**Goal of the Race**

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

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* ([Hebrews 12:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.1-2&t=NKJV))

The race in which Christians find themselves is not something optional in the Christian life. Rather, it is a race in which all Christians have been automatically enrolled. Individuals enter the race at the moment of belief, at the moment of salvation, at the moment they become Christians.

Thus, there is nothing which a Christian can do about entering or not entering the race. He has no choice concerning the matter. He has been entered in the race, with an ultimate God-ordained goal in view.

He does have a choice though concerning *how he runs* the race. He can follow the instructions which God has provided and run the race after a fashion that will allow him to win, or he can ignore the instructions that God has provided and run the race after a different fashion, one that can only result in loss.

And not only are instructions given for properly running the race, but information is also given concerning why the race is being run and exactly what awaits all Christians, all runners, after the race is over.

The race is being run in order to afford Christians the highest of all possible privileges — that of occupying positions on the throne as coheirs with Christ during the coming age. Awards that have to do with positions of honor and glory in the Son’s kingdom are waiting for the successful competitors; and the denial of these awards, which will result in shame and disgrace in relation to the Son’s kingdom, is waiting for the unsuccessful competitors.

Understanding these things will allow an individual to view both *his presently possessed salvation and the Christian life* within a proper interrelated biblical perspective.

Man has been saved *for a purpose*, which has to do with the coming kingdom of Christ. He has been saved, he has “*passed from death to life*,” he has come into possession of eternal life, in order that he might be able to participate in the race of the faith and be provided an opportunity to win one of the numerous proffered positions in the Son’s kingdom.

God is taking an entire dispensation, lasting approximately 2,000 years, to acquire the rulers who will ascend the throne and rule in the numerous positions of power and authority as co-heirs with His Son.

These individuals will form the bride who will reign as consort queen with God’s Son. And the numerous rulers, forming the bride, will be those having run and having finished the race in a satisfactory manner.

(Refer to the author’s book, [Redeemed for a Purpose](http://bibleone.net/RFAP.htm), for details concerning the work of the Spirit in the preceding respect during the present dispensation.)

Salvation removes man from one realm (one in which he cannot run the race) and places him in another (one in which he automatically finds himself in the race). Redeemed man has been removed from a realm associated with *darkness* (one in which he was alienated from God), and he has been placed in a realm associated with *light* (one in which he now has an association and relationship with God). And he finds himself in the race *only after* this transference has occurred, for the revealed purpose surrounding God’s reason for the present dispensation.

The opening chapter of Colossians touches upon this overall matter, though from a different perspective. This chapter reveals the Christians’ transference *from a realm of darkness to one of light.* And this transference is dealt with in a context that centers on *the reason* that God has brought this change about.

*Because* one has been saved (with his eternal destiny now a settled matter) and *because* he has been removed from one realm and placed in another, an “inheritance” and a “hope” come into view (*cf*. [Colossians 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.5&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.12&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.23&t=NKJV), [27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.27&t=NKJV)). And Colossians chapter one concerns itself primarily with this hope and inheritance, which are in connection with the present race of the faith and have to do with positions of honor and glory in the future kingdom of Christ.

The Christians’ removal from one realm and placement in another is spoken of in verse thirteen:

*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love* ([Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV)).

The word “*conveyed*” is from a word in the Greek text which means to be *removed from one place and positioned in another*; or the word can refer to *a change in one’s point of view.*

Regardless though of how the word is understood, the verse *cannot* refer to being removed from the kingdom of Satan and being placed in the kingdom of Christ. And this would be easy to understand, for such an act would not be possible during the present day and time.

Satan is God’s appointed ruler over the present “kingdom of the world” (though a rebel ruler), and both Christians and non-Christians alike reside in this kingdom. And there is no present existing kingdom of Christ into which Christians can be conveyed. The present kingdom under Satan is to one day become “*the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ*” ([Revelation 11:15 ASV](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15&t=ASV)); but that day will not, it cannot, arrive until the present age has been completed, at which time the Father will remove Satan from the throne and place His Son on the throne (*cf*. [Daniel 7:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.13-14&t=NKJV); [Revelation 19:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV)).

The thought in [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV) would, contextually have to be understood along the lines that God has brought about a change of sides with respect to *the present-existing kingdom*. “*The power of darkness*” (*cf*. [Ephesians 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.12&t=NKJV)) and “*the kingdom of the Son of His love*” in [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV) point to places diametrically opposed to one another, but these places must be looked upon in the sense that both have to do with the same thing. Both are *regal* and have to do with “a kingdom” — *a kingdom presently under Satan’s rule but to one day be under Christ’s rule.*

Satan is the present world ruler, and “*the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one* [‘in the wicked one’],” *i.e.*, in the kingdom of Satan ([1 John 5:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+5.19&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Luke 4:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+4.5-6&t=NKJV)).

Christ, on the other hand, is the coming World Ruler; and Christians, “*not of the world*” as Christ is “*not of the world*” ([John 17:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+17.14&t=NKJV)), have changed sides with respect to the existing kingdom.

Viewing matters in this respect, redeemed man, at any point in his existence, has never been removed from the kingdom in which he is destined to one day exercise regal power and authority (though, in that coming day, under a different Ruler than presently holds the scepter [*cf*. [Revelation 11:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15&t=NKJV)]). Redeemed man *can’t* be removed from this kingdom as long as he resides upon the earth during the present age, in this “*body of death*.” But he can be placed in a position where his allegiance is to the Ruler of the future form of this kingdom, *which is exactly what has occurred.*

(This can be graphically seen in the books of 1 & 2 Samuel, with Saul and David in the Old Testament theocracy, foreshadowing Satan and Christ in the present and future theocracy.

Saul was anointed king in Israel, as Satan was anointed ruler over the earth; Saul rebelled against the Lord, as Satan rebelled against the Lord; Saul was disqualified to continue on the throne, as Satan was disqualified to continue on the throne; but Saul continued to reign until the one whom God had chosen to replace him both appeared and was ready to ascend to the throne, as Satan continues to reign until the One Whom God has chosen to replace him will both appear and be ready to ascend to the throne.

[A principle of biblical government, seen in this type, necessitates that even though an incumbent ruler disqualifies himself (as Saul), he must remain on the throne until the one whom God has chosen to replace him (as David) is both on the scene and ready to ascend the throne.]

David was anointed king while Saul was still in power, as Christ was born King while Satan was still in power; but David didn’t immediately take the scepter and ascend the throne, as Christ didn’t immediately take the scepter and ascend the throne; David found himself out in the hills, separated from the kingdom, as Christ found Himself in heaven, separated from the kingdom; certain faithful individuals joined themselves to David, with a view to his one day occupying the throne [as seen in [1 Samuel 22:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Samuel+22.1-2&t=NKJV)], as certain faithful individuals join themselves to Christ, with a view to His one day occupying the throne [as seen in [Colossians 1:5-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.5-12&t=NKJV)].

That is to say, certain Israelites during David’s day in the type changed sides with respect to the kingdom, and certain Christians in the antitype today have done exactly the same thing. In the type, the Israelites during David’s day still resided in the kingdom of Saul, but their allegiance was to David, with a view to that day when Saul would be put down and David would take the kingdom. And exactly the same thing is seen in the antitype. The Christians in view still reside in the kingdom under Satan, but their allegiance is to Christ, with a view to that day when Satan will be put down and Christ will take the kingdom.

It was during this time that David acquired the rulers who were to occupy positions of power and authority with him when he ascended the throne. And exactly the same thing is seen in the antitype. It is during this time [during the present dispensation] that Christ is acquiring the rulers who are to occupy positions of power and authority with Him when He ascends the throne.

Only at the end of this time in the type was David ready to ascend the throne; and only at the end of this time in the antitype, at the end of the present dispensation, will Christ be ready to ascend the throne. Until that time arrived, in the type, Saul remained on the throne; and until that time arrives, in the antitype, Satan will remain on the throne.

Then, to complete the picture in the type, the day came when Saul was put down, his crown was taken, and it was given to David; and then David and his faithful men moved in and took over the government [the same kingdom that Saul had ruled].

And the day is coming when exactly the same thing is going to occur in the antitype. It has to occur, for it is seen in the type, among numerous other places in Scripture. Satan will ultimately be put down, his crown will be taken, and it will be given to Christ; and then Christ and His faithful followers will move in and take over the government of the kingdom [the same kingdom that Satan had ruled].)

Thus, the “*the kingdom of the Son of His love*” in [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV) should not, it cannot, be thought of in either a present sense or in some spiritual sense. The kingdom in view is presently ruled by Satan, and this kingdom is a very literal, tangible kingdom. And the coming kingdom of Christ can only be viewed in exactly the same manner — a future, literal, tangible kingdom, with Christ as the Ruler. It has to be viewed in this manner, for the coming kingdom of Christ will be *the same presently-existing kingdom under a new Ruler.*

The whole of the matter should be understood in the same framework as Christians being *raised up together and made to sit together “in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* in the book of Ephesians ([Ephesians 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.3&t=NKJV); [2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.6&t=NKJV)).

Note that Ephesians and Colossians are companion epistles and parallel one another in a number of places. Ephesians deals with one facet of the matter and Colossians with another.

Positionally we are *in the heavenlies* “*in Christ,*” the second Man, the last Adam (completely separated from Satan’s kingdom), even though actually here and now we still reside in this body of death in Satan’s kingdom. In Colossians, transference from the present form of the kingdom to the future form is in view.

Spiritual values are involved throughout, but these spiritual values cannot ignore a literal fact: We reside exactly where [Ephesians 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.3&t=NKJV); [2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.6&t=NKJV) and [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV) state that we reside. We have been moved from one realm and placed in another, but not moved from one kingdom and placed in another. A change of sides has occurred with respect to the existing kingdom, which is presently under Satan but will one day be under Christ.

Not only would the first part of [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV) necessitate that the “*the kingdom of the Son of His love*” be looked upon as a present reference to the *literal coming kingdom of Christ* but the context of the verse would demand this as well. Within the context, there is a “hope” laid up for Christians in heaven ([Colossians 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.5&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.23&t=NKJV), [27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.27&t=NKJV)), which has to do with an “*inheritance*” ([Colossians 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.12&t=NKJV)) and the “*mystery*” revealed to Paul ([Colossians 1:26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.26-29&t=NKJV)); and these things have to do with that day when Christ takes the kingdom. The simple fact is that a change of sides relative to the kingdom has occurred among Christians, with a view to “*the hope of glory*” ([Colossians 1:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.27&t=NKJV)), which has to do with an *“inheritance” as co-heirs with Christ in that kingdom.*

This involves transference from one realm into another in relation to the kingdom, which has to do with *the purpose for our salvation*. It involves the transference of power in the kingdom, looking forward to that day when the Father removes the scepter from Satan’s hand and places it in His Son’s hand. And, as seen within a different frame of reference in [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV), the race in which Christians are presently engaged is, in like manner, associated with *the future state of the kingdom*, not with the present state.

Christians are presently running to win awards, and these awards all have to do with the same thing — positions of honor and glory in “*the kingdom of the Son of His love*” in that future day when Christ and His coheirs ascend the throne together.

(Viewing matters relative to the place Christians reside in relation to “the kingdom of the world” will settle the matter once and for all as to what part, if any, Christians should have in the political structure of the present world system.

In the light of [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV) and related scripture, the matter can be viewed only one way: Christians involving themselves, after any fashion, on any level, in the politics of the present world system [in the politics of world government as it presently exists, under Satan] are delving into the affairs of a kingdom from which they have been delivered. Refer to the author’s book, [The Most High Ruleth](http://bibleone.net/MHR.htm), for more details concerning the preceding.)

**The Joy Set Before Him**

The “*Author and Finisher of our* [‘the’] *faith*,” the One we are to *look to* as we *look away* from anything that could cause distraction, is described in [Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV) as One who had His eyes fixed on “*the joy that was set before Him*” as He bore “*our sins in His own body on the tree*” ([1 Peter 2:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.24&t=NKJV)). Christ viewed Calvary within the framework of that which lay beyond Calvary.

The ignominious shame and indescribable sufferings of Calvary had to come first. There was no other way. But beyond Calvary lay something else, described as “*the joy that was set before Him*.” Following His resurrection, when Christ confronted the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and other disciples later in Jerusalem, He called attention to a constant theme throughout the Old Testament Scriptures: Israel’s Messiah was going to *first suffer these things* [events surrounding Calvary] and *then enter into His glory* ([Luke 24:25-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.25-27&t=NKJV), [44-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.44-45&t=NKJV)).

Joseph, a type of Christ, first suffered prior to finding himself seated on Pharaoh’s throne ruling “*over all the land of Egypt*” ([Genesis 37:20ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+37.20ff&t=NKJV); [39:20ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+39.20ff&t=NKJV); [41:40ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+41.40ff&t=NKJV)). Moses, another type of Christ, first suffered rejection at the hands of his people before being accepted by them. Rejection was followed by his experiences in Midian, and acceptance was followed by the people of Israel being led out of Egypt to be established in a theocracy in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ([Exodus 2:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+2.11ff&t=NKJV); [3:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+3.1ff&t=NKJV); [12:40-41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+12.40-41&t=NKJV)).

Passages such as [Psalm 22-24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+22-24&t=NKJV) or [Isaiah 53:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+53.1ff&t=NKJV) (Israel’s future confession concerning what had happened to the nation’s Messiah before He entered into His glory [[Isaiah 52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+52&t=NKJV)]) present the same order — *sufferings*, and then *glory*. This is *the only order* one finds in Scripture, and enough is stated about Christ’s sufferings preceding His glory in the Old Testament that He could say to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus,

*O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!*

*Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”* ([Luke 24:25-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.25-26&t=NKJV)).

Peter, James, and John on the Mount with Christ during the time of His earthly ministry “*saw His glory*” ([Luke 9:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+9.32&t=NKJV)), and Peter, years later, associated the “*glory*” that they had seen at this time with “*the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*” ([2 Peter 1:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.16-18&t=NKJV)). Christ’s “glory” thus has to do with that day when He will occupy the throne and rule the earth (as Joseph on the throne ruling Egypt [always a type of the world in Scripture]).

In [Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV), the wording is slightly different. In this passage we’re told that Christ’s “sufferings” preceded “*the joy* [rather than ‘the glory’]” set before Him. This though, in complete keeping with Old Testament prophecy, is clearly a reference to “sufferings” preceding Christ’s “glory” and to Christ looking beyond the sufferings to the time when he would enter into His glory.

In the parable of the talents in [Matthew 25:14ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14ff&t=NKJV), Christ referred to individuals who would enter into positions of power and authority with Him as entering “*into the joy of your Lord*” ([Matthew 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.21&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.23&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Luke 19:16-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.16-19&t=NKJV)). Thus, the “sufferings” and “joy” of [Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV) follow the same order and refer to the same two things as the “sufferings” and “glory” found elsewhere in Scripture.

In keeping with the theme of Hebrews though, there’s really more to the expression, “*the joy that was set before Him,*” than just a general fore-view of Christ’s coming glory. The thought here is much more specific. Note in the parable of the talents that “*the joy of your Lord*” is associated with Christ’s co-heirs entering into positions on the throne with Him, and the key thought throughout Hebrews is that of Christ “*bringing many sons to glory*” ([Hebrews 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.10&t=NKJV)).

This is what Christ had His eyes fixed upon when He endured the humiliation, shame, and sufferings of Calvary (*cf*. [Hebrews 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.9&t=NKJV)). Christ, at Calvary, fixing His attention on “*the joy that was set before Him*,” fixed His attention on that day when *He and His co-heirs would ascend the throne together in His kingdom.*

*1) Endured the Cross*

Note something, and note it well. It is *because* of Calvary that unredeemed man, “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” can be “*quickened* [‘made alive’]” ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.5&t=NKJV); [Colossians 2:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+2.13&t=NKJV)). It is *because* of Calvary that unredeemed man can be eternally saved, changing once and for all his eternal destiny. But Christ looked beyond Calvary. He looked at the *purpose* for man’s redemption, a *purpose* which would allow redeemed man to realize the highest of all possible callings.

Christ viewed the events surrounding Calvary more in the light of [Colossians 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.13&t=NKJV). Christ’s finished work on Calvary allows God to take fallen man and bring about a change in sides with respect to the kingdom. This allows God to take a man who is “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” produce life in that individual, and place him in the very sphere for which he had been created in the beginning.

And being more specific, Christ, through His work at Calvary, provided redemption for His bride, the one who would reign as consort queen with Him. Christ’s finished work at Calvary ([Genesis 22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22&t=NKJV)) allows the Holy Spirit to presently call out a bride for the Son ([Genesis 24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24&t=NKJV)). “Sufferings” *must come* first, but the “joy” toward which Christ looked must *follow* the sufferings. Christ “*endured the cross*,” knowing these things, with His eyes accordingly fixed on “*the joy that was set before Him.*” And man today, viewing Calvary apart from also looking ahead to this same “joy,” is not looking upon Christ’s redemptive work the same way Christ viewed it at all.

*2) Despised the Shame*

Christ, “*for the joy that was set before Him*,” not only *endured the Cross* but He *despised the shame*. The word “for” in this verse — “*for the joy*” — is a translation of the Greek word *anti*, which refers to setting one thing over against another. The “joy” was set over against the “shame.” Christ considered the ignominious “shame” associated with Calvary a thing of little consequence compared to the “joy” which lay ahead. The ignominious “shame” was no small thing, but the “joy” was so much greater that, comparatively, Christ could only look upon the former as of little consequence.

Events of that coming day when He and His bride would ascend the throne together so far outweighed events of the present day that Christ considered being spat upon, beaten, and humiliated to the point of being arrayed as a mock King as things of comparatively little consequence. He then went to Calvary, paying the price for man’s redemption, so that even the very ones carrying out His persecution and crucifixion could one day (through believing on Him) find themselves in a position to participate in the “joy” set before Him.

And a Christian should view present persecution, humiliation, and shame after the same fashion Christ viewed these things at Calvary. This is what Peter had in mind when he penned the words, “*Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps*” ([1 Peter 2:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.21&t=NKJV)).

The epistles of 1 & 2 Peter have been written to encourage Christians who are being tested and tried; and this encouragement is accomplished through offering compensation for the sufferings that one endures during the present time. And this compensation — rewards having to do with positions of honor and glory in the Son’s kingdom — will be exactly commensurate with present sufferings ([1 Peter 1:6-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.6-7&t=NKJV); [4:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+4.12-13&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Matthew 16:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.27&t=NKJV)).

(Note that the “sufferings” in 1 & 2 Peter, resulting in future rewards, appear in connection with *an inheritance* “*reserved in heaven*” and a *salvation* “*ready to be revealed in the last time*,” which is “*the salvation of your souls*” [[1 Peter 1:4-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.4-5&t=NKJV), [9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.9&t=NKJV)].)

Following the example that Christ set at Calvary, a Christian should place the *coming* “joy” over against the present “sufferings” and consider the sufferings of little consequence compared to “*the just recompense of the reward*” that lies ahead. And he should not think it strange when he finds himself suffering for Christ’s sake, for “*all that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (*cf*. [2 Timothy 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.12&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 4:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+4.12&t=NKJV)). This is the norm for the Christian life. Rather, he should rejoice, knowing that as *a partaker of Christ’s sufferings*, he is also going to be *a partaker of Christ’s glory* ([1 Peter 4:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+4.13&t=NKJV)).

**Sat Down at God’s Right Hand**

Following His death and subsequent resurrection, Christ spent forty days with His followers, presenting “*many infallible proofs*” concerning His resurrection and instructing them in “*things pertaining to the kingdom of God*” ([Acts 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+1.3&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Luke 24:25-48](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.25-48&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 15:3-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.3-7&t=NKJV)). He was then taken up into heaven. With His arms outstretched, blessing His disciples, “*a cloud*,” the Shekinah Glory, received Him out of their sight (*cf*. [Luke 24:50-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.50-51&t=NKJV); [Acts 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+1.9&t=NKJV); [1 Timothy 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+3.16&t=NKJV)).

Then, even before the disciples had removed their eyes from that point in the heavens where Christ disappeared from their sight, two messengers who had been dispatched from heaven stood by them and said,

*Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven* ([Acts 1:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+1.11&t=NKJV)).

Two things are certain from the words of these messengers: 1) Christ will one day return, and 2) His return will be in the same manner as His departure.

Christ ascended in a body of flesh and bones, and He will return in this same body ([Zechariah 12:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+12.10&t=NKJV); [13:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+13.6&t=NKJV)); Christ ascended from the land of Israel, from the midst of His people, and He will return to this same land, to His people ([Zechariah 14:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+14.4&t=NKJV)); Christ was blessing those in His midst at the time He was taken into heaven, and Christ will bless Israel at the time of His return ([Joel 2:23-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joel+2.23-27&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Genesis 14:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+14.18-19&t=NKJV); [Matthew 26:26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.26-29&t=NKJV)); Christ was “*received up into glory*,” and He will return “*in the glory of his Father with his angels*” ([Matthew 16:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.27&t=NKJV); [1 Timothy 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+3.16&t=NKJV)).

During the time between His ascension and His return — a period lasting approximately 2,000 years — Christ has been invited to sit at His Father’s right hand, upon His Father’s throne, until a particular time ([Psalm 110:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.1&t=NKJV); [Revelation 3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)).

The Father has told His Son,

*Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool*  ([Psalm 110:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.1&t=NKJV)).

The “right hand” points to *the hand of power*, and *universal rule* emanates from this throne. Though the Son occupies a position denoting power and is seated upon a throne from which *universal rule* emanates, the Son is not exercising power and authority after a kingly fashion with His Father today. Rather, He is occupying the office of *Priest*, waiting for the day of His power as *King*.

He is to sit on His Father’s throne until that day when the Father will cause all things to be brought in subjection to the Son. Then, and only then, will Christ leave His Father’s throne and come forth to reign upon His Own throne as the great King-Priest “*after the order of Melchizedek*” ([Psalm 110:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.2-4&t=NKJV)).

*1) My Throne, My Father’s Throne*

In Revelation chapters two and three, there are seven short epistles directed to seven churches, and each of the seven epistles contains an overcomer’s promise. These are promises to overcoming Christians, and all seven are millennial in their scope of fulfillment. All seven will be realized during the one-thousand-year period when Christ and His co-heirs rule the earth.

The last of the overcomer’s promises has to do with Christians one day being allowed to ascend the throne with Christ, and this forms the pinnacle toward which all of the overcomer’s promises move.

*To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.* ([Revelation 3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV))

The analogy in this verse has to do with Christians patterning their lives after Christ’s life, with *overcoming* and *the throne* in view. Christ overcame and is presently occupying a position with the Father on His throne, and Christians who overcome are to one day occupy a position with the Son on His throne.

Note the exact wording of the text: “. . . *to him who overcomes . . . as I also overcame* . . . .” *A conflict ending in victory is in view* first, and then *the throne* comes into view. The latter cannot be attained without the former.

Christ’s overcoming is associated with His *sufferings* during the time of His shame, reproach, and rejection; and Scripture makes it very clear that overcoming for Christians is to be no different. Christ has “*suffered for us, leaving us an example .* . . .” ([1 Peter 2:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.21&t=NKJV)). But beyond the *sufferings* lies the *glory*, as the night in the biblical reckoning of time is always followed by the *day* (*cf*. [Genesis 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.5&t=NKJV), [8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.8&t=NKJV), [13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.13&t=NKJV), [19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.19&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.23&t=NKJV), [31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.31&t=NKJV)).

In Revelation chapters two and three, *overcoming* is with a view to the *throne*; and in portions of Scripture such as the books of 1 & 2 Peter, *suffering* is with a view to *glory*. In this respect, *overcoming* is inseparably associated with *suffering*, as is the *throne* with *glory*.

*2) A Rule with A Rod of Iron*

The Father has not only invited the Son to sit at His right hand, awaiting the day of His power on His Own throne, but He has told the Son certain things about that coming day, things which He has seen fit to reveal to man in His Word. Portions of Psalm chapter two provide one example of this:

*Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations* [Gentiles] *for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.*

*You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel* ([Psalm 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+2.8-9&t=NKJV)).

Then a portion of these words of the Father to the Son have been repeated by the Son in His words to the church in Thyatira, forming the fourth of the seven overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three:

*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* ([Revelation 2:26-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.26-27&t=NKJV)).

For one thousand years Christ and His co-heirs are going to rule the earth with a rod of iron. They are going to rule the earth after this fashion to produce perfect order where disorder had previously existed, to produce a cosmos where a chaos had previously existed. And at the end of the thousand years, after perfect order has been restored, the kingdom will be turned back over to God the Father so that “*God may be all in all* [*i.e.,* that ‘God may be all things in all of these things*’*]” ([1 Corinthians 15:24-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.24-28&t=NKJV)).

Co-heirship with God’s Son, participation in the activities attendant the bride, being seated on the throne with Christ for one thousand years, ruling the earth with a rod of iron — events that will occur once, never to be repeated — await those who run the present race of the faith after a manner that will allow them to win.

(For additional information on the messages to 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), refer to the author’s book, [Judgment Seat of Christ](http://bibleone.net/JSC.htm), Chapters 4-11.)

**Concluding Remarks**

This is what lies ahead for those who, as Moses, possess a proper respect for “*the recompense of the reward*.” Moses looked beyond present circumstances and, “*by faith*,” considered “*the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*” ([Hebrews 11:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.26&t=NKJV)). And Christians must run the present race of the faith in which they find themselves after the same fashion.

*Christians must look away from anything that could distract as they look unto Jesus, “the Author and Finisher of our* [‘the’] *faith.” Christians must keep their eyes fixed on the goal*, looking beyond present circumstances to that which lies ahead. *Christians must center their attention on the “joy” that lies ahead* rather than upon present “*sufferings*,” viewing both the “joy” and “sufferings” within the same framework that Christ viewed them at Calvary.

Runners who heed Christ’s instructions and follow the example that He has set will win. They will realize the goal of their calling. Those though who fail to so govern their actions in the race cannot win. They can only fall by the wayside, short of the goal of their calling.

*“Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”* ([1 Corinthians 9:24b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.24b&t=NKJV))