLESSED** IS THE MAN WHO **READS** THIS BOOK AND **OBEYS** THE THINGS WRITTEN IN IT."



THE BOOK OF REVELATION HAS **NOT** BEEN GIVEN TO US TO MAKE **CHARTS** ABOUT THE **FUTURE**.



JOHN WRITES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES FROM "JESUS CHRIST THE RULER OF ALL THE KINGS OF EARTH" (1:5).

AND IMMEDIATELY HE TALKS ABOUT **CHRIST'S RETURN**, "HE IS COMING IN THE **CLOUDS**" (1:7). WHEN CHRIST RETURNS, HE WILL **NOT** COME SECRETLY. HE WILL COME AS HE **HIMSELF** SAID, LIKE THE **LIGHTNING** SHINING FROM ONE END OF THE SKY TO ANOTHER -- THAT **EVERYONE** WILL **SEE** (MATTHEW 24:27).



THERE WILL BE **NO SECRET** RAPTURE OF THE **CHURCH BEFORE** THE **TRIBULATION** AS MANY **FALSELY** BELIEVE. THERE IS ONLY **ONE** COMING OF CHRIST -- **AFTER** THE **TRIBULATION** -- AND THAT IS WHEN THE **CHURCH** WILL BE **RAPTURED** TO MEET HIM IN THE **SKY**. EVERY EYE WILL SEE US BEING TAKEN **UP** TO HEAVEN.

IN 1:9, WE SEE JOHN REFERRING TO HIMSELF AS "YOUR **BROTHER**." HE WAS **NOT** POPE JOHN OR **BISHOP** JOHN OR **REVEREND** JOHN OR EVEN **PASTOR** JOHN. MOST OF **TODAY'S** LEADERS DO **NOT** FOLLOW JOHN, BECAUSE THEIR SENSE OF **SUPERIORITY** AND THEIR **DESIRE** TO **EXALT** THEMSELVES OVER **OTHER** BELIEVERS WILL MAKE THEM WANT TO **RETAIN** THEIR **TITLES**.



JOHN WAS ALSO "A **FELLOW PARTNER** IN THE **TRIBULATION**" (1:9). THE BOOK OF REVELATION HAS A LOT TO SAY ABOUT **TRIBULATION**. BUT IF ONE IS TO PREACH ABOUT TRIBULATION, HE NEEDS TO HAVE GONE **THROUGH** TRIBULATION HIMSELF **FIRST**.

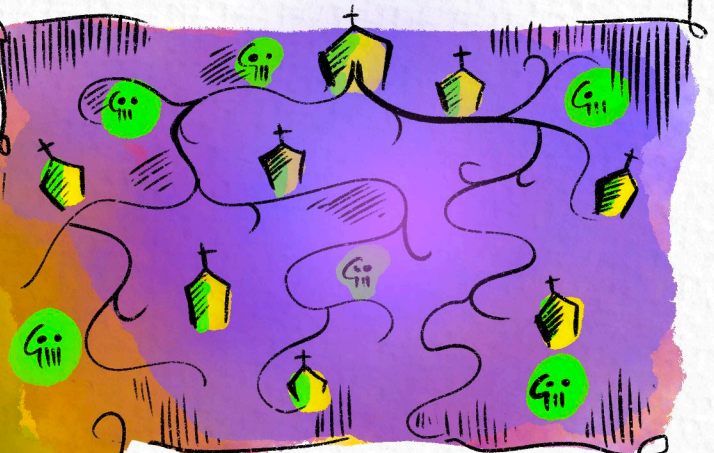
GOD ALLOWS HIS **GREATEST SAINTS** TO GO THROUGH **TRIBULATION** FROM **MAN**, IN ORDER TO **MANIFEST** THEIR **FAITH** AND THUS TO **GLORIFY** HIS NAME BEFORE **DEMONS** AND **MEN**.



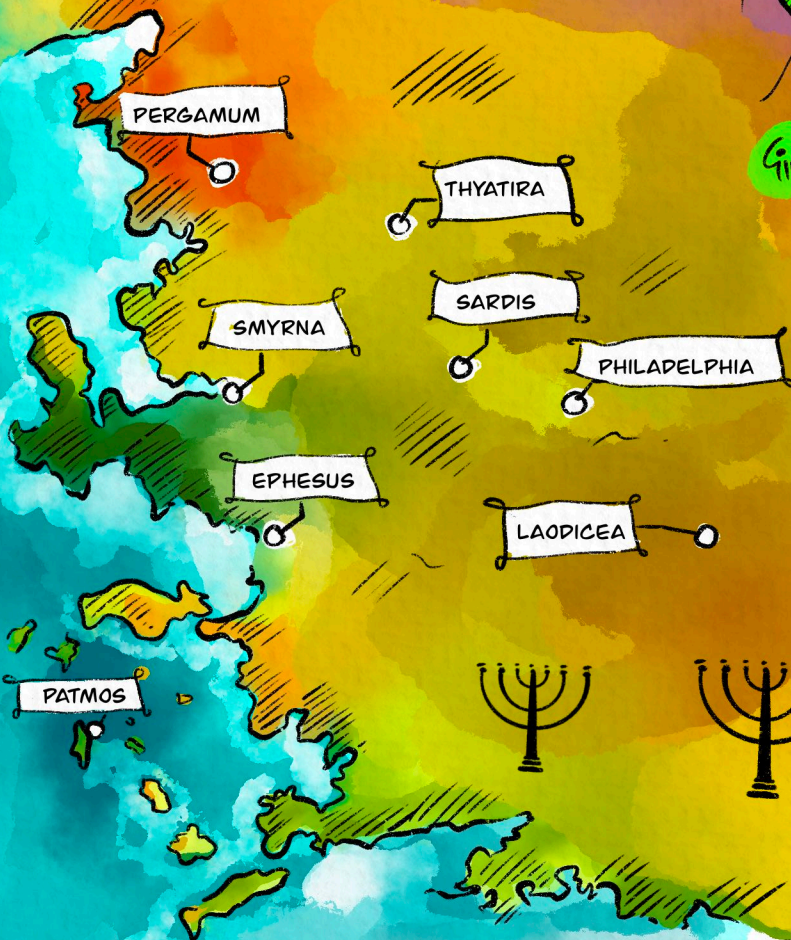
JOHN CONTINUES: "I WAS IN THE **SPIRIT** ON THE LORD'S DAY" (1:10). IT'S ONLY WHEN WE ARE "**IN THE SPIRIT**" THAT WE CAN **UNDERSTAND** WHAT **GOD REVEALS**.

"AND I HEARD A **LOUD** VOICE LIKE THE SOUND OF A **TRUMPET**" (1:10). WHEN WE ARE **TUNED** TO THE HOLY SPIRIT'S **FREQUENCY** IN OUR HEARTS (WHICH MEANS HAVING A **CLEAR CONSCIENCE** WITH GOD AND MEN), WE WILL HEAR **GOD'S VOICE**, LOUD AS A **TRUMPET**.

THE LORD TOLD JOHN TO WRITE DOWN WHAT HE SAW AND TO SEND IT TO **SEVEN CHURCHES**.



BUT MAN HAS USED HIS **WISDOM** AND **COMBINED** MANY CHURCHES INTO **ONE DENOMINATION** -- AND THUS **CORRUPTION** HAS SPREAD TO ALL THE **CHURCHES**.



ALL THESE CHURCHES WERE **WITHIN A CIRCLE** OF ABOUT **100 KILOMETRES** RADIUS. YET THEY DID **NOT** BELONG TO **ONE DENOMINATION**. THEY WERE ALL **INDEPENDENT** CHURCHES. THEY DID **NOT** HAVE A BISHOP RULING OVER ALL OF THEM. EACH CHURCH HAD ITS OWN **ELDERS**.



WHEN JOHN TURNED AROUND, HE DID NOT SEE **ONE** LAMPSTAND WITH **SEVEN** BRANCHES, AS IN THE **OLD TESTAMENT** TABERNACLE. HE SAW **SEVEN SEPARATE** LAMP STANDS. THAT SYMBOLISED **SEVEN INDEPENDENT** CHURCHES.

THEN JOHN DESCRIBES JESUS IN **SYMBOLIC** LANGUAGE -- SYMBOLS OF HIS **PURITY** AND **POWER**. THE **WORD** OF GOD IS SEEN AS GOING OUT OF HIS MOUTH AS A **SHARP SWORD** (1:16).

THE **SEVEN STARS** IN HIS HAND WERE THE **MESSENGERS** OF THE **CHURCHES** (1:20).

THE ELDER WHO HAD THE GIFT OF **PREACHING** THE **WORD** WAS CALLED "THE **MESSANGER**"

JOHN, WHO ONCE **LEANED** ON JESUS AT THE **LAST SUPPER**, NOW **FALLS** ON HIS **FACE** AS A **DEAD** MAN BEFORE THE **LORD**. WHENEVER WE SEE THE **GLORY** OF THE **LORD**, WE WILL **HUMBLE** OURSELVES.

JESUS HAS THE **KEYS** OF **DEATH**. WE CANNOT GO THROUGH THE **DOOR** OF **DEATH**, UNTIL HE OPEN IT. SO LET US NOT BE **AFRAID**

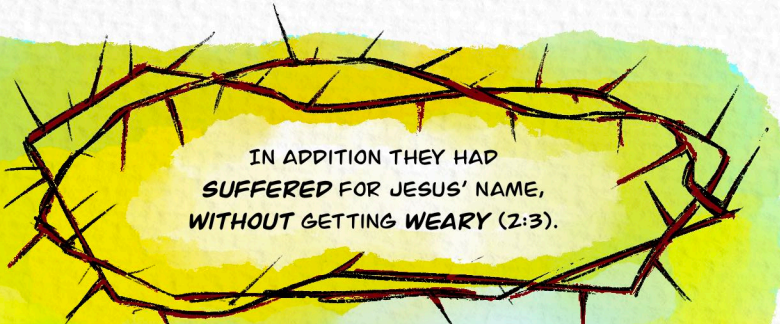
JOHN HAD TO SEE THE **GLORY** OF **JESUS** FIRST BEFORE HE SAW THE **BACKSLIDDEN** CONDITION OF THE **CHURCHES** AROUND HIM. OTHERWISE HE WOULD HAVE BEEN **DISCOURAGED**.

JESUS SPOKE TO JOHN (WHO HAD SUFFERED **PERSECUTION** FOR SO MANY YEARS) THE **SAME** WORD THAT HE HAD ALWAYS SPOKEN TO HIS APOSTLES WHEN HE WAS ON **EARTH**, "**DON'T BE AFRAID**" (1:17). THAT IS THE WORD THAT COMES TO **US** ALSO AS WE FACE THE PROSPECT OF **PERSECUTION** AND **TRIBULATION** IN THE FUTURE.

THE ELDER AND THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS HAD MANY **GOOD** QUALITIES (2:2). THEY HAD MANY **GOOD DEEDS** AND **HARD WORK** AND **PERSEVERANCE** TO THEIR CREDIT.



IN ADDITION THEY HAD **SUFFERED** FOR JESUS' NAME, **WITHOUT GETTING WEARY** (2:3).



Ephesus

NO!

NO!

THEY WOULD NOT TOLERATE **EVIL** MEN, WHICH MEANS THEY JUDGED **SIN** IN THEIR MIDST. THEY WOULD NOT ENDURE **FALSE** PROPHETS EITHER, WHICH MEANS THAT THEY EXPOSED **FALSE DOCTRINE**.

BUT THE LORD TOLD THEM THAT ALL THIS WAS **WORTHLESS** BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T **LOVE** HIM LIKE THEY LOVED HIM AT **FIRST** (2:4).



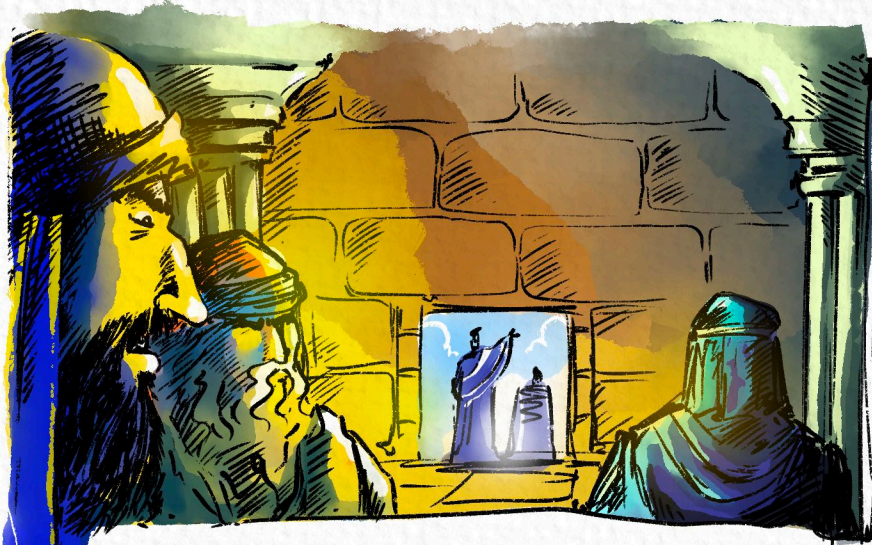
HERE HE TELLS THE OVERCOMERS, THAT HE WILL GRANT THEM "TO EAT FROM THE **TREE OF LIFE** WHICH IS IN THE **PARADISE OF GOD**" (2:7). THE **OVERCOMERS** WILL GET WHAT **ADAM** MISSED.

THE CHURCH IN **SMYRNA** WAS A **SUFFERING** CHURCH. IT WAS FACING A LOT OF **TRIBULATION** (2:9).

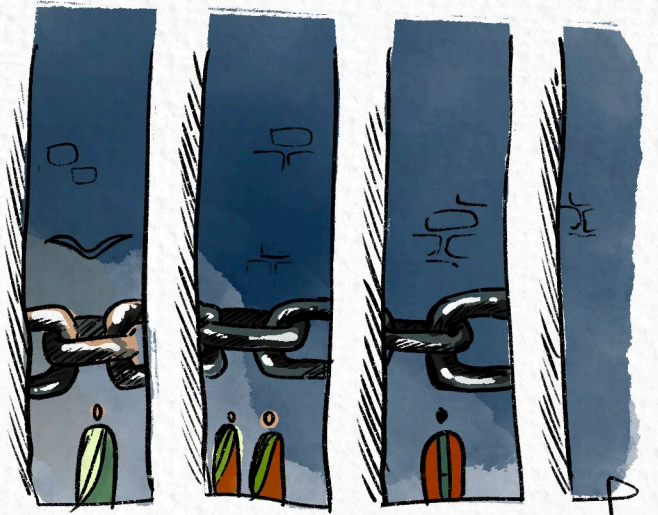
Smyrna



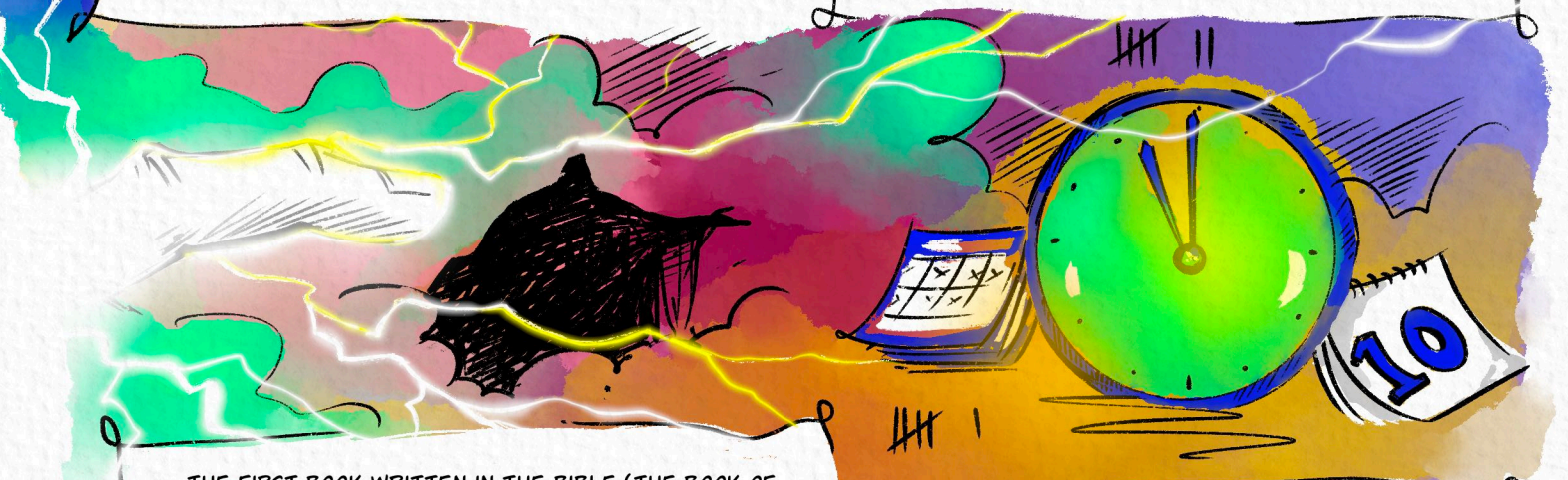
THE LORD WAS VERY **HAPPY** WITH THIS CHURCH FOR IT WAS **FAITHFUL** TO HIM IN THE MIDST OF **TRIBULATION**. GOD LOVES HIS PEOPLE AND PERMITS THEM TO FACE **TRIBULATION** -- TO **PURIFY** THEM. TRIBULATION HAD MADE THIS CHURCH **SPIRITUALLY RICH** (2:9).



THEY WERE BEING **PERSECUTED** BY PEOPLE WHO CALLED THEMSELVES **JEW**S (THE PEOPLE OF GOD) BUT WERE ACTUALLY THE **SYNAGOGUE** OF **SATAN**. TODAY ALSO THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO **CALL** THEMSELVES **CHRISTIANS** BUT WHO **PERSECUTE** THE **GODLY**.

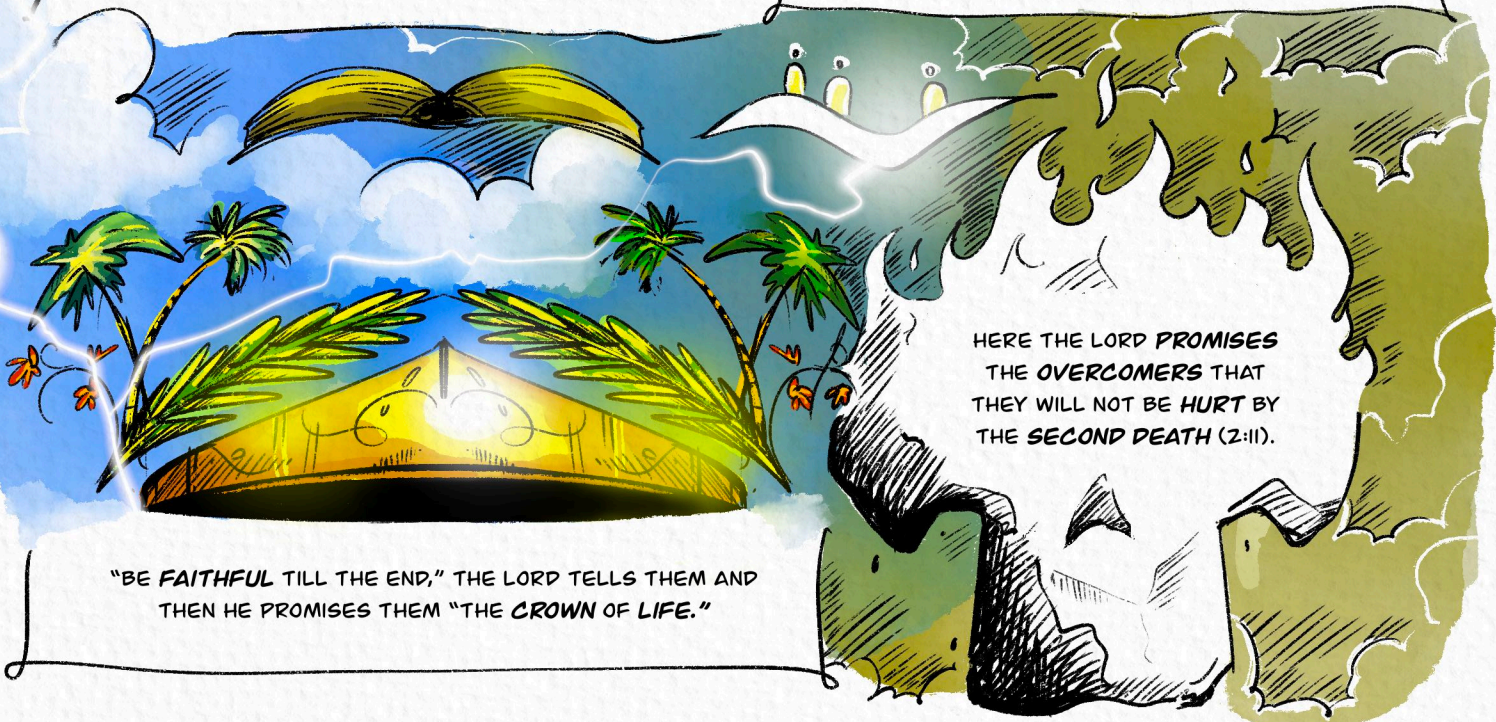


THE LORD'S WORD TO THIS CHURCH WAS WHAT HE TOLD JOHN "**DON'T** BE **AFRAID** OF WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO **SUFFER**" (2:10). THIS COULD BE A WORD FOR SOME OF US **TODAY**. "THE **DEVIL** WILL PUT SOME OF YOU INTO **PRISON**. BUT **DON'T** BE **AFRAID**."



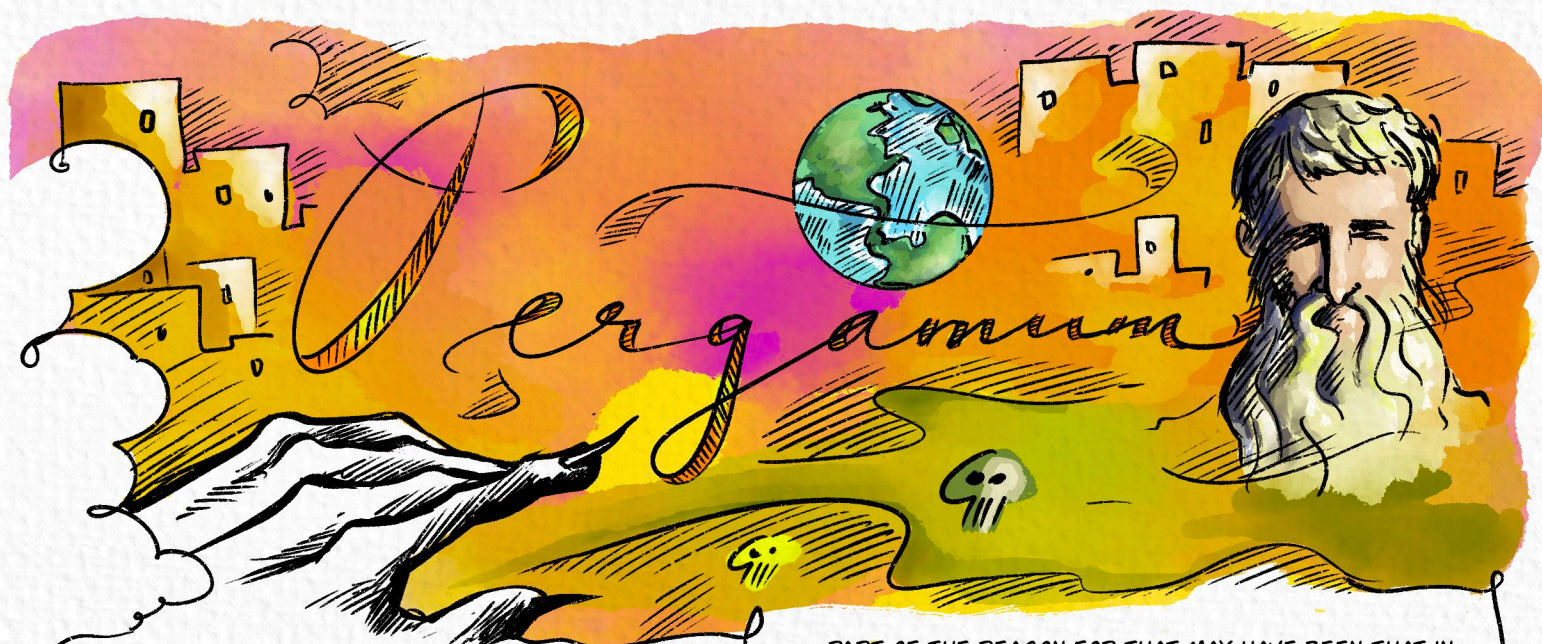
THE FIRST BOOK WRITTEN IN THE BIBLE (THE BOOK OF **JOB**) TEACHES US THAT **GOD** HAS TO GIVE **SATAN** **PERMISSION** BEFORE HE CAN DO ANYTHING TO **GOD'S** SERVANTS. AND IF **GOD** ALLOWS YOU TO BE PUT INTO **PRISON**, IT WILL BE "SO YOU WILL BE **TESTED**" (2:10).

GOD DETERMINES THE **EXACT PERIOD** OF OUR TRIALS. HERE THE LORD TOLD THEM THAT THEIR TRIAL WOULD BE "ONLY FOR **TEN DAYS**" (2:10).



"BE **FAITHFUL** TILL THE **END**," THE LORD TELLS THEM AND THEN HE PROMISES THEM "THE **CROWN OF LIFE**."

HERE THE LORD **PROMISES** THE **OVERCOMERS** THAT THEY WILL NOT BE **HURT** BY THE **SECOND DEATH** (2:11).



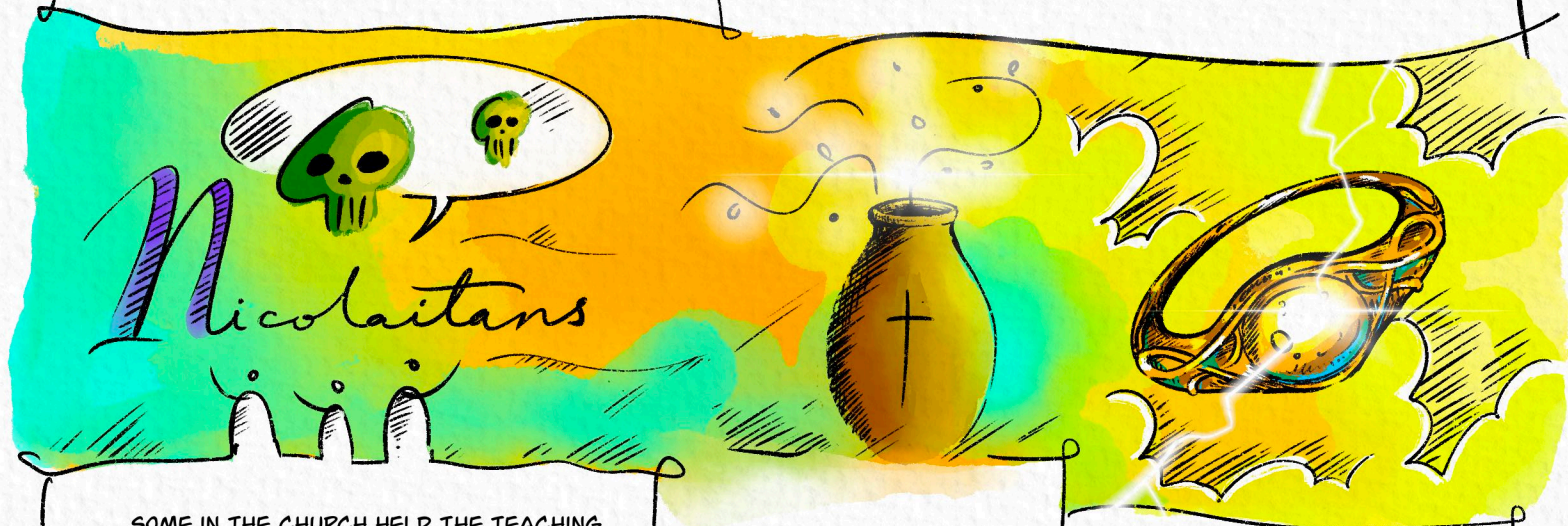
THE CHURCH IN PERGAMUM WAS A **WORLDLY** CHURCH. THE LORD SAID TO THEM, "I KNOW YOU ARE LIVING WHERE **SATAN'S THRONE** IS" (2:13). THAT INDICATES THAT SATAN HAD A **SPECIAL INTEREST** IN THAT CITY.

PART OF THE REASON FOR THAT MAY HAVE BEEN THAT IN THAT CITY THERE WAS A VERY **FAITHFUL SERVANT** OF GOD NAMED **ANTIPAS** (2:13). WHEN SATAN SAW HOW **WHOLEHEARTED** ANTIPAS WAS, HE **DETERMINED** TO MAKE HIS **HEADQUARTERS** IN THAT CITY TO **HARASS** HIM.



THE LORD CALLED HIM, "MY **WITNESS**, MY **FAITHFUL** ONE." SATAN FINALLY GOT HIM **KILLED**.

NOW THE CHURCH IN PERGAMUM STARTED FOLLOWING THE TEACHING OF **BALAAAM**. THAT MEANS THEY RAN AFTER **MONEY** AND ALLOWED **IMMORALITY** IN THEIR MIDST, AS BALAAAM DID.



SOME IN THE CHURCH HELD THE TEACHING OF THE **NICOLAITANS**. WE **DON'T KNOW** WHAT **EXACTLY** THE TEACHING OF THE NICOLAITANS WAS, BUT IT WAS SOMETHING THAT GOD **HATED**. THE LORD CALLED THEM TO **REPENT**, AS OTHERWISE HE WOULD **JUDGE** THEM (2:16).

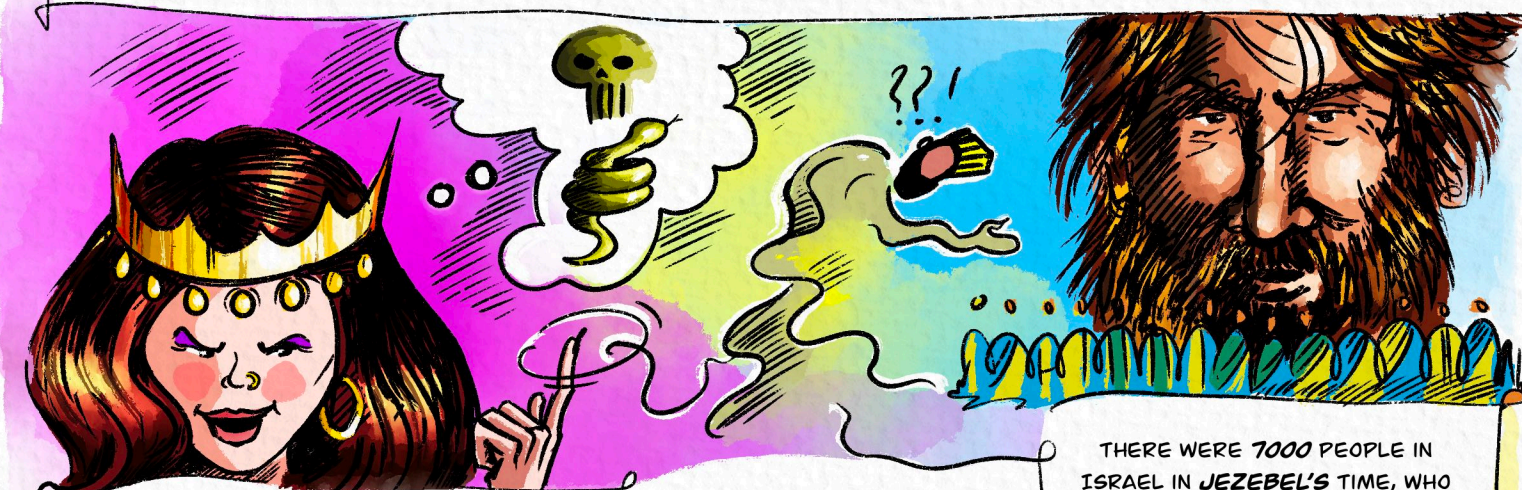
THE LORD PROMISED THE **OVERCOMERS** THERE THAT HE WOULD GIVE THEM SOME **SECRET REVELATIONS** ("HIDDEN MANNA")

HE WOULD ALSO GIVE THEM A **STONE** (LIKE A **WEDDING RING** WITH A **DIAMOND**) WITH A **NEW NAME** WRITTEN ON IT (2:17).

THE CHURCH IN **THYATIRA** WAS AN **ADULTEROUS** CHURCH. THEY HAD MANY WORKS, AND LOVE, FAITH, SERVICE AND PERSEVERANCE. BUT ALONG WITH ALL OF THAT, THERE WAS ALSO **SPIRITUAL ADULTERY** IN THEIR MIDST.



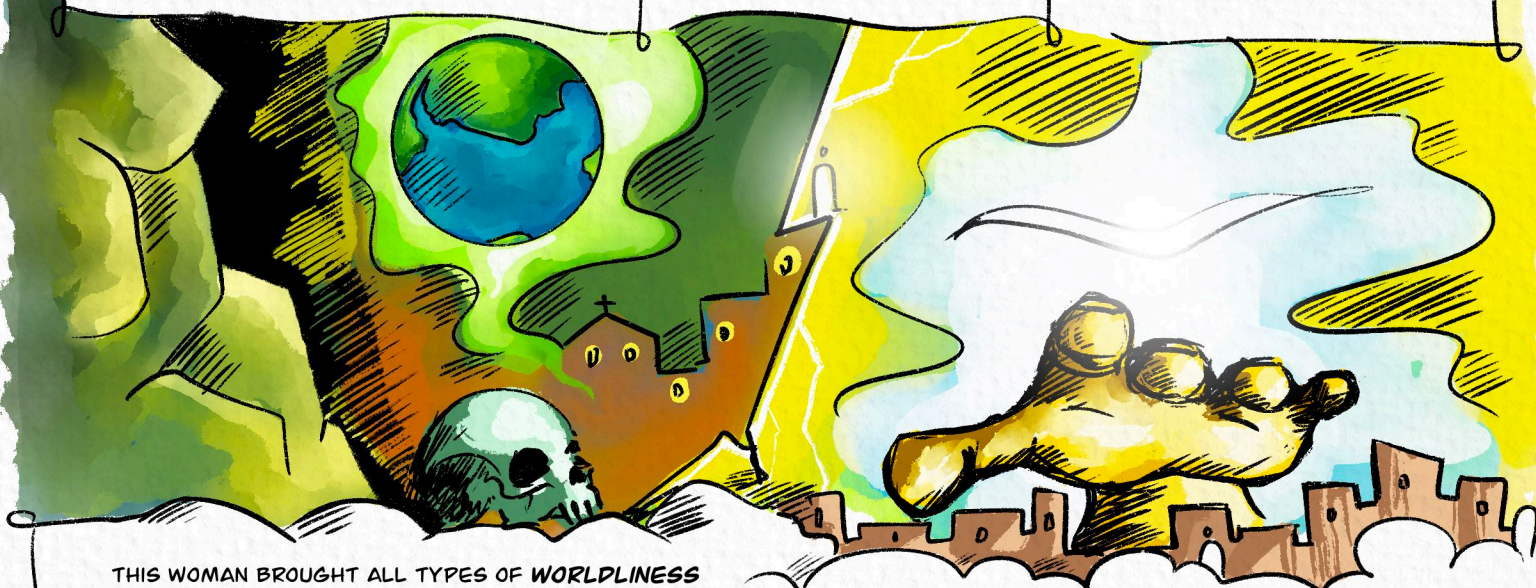
THERE WAS A WOMAN THERE, WHOM THE LORD REFERS TO AS **JEZEBEL**. SHE WAS PROBABLY THE **ELDER'S WIFE**, SINCE THE WORD '**WOMAN**' HERE CAN ALSO BE TRANSLATED AS '**WIFE**.' THE **ELDER** HERE WAS BEING **CONTROLLED** BY HIS **WIFE**.



QUEEN JEZEBEL IN ISRAEL **CONTROLLED** HER HUSBAND **AHAB**. HE WAS A **WEAK** MAN WHO WAS EASILY **MANIPULATED** BY HIS **WIFE**

MANY **CHURCH-ELDERS** ARE LIKE THAT, WITHOUT A **SPIRITUAL BACKBONE**. THEIR **WIVES** **CONTROL** THEM.

THERE WERE **7000** PEOPLE IN ISRAEL IN **JEZEBEL'S** TIME, WHO HAD **NOT** WORSHIPPED **IDOLS**. BUT **JEZEBEL** WAS **NOT** AFRAID OF ANY OF THEM. SHE WAS AFRAID OF ONLY **ONE** MAN -- **ELIJAH**.



THIS WOMAN BROUGHT ALL TYPES OF **WORLDLINESS** INTO THAT CHURCH. AND THE LORD WARNED SAYING THAT HE WOULD **SEVERELY PUNISH** ALL WHO LISTENED TO HER TEACHINGS, WHICH HE CALLS "**THE DEEP TRUTHS OF SATAN**" (2:22--24).

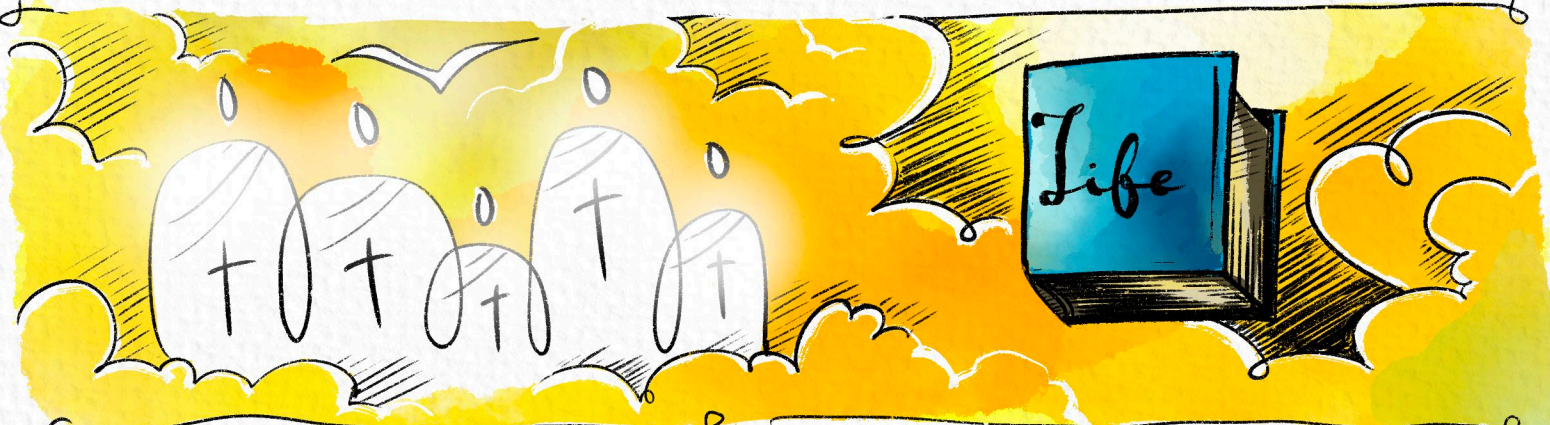
THE **OVERCOMERS** ARE PROMISED **SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY** (JUST AS GOD GAVE **ELIJAH**) AND THEY WILL **RULE** THE **NATIONS** WITH A **ROD OF IRON** ONE DAY (2:26, 27).



THE CHURCH IN SARDIS WAS A **HYPOCRITICAL** CHURCH. IT HAD A NAME THAT IT WAS **ALIVE**, BUT IT WAS **SPIRITUALLY DEAD**.

THE ELDER HAD MADE A **NAME** FOR HIMSELF THROUGH HIS **PREACHING**. HIS **DOCTRINES** WERE ALL **EVANGELICAL**. BUT HE **DIDN'T** HAVE A **LIFE** TO BACK UP HIS **PREACHING**. HE WAS A **COMPROMISER**. HE LIVED ON HIS **NAME** AND HIS **REPUTATION**.

BUT THE LORD NOTICED THAT IN HIS CHURCH THERE WERE A **FEW** BROTHERS (PROBABLY YOUNG BROTHERS) WHO WERE **ZEALOUS** AND **PURE**, WHO HAD **NOT CORRUPTED** THEIR **GARMENTS**, AND WHO WERE **MORE SPIRITUAL** THAN THEIR **ELDER** (3:4).



THE **OVERCOMERS** WERE **PROMISED** THAT THEY WOULD BE **CLOTHED** IN **WHITE GARMENTS** (3:5).

THOSE WHO DO **NOT OVERCOME** ARE **WARNED** HERE THAT THEIR NAMES WOULD BE "**ERASED FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE**" (3:5).



THE CHURCH IN **PHILADELPHIA** WAS THE **FAITHFUL** CHURCH. THE ELDER WAS **FAITHFUL**, AND SO THE CHURCH WAS **FAITHFUL**. THE LORD TOLD THEM, "I HAVE PUT BEFORE YOU AN **OPEN DOOR** WHICH **NOBODY** CAN **SHUT**" (3:8).