**A Pillar, A City**

**By Arlen Chitwood of** [**Lamp Broadcast**](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

*He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. 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 out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.* ([Revelation 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV))

If this message to the church in Philadelphia is to be looked upon as referring to a particular period in Church history, it could only be placed during a time which began in the nineteenth century and extended to the end of the dispensation. Then, the succeeding message to the church in Laodicea ([Revelation 3:14ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.14ff&t=NKJV)) would cover the same time as well.

Both messages form continuations of two segments of Christendom referred to in the message to the preceding church, the church in Sardis (those with undefiled garments, and those with a name that they lived but were dead). The message to the church in Philadelphia constitutes a continuation of the former segment (those with undefiled garments [[Revelation 3:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.1-6&t=NKJV)]); and the message to the church in Laodicea constitutes a continuation of the latter segment (those with a name that they lived but were dead), with both extending to the end of the dispensation.

But, as evident from Scriptures such as [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV) and [Luke 18:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+18.8&t=NKJV), along with the arrangement of the seven churches in [Revelation 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3&t=NKJV), that segment of Christendom represented by the church in Philadelphia could only continue in *a diminishing manner*. This segment of Christendom *could only progressively be engulfed by that segment of Christendom represented by the church in Laodicea.*

The status of *Christians alone* is in view in the messages to the seven churches; and the condition in which Christians find themselves, as viewed in these messages, is always brought about by works. In this respect, the reference to a condition described by the word “*dead*” could only refer to *a spiritually destitute condition* brought about by the absence of acceptable works, which in [James 2:14-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14-26&t=NKJV) is associated with *a dead faith*.

Such individuals in the church in Sardis must be looked upon in an opposite sense to those in the same church who had not defiled their garments. Thus, the word “*dead*” could be equated with *defiled*; and in the message to the church in Laodicea, the same condition is described another way by the word *naked* ([James 2:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.17-18&t=NKJV)).

The “*white garments*” are also in view in the message to the church in Laodicea (as in the message to the church in Sardis); and those described as “*naked*” were said to be in a position wherein they would have been able to array themselves in “*white garments*” through works (as were their counterparts in Sardis), a position that could never be held by an unsaved person because of his alienated position outside Christ ([James 2:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.15&t=NKJV), [18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.18&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Revelation 19:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-8&t=NKJV)).

The church in Philadelphia is mentioned first, calling attention to an open door set before those who had exercised *patient endurance* through the trials and testing of this life (“*patience*” [[Revelation 3:10 NIV](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NIV)] should be translated “patient endurance”). The full fruition of the work of the reformers and those who followed in their steps appears to be in view in the message to the church in Philadelphia; and such a fruition could refer only to the condition in which the Church, for the first time following the Reformation, found itself during the nineteenth century.

Two things marked the activities of Christians during those days:

1) Worldwide missionary activity, paralleled only by the missionary activity of Christians during the first century of the Church’s existence.

2) A restoration of the great truths surrounding Christ’s return, seen in the first-century Church.

If matters are viewed in this respect, *the open door* may relate to the former and *the patient endurance* to the latter.

(See [Clothed in White Garments](http://bibleone.net/JSC09.htm) for comments concerning the association of “patient endurance” on the part of Christians with events surrounding Christ’s return.)

*The planting* and *watering* would have been carried on by the sixteenth century reformers and those who followed in their steps during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but the forthcoming *increase* that God would give awaited the Church during the nineteenth century (*cf*. [1 Corinthians 3:5-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.5-7&t=NKJV)). Missionary endeavor became a major activity of the Church in the sixteenth century, and there was a beginning of the restoration of prophetic truth during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but the full fruition of the entire matter was not seen until the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century, God raised-up great missionary-minded individuals who entered into the labors of the reformers and those following in their steps, taking advantage of open doors in countries worldwide; and during this same time, God raised-up great prophetic students who built upon the work of their seventeenth and eighteenth century predecessors.

God continued to raise-up great missionary-minded individuals and great prophetic students for over one hundred years, extending well into the twentieth century. But then events took a different course. Mission doors around the world began to close, and, correspondingly, the ranks of the great teachers of prophecy began to diminish. In this respect, there is an apparent connection between the Church being allowed to involve itself in great missionary activity and the ministry of the prophetic word. Such a connection existed at the beginning of the dispensation, and such also existed near the end of the dispensation.

The terminus of the matter though has, for the past few decades, been rapidly moving more and more away from that sphere of activity typified by the Philadelphian church and moving more and more toward that sphere of activity typified by the Laodicean church. The deteriorating effect produced by the leaven that the woman placed in the three measures of meal in [Matthew 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.33&t=NKJV) could only cause the Laodicean church to become more and more prominent until, for all practical purposes, *that which is seen in this church alone would prevail as the dispensation was brought to a close.*

**The Hour of Trial**

*Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial that shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.* ([Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV))

The words “*hour of trial* [KJV: ‘temptation’]” in [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV) are taken by most Bible students to be a reference to the coming time of *Tribulation*, with the promise being given in the message to the church in Philadelphia that Christians will not enter into this time. The word, “*from*” is a translation of the Greek word “*ek*,” meaning “out of.” Thus, the correct translation is, “I also will keep you *out* of the hour of trial . . . .”

And many Bible students, seeing the “*hour of trial*” as a reference to the coming Tribulation period, see this verse as a promise that Christians will be kept *out of this time, out of the Tribulation*. That is, they see this verse as a promise to Christians that they will be removed from the earth before the Tribulation begins.

In turn, this has also led many Bible students to follow a selective rapture ideology, for all Christians are not included in this promise. Note that only those who have *kept My command to persevere* have been promised that they will be kept “*out of the hour of trial . . . .*”

Thus, if this verse centers on a promise that Christians will be removed before the coming Tribulation, then a major problem exists, for a teaching of this nature would be in direct conflict with that which Scripture reveals concerning the rapture. Scripture is quite clear from both the Old Testament types and the New Testament antitype that the rapture will be *all-inclusive*.  *All Christians* will be removed at this time, not just those who have *kept the word of His patience.*

The Tribulation comprises the last seven years of Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. And, accordingly, this period of time has to do with seven years that will complete God’s dealings with Israel during the preceding dispensation.

This preceding dispensation was interrupted seven years short of completion. Israel’s sin had reached an apex (at Calvary); and God stepped in, stopped the chronometer marking off time for the dispensation, and instituted a new dispensation. Israel was set aside, and fifty-three days following the events surrounding Calvary, God sent His Spirit into the world to procure a bride for His Son. God, at this time, through events beginning on the day of Pentecost, called into existence *one new man* that was neither Jew nor Gentile; and the Spirit began His search for the bride among those comprising this *new man*, a search that would last for one dispensation, for 2,000 years.

Once the Spirit has completed His search, this *new man* (comprised of all Christians) will be removed and dealt with at Christ’s judgment seat in the heavens. Then, once this has been accomplished, God will turn back to Israel and complete His dealings with this nation during Man’s Day, completing the last seven years of the previous dispensation.

This will complete Man’s 6,000-year Day. Christ will then return, restore Israel, overthrow Gentile world power, and the 1,000-year Messianic Era will be ushered in.

[Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV) really has nothing to do with either the rapture or the Tribulation. Both are dealt with in the book of Revelation, showing a pre-Tribulation rapture of all Christians. But neither the rapture nor the Tribulation is dealt with in this verse. The rapture is dealt with in [Revelation 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.10&t=NKJV); [4:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+4.1-2&t=NKJV)a, and the Tribulation is dealt with in [Revelation 6-19a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6-19a&t=NKJV). But [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV), understood within context, can clearly be seen to deal with something else entirely.

[Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV), within context, has to do with *works emanating out of faithfulness* (*cf*. [James 2:14-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14-26&t=NKJV)), *with a view to overcoming* (*cf*. [James 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.8&t=NKJV), [10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.10&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.12&t=NKJV) [10a]). And the Christians in Philadelphia were promised that, because of their faithfulness, they would be kept out of a particular time of testing/trials — “*that shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth*.”

This promised *deliverance* could only be the same as that which is seen in what is commonly called “the Lord’s prayer” in [Matthew 6:9-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+6.9-13&t=NKJV): “*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one* [Satan] . . .” ([Matthew 6:13a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+6.13a&t=NKJV)). This would be the same temptation that Christ spoke of in [Mark 14:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+14.38&t=NKJV) and that Paul wrote about in [1 Corinthians 7:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+7.5&t=NKJV). And it is the same temptation from which the Lord promised *deliverance* in [2 Peter 2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+2.9&t=NKJV).

Tests or trials are seen in Scripture within two spheres. They are seen as something that God uses in connection with the maturing process, with a view to *the person ultimately being approved at the judgment seat* ([James 1:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.2-4&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV)); and they are seen as something that *Satan uses in his efforts to bring about defeat in a Christian’s life* ([Mark 14:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+14.38&t=NKJV); [James 1:13-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.13-15&t=NKJV)). The promise concerning *deliverance* in [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV) would have to be understood within the latter frame of reference, in keeping with Christ’s statement to His disciples in [Matthew 6:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+6.13&t=NKJV).

This “trial [testing]” by Satan *was about to* (literal rendering from the Greek text) come upon “*the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth*.” The fact that this testing would be worldwide is another thing that has led many individuals to believe that the coming Tribulation was in view. But, not so. *Christians* are being dealt with, not the world at large; and the expression, “*the whole world,*” must be understood in the same sense as it is used in [Colossians 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.6&t=NKJV), where *Christians alone* are also in view.

In [Colossians 1:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.5-6&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.23&t=NKJV), Paul states that the gospel (his gospel, the good news surrounding the mystery that had been revealed to him) had been proclaimed throughout “*all the world,*” “*to every creature under heaven*.” However, the message in this gospel, in Paul’s gospel — “*if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel*” ([Colossians 1:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.23&t=NKJV)) — was for *Christians alone*. The content of the message restricts this good news to Christians, allowing for only one understanding of the passage. To “*every creature under heaven*” can only be a reference to Christians (all Christians) scattered throughout the then known world, not to unsaved individuals in the world as well.

And the extent of the promise surrounding deliverance from a coming time of testing/trials in [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV) is the same. It is a promise made to *faithful Christians* relative to a time of testing/trials that Satan would bring upon Christians (all Christians) scattered throughout the then known world, *seeking to bring about their defeat.* They, because of their faithfulness, would overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. And, by and through this means, they would be delivered out of the onslaughts of Satan, as seen in [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV).

And the context of this verse is *in complete keeping* with this thought, not with thoughts surrounding the rapture. Efforts to use [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV) as a verse relating to the rapture can only have *one end result, which is negative*. Such efforts can only serve *to do away with that which actually is dealt with in this verse — a facet of teaching surrounding the Word of the Kingdom*.

There is an abundance of Scripture — in both the Old Testament and the New Testament — to show that the complete Church will be removed prior to the Tribulation. And, with this in mind, one need not attempt to make [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV) deal with something that it doesn’t deal with, in an effort to teach that which is clearly taught so many places elsewhere in Scripture, even elsewhere in the book of Revelation itself.

**Behold, I Come Quickly**

*Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown*. ([Revelation 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.11&t=NKJV))

The Greek word translated “*quickly*” (*tachu*) is used six times in the book of Revelation referring to the coming of the Lord for His saints ([Revelation 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.5&t=NKJV), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.16&t=NKJV); [3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.11&t=NKJV); [22:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.7&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.12&t=NKJV), [20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.20&t=NKJV)). This word, within its context in these passages, can only refer to *the suddenness* or *swiftness* of an event coming at a completely *unexpected time* for many, though others will be *watching and waiting*.

This would be a continuation of thought from the previous verse relative to *patient endurance under trials and testing*. Individuals are exhorted to hold onto *that which they have*, for a revealed reason that both precedes and follows the exhortation. *That which they have*, contextually, can only have to do with *the end result of patient endurance* ([Revelation 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.10&t=NKJV)) — *occupying a regal position with Christ in His kingdom* ([Revelation 2:11b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.11b&t=NKJV)).

That which is in view in [Revelation 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.11&t=NKJV) has to do with the *sudden, swift* nature of the Lord’s return. This is a parallel passage to that which is seen in [1 Thessalonians 5:1-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+5.1-9&t=NKJV). Some Christians will be watching and some will not be watching when the Lord returns in this manner. Some will have patiently endured, holding fast that which they had. Others though will not have done so. And the end result will have to do with either occupying or being denied a position with Christ in the kingdom.

The *suddenness* or *swiftness* of Christ’s return is described in [1 Corinthians 15:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.52&t=NKJV) by the use of the Greek word *atomos*, translated “*moment*.” (Our English word “atom” is simply a transliterated form of *atomos*.) When associated with *time*, as in [1 Corinthians 15:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.52&t=NKJV), this word refers to the smallest, most minute unit into which time can be divided (*e.g.*, hours are divided into minutes, minutes are divided into seconds, and seconds are divided into fractions such as a millisecond [one-thousandth of a second], or a microsecond [one-millionth of a second]). And there are divisions beyond a microsecond.

Events surrounding Christ’s return for His saints will occur within the scope of a unit of time lasting less than a microsecond — so *sudden* and *swift* that it will be beyond all finite comprehension. And the warning to Christians concerning *the unexpected nature* of this event occurs numerous places in Scripture (*cf*. [Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV); [25:10-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.10-13&t=NKJV), [24-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.24-30&t=NKJV); [Luke 12:42-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.42-46&t=NKJV); [13:24-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.24-30&t=NKJV); [19:20-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.20-26&t=NKJV)).

Christians being removed from this world (removed from Man’s Day on earth and placed in the Lord’s Day in heaven) is really not the main thrust of the matter though. Interpreters have too often sought to make it so. The main thrust of the matter has to do with the Christians’ present manner of living (*patient endurance*) in view of the sudden, unexpected nature of the Lord’s return (*Behold, I come quickly* [*suddenly, swiftly*]) and that which will be brought to light following His return (*that no one may take your crown*).

Christians, in actuality, will be removed from the earth preceding a judgment befalling the earth-dwellers, with a view to their appearance before the judgment seat of Christ in the heavens; and it is at this judgment that all decisions and determinations concerning *the presently proffered crowns* will be made. [Revelation 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.11&t=NKJV) anticipates these events at the judgment seat following the removal of Christians from the earth. And [Revelation 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.10&t=NKJV), leading into verse eleven, deals, not with the rapture, but with the same subject matter seen in verse eleven, providing introductory material for this verse.

“Crowns” have to do with *regal power and authority*. Rulers are the ones who wear crowns, and crowns are presently being offered to Christians in view of their occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom. Christ will wear a crown in that day, and all who rule with Christ will likewise wear crowns. There will be no such thing as an uncrowned Christian occupying a position as co-heir with Christ during the day of His power. *These positions of power and authority are real, the proffered crowns are real, and the warnings concerning the possibility of a forfeiture of these crowns are just as real.*

**The Overcomers**

Thoughts from verses ten and eleven concerning faithfulness in view of the Lord’s return, the judgment seat, and the reign of Christ lead directly into the overcomer’s promise in verse twelve. This promise has several interrelated parts and brings matters introduced in the preceding verses to their climax. Those who *patiently endure* (*persevere*) during the present time will be shown (by and through the issues of the judgment seat) to have overcome, they will receive crowns, and they will occupy positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.

The overcomer’s promise to the church in Philadelphia describes certain things about the nature of these positions; and, for the only time in the overcomer’s promises, reference is made to the city from which Christians will conduct this rule.

1) Pillars in the Temple

The promise to the overcomer in Philadelphia that he will be made a “*pillar in the temple*” is, of course, a figure of speech. “Christ” is *the temple* in one respect ([Revelation 21:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.22&t=NKJV)); and in another respect, Christ is presently building a temple. The temple presently under construction is being built with “*living stones* [Christians, who themselves are temples (temples of the Holy Spirit)]” ([1 Peter 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.5&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Matthew 16:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.18&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 3:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.16-17&t=NKJV); [6:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.19&t=NKJV)).

The figurative use of “*pillar*” in [Revelation 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV) must, for the spiritual lessons being drawn, refer back to that which is literal; and for these spiritual lessons it seems apparent that the reference can only be to “Solomon’s temple,” where special, specific reference is made to *pillars* in the temple.

(The only other temple built during Old Testament days was “Zerubbabel’s temple,” built following the Babylonian captivity. Centuries later, following a reconstructing process, beginning under Herod the Great, this temple became known as “Herod’s temple”; and this is the temple that was destroyed in 70 A.D.

The grandeur of Solomon’s temple so far overshadowed the grandeur of Zerubbabel’s temple that the latter was looked upon as “nothing” in comparison to the former [[Haggai 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Haggai+2.3&t=NKJV)].)

The son of David, Solomon, built a temple for the Lord; and the greater Son of David, Christ, is presently building a temple. Revelation concerning the construction of the former has been given in such a manner that great spiritual truths can be drawn pertaining to the construction of the latter. The prophets recorded far more than just Jewish history. Their writings, recorded under the supernatural direction of the Holy Spirit, are filled with significance and meaning.

When Solomon built the temple following his ascension to the throne, he had a worker of brass from Tyre construct two massive pillars for the porch. Solomon named one of these pillars “Jachin,” meaning establish; and he named the other pillar “Boaz,” meaning *strength* ([1 Kings 7:13-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Kings+7.13-21&t=NKJV)).

The overcomers in Philadelphia were promised future positions with Christ that appear to be described by the meanings of the names given to the two pillars in Solomon’s temple. The promise to the overcomers that they would “*go no more out*” refers to their fixed position as pillars in the temple; and with the two massive pillars in Solomon’s temple in view, saying that overcoming Christians will be placed in the position of pillars in the temple is saying that these Christians will occupy *sure, secure, firmly established* positions of *strength* and *power*. And positions of this nature, in complete accordance with [Revelation 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV), will be realized when they rule and reign as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.

The manner in which Christians will conduct themselves during that coming day should be thought of in the same sense as the manner in which Christ will conduct Himself. In the words of the psalmist, Christ, during His rule over the nations, will “*break them with a rod of iron*” and “*dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel*” ([Psalm 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+2.8-9&t=NKJV)); and in the overcomer’s promise to the church in Thyatira, Christians are promised that their coming rule will be conducted after the same fashion:

*And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations —*

*He* [the overcoming Christian] *shall rule them* [the nations] *with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels — as I also have received from My Father.* ([Revelation 2:26-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-27&t=NKJV))

The position that Christians are to occupy today is, in many respects, diametrically opposed to the position that Christians are to occupy during the coming age. [Matthew 5:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.5&t=NKJV) states, “*Blessed are the meek* [present]: *for they shall inherit the earth* [future].”

The word “*meek*” refers to one’s present manner of living, in view of a future inheritance. This word has to do with being “gentle,” “humble,” or “unassuming” as one patiently endures the trials and testing of life.

The same word is used in [Matthew 21:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.5&t=NKJV) relative to Christ at the time He rode into Jerusalem as Israel’s King, anticipating His rejection and crucifixion:

*Tell the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly* [meek], *and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*

This verse is a fulfillment of [Zechariah 9:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+9.9&t=NKJV), where the word “lowly” is used in the translation rather than “meek.”

“Lowly” is the translation of a Hebrew word meaning *poor* or *afflicted*, and this word refers to the position Christ assumed on our behalf. He who was rich became poor that we, *through Him*, might be made rich ([2 Corinthians 8:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+8.9&t=NKJV)). The sufferings of Isaiah chapter fifty-three are in view, but these sufferings do not stand alone; the glory *must* follow the sufferings, as the day follows the night ([Luke 24:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.26&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 3:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+3.13&t=NKJV)).

When Christ was upon earth the first time, appearing to Israel as *the meek* or *lowly* One, He allowed the governing Gentile power of that day to array Him as a mock King. He was clothed in purple, crowned with a wreath made from thorns, and given a reed for a scepter. He was then mocked, spat upon, and smitten ([Matthew 27:27-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+27.27-31&t=NKJV)). He, the One destined to *break* the nations with a *rod of iron*, allowed this to happen. Why? Simply because it was not time for Him to take the scepter.

This occurred during the time of His sufferings and humiliation, which was during the Times of the Gentiles (the interval during which Gentile nations hold the scepter); and *not only must events surrounding His sufferings and humiliation* (*past*) *be fulfilled, but the Times of the Gentiles* (*presently continuing*) *must be fulfilled as well before Christ can come into His glory.*

Christ remained in a completely “unassuming, gentle, humble” state while being persecuted unjustly at the time of His first coming. However, the day is coming when He will return and be seen by the world after an entirely different fashion. He will then be seated upon a “*white horse*” rather than an “*ass*,” and He will come forth to “*judge and make war*” ([Revelation 19:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV)). The words “meek” or “lowly” will not fit His character at all in that day, for *He will take the scepter and break the nations* (*cf*. [Daniel 2:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+2.34&t=NKJV), [35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+2.35&t=NKJV), [44-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+2.44-45&t=NKJV)).

In this light, Christians, as *partakers* with Christ ([1 Peter 4:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+4.12-13&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Romans 8:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.17&t=NKJV); [2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV)), are to conduct their affairs (both present and future) after the same manner in which Christ conducted and will conduct His affairs (both past and future).

The government of the earth, continuing under Gentile dominion, is no more the Christians’ concern during the present time than it was Christ’s concern when He was upon earth almost two millennia ago. Christians are not to hold the scepter today.

Rather, they are to assume the same position relative to world government that Christ assumed. They are to patiently endure the trials and testing of life in an “unassuming, humble, gentle” spirit; and if called upon to so do, they are to continue in this manner through any unjust treatment that God may allow to befall His people, *looking forward to another day — the day when Christians, with Christ, will hold the scepter and break the nations.*

2) Engravings on the Pillars

Christ returning to the earth at the termination of the Tribulation, as the conquering King, will put down all power and authority. He will have “*on His robe and on His thigh a name written*: *KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*.”; and He will possess a “*new name*” that no man will know ([Revelation 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV); [19:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.12&t=NKJV), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.16&t=NKJV)).

In the ancient world, the columns of cities were often inscribed with the names of conquerors, and this appears to be the thought in [Revelation 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV). Christ will inscribe upon the pillars of the temple (upon overcoming [conquering] Christians) three things:

1) *“the name of My God,”*

2) *“the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem,”*

3) *“My new name.”*

This will be brought to pass after Christ puts down all present ruling powers/authorities and assumes, with His co-heirs, governmental control over the earth.

At that time Christians will be intimately identified, after the fashion revealed in [Revelation 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV), with *God the Father, God the Son,* and *the New Jerusalem*. And they will then exercise *sure, secure, firmly* *established* positions of *strength* and *power* as they rule with the Son from the New Jerusalem.

It seems apparent that the New Jerusalem will be a satellite city of the earth during the coming age. Overcoming Christians, along with a select group of Old Testament and Tribulation saints (those who qualified to rule from the heavens), will dwell in this city. This, however, is only for the coming age. Once the new heavens and the new earth have been brought into existence ([Revelation 21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21&t=NKJV); [22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22&t=NKJV)), the New Jerusalem will apparently rest upon the new earth and so remain throughout the ages of eternity. During these ages, the New Jerusalem will continue to be the dwelling place of a segment of the redeemed and continue as the center of governmental power and authority.

The New Jerusalem is described in [Revelation 21:9-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.9-21&t=NKJV), with additional information concerning the city and its inhabitants given in the verses following ([Revelation 21:22-22:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.22-22.21&t=NKJV)). This city measures about fifteen hundred miles in length, in breadth, and in height; it is constructed of “*pure gold, like clear glass*”; and a wall over two hundred feet high, constructed of “*jasper*” (with “*twelve gates*” constructed of “*twelve pearls*,” resting on foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones), surrounds the city. Certain things are also stated concerning the “street” of the city, the “temple” in the city, the “light” for the city, the “tree of life,” and a “pure river of water of life.”

The fact that the length, breadth, and height of the New Jerusalem are equal should not lead one to conclude that the city has been constructed in the shape of a cube, with possibly numerous tiers or levels to the city within the cube. No geometric shape is given in Scripture; and it would seem to be more in keeping with that which is revealed to think of the New Jerusalem in the same sense as walled cities in the Middle East down through history, with one exception — an elevated central point (elevated to equal the length or breadth), probably housing the center of government. Many things seem to fit much better by viewing the city after this fashion (*e.g.* the wall surrounding the city, the gates to the city, the street in the city, and the river flowing out from the throne of God, appear to depict the city built on a single level [[Revelation 21:17-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.17-21&t=NKJV); [22:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.1-2&t=NKJV)]).

Another thing that should be understood about the New Jerusalem is the fact that this city was brought into existence either prior to or during the days of Abraham ([Hebrews 11:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.16&t=NKJV)) and has, since that time, been associated with *Abraham and his seed*. The seed of Abraham in the Old Testament, to whom heavenly promises and blessings pertained, were the lineal descendants of Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s twelve sons. The seed of Abraham, to whom these same heavenly promises and blessings pertain today, are Christians ([Galatians 3:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.16-18&t=NKJV), [26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.26-29&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Genesis 22:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22.17-18&t=NKJV); [Matthew 21:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-10&t=NKJV)). In reality though, Abraham and a segment of his seed from both dispensations will ultimately enter into the proffered heavenly promises and blessings.

(Though the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel and is presently being offered to a new nation — *the one new man* “in Christ,” comprised of Christians [*cf*. [Matthew 21:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-10&t=NKJV)] — certain Old Testament saints aspired to and qualified to occupy heavenly positions in the theocracy prior to that time when the kingdom was taken from Israel.

And the nation of Israel, forfeiting the right to rule from heavenly places in later years, cannot do away with the promises made to these Old Testament saints. Regardless of that which the nation did at Christ’s first coming, these Old Testament saints will realize that which has been promised to them.)

The “place” presently being prepared for Christians in [John 14:2-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+14.2-3&t=NKJV) has nothing to do with a supposed present construction of the New Jerusalem. In the “*Father’s house are many mansions* [*lit*. abiding places],” and Christ has gone into heaven to “*prepare a place*” for Christians *in the Father’s house*. The New Jerusalem is a city in the Father’s house, not the Father’s house. His “house” includes *all under His sovereign control*, and in the broadest sense of the word would include the entire universe. However, biblical Revelation concerns itself with *this earth*; and Christ going away “*to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return*” relates itself to *governmental control over the earth.*

The “place” that Christ has gone away to prepare for Christians is *a position* with Him in this kingdom. Overcoming Christians in that coming day will *dwell* in the New Jerusalem and occupy their *place* with Christ upon His throne, in complete accordance with that which is revealed in the overcomer’s promise in [Revelation 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.12&t=NKJV).