

“To Reign or to Wane?” (Revelation 2:18-29)

If there is a watchword that describes the American mind-set today, it is the word tolerance. The thought behind tolerance is that right and wrong varies from situation to situation. What’s wrong for me may be right for you and vice versa. Tolerance teaches that all views are equally valid and there are no absolutes. The only absolute is that there are no absolutes. We tolerate everything except intolerance. As a result, we are killing truth and values have no value.

But this is just society’s worldview, right? Wrong! Last year, the Los Angeles Times quoted Christian pollster George Barna’s research that only 44% of born-again adults are certain that absolute moral truth exists. Barna also discovered that only 9% of born-again teenagers believe in absolute moral truth.¹ This is frightening! God’s Word, the sharp, two-edged sword is being replaced with the Devil’s pitchfork. Our worldview is now defined with a Burger King philosophy, “Have it your way,” rather than by heaven’s King² who says, “Have it My way!”

So what can we do to remedy the situation that we find ourselves in? Hear the Word of the Lord. In Revelation 2:18-29, Jesus has some choice words to a church teetering on the edge of disaster.

1. The Character (2:18). The letter to the church in Thyatira is the longest of the seven letters. It may have been the lengthiest letter because Thyatira was the most corrupt of the churches. The title, “**Son of God**”³ declares Christ’s absolute deity. He is equal with God the Father. He is the eternally existent One who has been designated to rule.⁴ Jesus then refers to His eyes and His feet (head to toes). He says His eyes are like a “**flame of fire**,” indicating that He is able to see into the secret places of our hearts. The word “**fire**” also suggests discerning and severe judgment (cf. Rev 1:14). Everything yields to fire. Fire consumes all that it touches. Nothing escapes. Jesus moves from his head to his toes and says that His feet are like “**burnished bronze**,”⁵ meaning that He will pursue evil and stamp it out.

Stop for just a moment and think back to a time when you sinned or unintentionally did something wrong and got in trouble. Do you remember that feeling when your parent, spouse, friend, or teacher stomped into your presence and stared you down with eyes of fire? It’s scary, isn’t it? In the same way, the glorious Jesus Christ is also to be taken seriously because He is the holy and righteous Judge. He is not “bro” or “the man upstairs.” He is the Son of God and our coming Judge.

2. The Commendation (2:19). These are the strongest words of commendation given to any of the churches. But before He confronted her weakness He affirmed her strengths. Jesus realizes something His people often do not: Christians need encouragement as much as they need rebuke. We should follow this practice: first affirm the positive and then rebuke the negative.⁶

Jesus begins His commendation with the phrase “**I know your deeds**” (Rev 2:2; 3:1, 8). He then affirms the church in four ways.

- “**Love**” (*agapen*). Love is a sacrificial commitment to God and others. Of the seven churches, Thyatira is the only one singled out for their love.⁷
- “**Faith**” (*pistin*).⁸ Faith is a conviction or persuasion based upon hearing.
- “**Service**” (*diakonia*). Service is a voluntary ministering to others.⁹ Service is exhausting, and it’s very easy to become weary and even resentful because others may seem like they aren’t pulling their weight. Are you a servant? In what ministry context do you consistently serve? Whom do you sacrificially serve?

- **“Perseverance”** (*hupomonen*): Perseverance is the ability to persist in doing well through time (cf. Rev 2:2). It is refusing to throw in the towel when things get tough. This requires fortitude and tenacity. Vance Havner once said, “Too many people go up like rockets and come down like rocks.”¹⁰ Perseverance has to do with our understanding of God’s sovereignty. If we know that God is in control of our circumstances, then we keep at it for we know that God is working out the situation according to an eternal plan.

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with ten being the highest), how would you evaluate yourself in the areas of love, faith, service, and perseverance?

After giving out four straight A+ grades, Jesus includes a progress report that reads: **“your deeds of late are greater than at first.”** The church had been growing in her strengths. Most likely these deeds are greater both quantitatively and qualitatively.¹¹ However, some of us need to recognize that God is not asking us to take on more works for Him. Instead, He is calling us to do the works that we are currently doing, with greater excellence.

Unfortunately, the church at Thyatira was not an honor roll church. In fact, Jesus is about to flunk a number of people in this church.

3. The Condemnation (2:20-23). Jesus says in 2:20, **“But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess,¹² and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”¹³** Jesus begins His scathing rebuke with the familiar words, **“But¹⁴ I have this against you.”** Jesus spoke these very same words to the church in Ephesus (cf. Rev 2:4). Ephesus was strong in doctrine but weak in love. Thyatira was strong in love but weak in doctrine. It’s common for churches to be polarized in one of these two extremes. Either they will have full heads and empty hearts, or full hearts and empty minds. Either polarization is deadly. Balance is the key in any church. God demands both love and sound doctrine (see 1 Tim 1:5).

Doctrine and love are like the two chemical ingredients of salt. Interestingly, salt is composed of two poisons: sodium and chloride. If we ingest one without the other we would die. But if we combine them together properly we have sodium chloride which is common table salt. It gives flavor to food and life and health to our bodies. So too, doctrine and love must be bound together. One without the other leads to a deadly imbalance. Separately they can be deadly. But combined they provide health to the body of Christ. The church at Thyatira had gotten out of balance. They had all love but no doctrine. The result was devastating.¹⁵

The initial charge against Thyatira is: **“You tolerate the woman Jezebel.”** There is our word **“tolerate”** once again. Notice that Jesus’ rebuke is directed against the church of Thyatira, not Jezebel. Jesus was angry that these believers tolerated false teaching and sinful behavior rather than confronting and condemning it.

If you’re a student of the Old Testament you may remember that Jezebel was the notorious wife of Ahab, king of Israel. Queen Jezebel led King Ahab away from worshipping God to serve the false god Baal. Then, through intimidation and deception, she got Ahab to propagate her idolatrous teaching throughout Israel (1 Kgs 16:31-33; 2 Kgs 9:22). But that’s over 900 years before this letter is written to Thyatira. So obviously Jesus is talking about another Jezebel, a current leader in the church. I don’t believe, however, that her real name is Jezebel, for there are some names, like Judas and Jezebel that are completely out of bounds for anyone to give to their child. I think Jesus refers to this prophetess in Thyatira as “Jezebel” because that name had become synonymous with wickedness.

Jesus says that this Jezebel “calls herself a prophetess and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols” (2:20). This Jezebel called herself a prophetess but she did not serve the Lord. Instead, she misled believers—not by seducing them herself but “by her teaching.”¹⁶ This could mean that she openly taught that free sex and idolatry was okay, but I doubt it. Even most nominal Christians wouldn’t tolerate that. It is more likely that her teaching was imbalanced and distorted to the point that her listeners were subtly enticed to engage in such behavior. This Jezebelian woman must have been persuasive, charismatic, and maybe even attractive because she was able to lead Jesus’ own **“bond-servants”** into a religion that was essentially a combination of idol worship and orgies. Most of us can hardly imagine worship and open sexual perversion together. Generally speaking, in our society nearly all religions make at least a pretense of teaching the values of marriage, family, and faithfulness. But that is changing. What God has called an abomination in His Word, many, even in the religious community, are now calling normal and holy. That was apparently happening in the church at Thyatira as well.

It goes without saying that Jesus didn’t appreciate this. So He declared, **“I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality”** (2:21). We must note that Jesus **“gave her time to repent.”** It’s not clear how or when this opportunity for repentance came, but it indicates an important biblical principle: the Lord’s judgments are not hasty—He gives time for repentance.¹⁷ But that time is limited. Unfortunately in this case, this woman refused to repent. She hardened her heart.¹⁸ She became like a runaway truck going down a mountain—hard to stop.

Jezebel’s judgment was imminent and she was about to run smack into Jesus. Jesus’ warning is powerful: **“Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds”** (2:22-23). Three times in these two verses, the phrase **“I will”** appears. It is Jesus Himself who brings God’s discipline. He says that Jezebel will end up on a bed of suffering since her influence has led to the violation of the marriage bed. But she is not the only one who will suffer—so will those who commit adultery with her. This could refer to literal sexual immorality, but it is more likely a reference to the spiritual adultery that her followers engage in when they accept her false teaching. Note the change from **“they”** to **“her.”** This stresses that their deeds of immorality were really the product of her teaching, example, and error. Teaching is a very strong medium. We must never underestimate how a teacher can subtly influence his/her listeners. This should remind us of what a great responsibility those in places of leadership have (cf. Luke 6:40; Jas 3:1), but also of how we need to be sure that the lives and teaching of our leaders truly line up with the Word of God.

Jesus goes on to say, **“I will kill her children (i.e., disciples)¹⁹ with pestilence.”** The result of this looming judgment is then **“all the churches will know that I²⁰ am He who searches the minds²¹ and hearts.”** Discipline in the church has several purposes: one is correction in the sinning person’s life. Another purpose is restoration—always the goal of biblical discipline is to bring the person back to the Lord. But discipline also has the purpose of instilling a healthy respect for the Lord in the people of God.²²

Jesus closes this condemnation by stating the biblical principle: **“I will give to each of you according to your deeds.”²³** This is confusing to some people, for they are familiar with passages to the effect that God will not count our sins against us and will bury them in the deepest sea. But then they read passages like this which indicate that we will be held accountable for our deeds. I think both are true. Believers in Christ will never face the eternal judgment for their sins but they will be held accountable for their deeds when it comes to the handing out of eternal rewards. Unbelievers, though separated from God because they died without Christ, will also be punished in proportion to their deeds in this life.

It would be easy for us to think that we are far from the church at Thyatira. We don't have any female heretics that I am aware of; much less one that might be called a Jezebel. We don't take a casual corporate attitude toward sexual immorality, and we certainly don't promote idolatry. But I think we might be congratulating ourselves too soon. One of the things you discover readily when you read the Old Testament is that adultery and fornication are often used as symbols of spiritual unfaithfulness. Israel is often accused of adultery even when no sexual immorality is involved. When God's people put other things ahead of Him—whether it be success, prosperity, materialism, sports, fitness, financial security, or even ministry—he becomes jealous because we are being unfaithful to Him, the One who created us, loved us, died for us, and is one day coming again for us. He will tolerate no other lovers. The seductive teaching of Jezebel is a real danger in our church and every church today.

Every generation of Christians must face the question, “How far should I go in accepting and adopting the cultural standards and behaviors of my day?” Where does being contemporary cross over into compromise? If most people, even most Christians I know, watch whatever comes on TV, does that mean I have *carte blanche* to do the same? If they are going to R-rated movies, is that sufficient justification for me to go? If most are becoming tolerant of attitudes and practices that were routinely condemned 20 years ago, is that reason for me to change?

The problem you see, is that we Christians are caught between two worlds—citizens of two countries, and we cannot renounce either. We are citizens of earth and at the same time citizens of heaven. The cause of Christ is not served if Christians come across as dinosaurs trying to hide from the real world. The Amish, for example, are not winning the world to their faith; they are just a curiosity, and they are fortunate if they even keep their own children among the faithful. But by the same token, the cause of Christ is not advanced if we buy wholesale into the world's values and become chameleon Christians indistinguishable from its permanent residents.²⁴

Jesus now returns to the faithful remnant within the church at Thyatira. Thankfully, some had not bought into Jezebel's bill of goods.

4. The Challenge (2:24-25). “But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you.” Apparently this woman claimed that her teaching (that Christians can indulge the flesh with impunity) was deeper than the apostles' teaching, but it was of course the depths of satanic doctrine. Jezebel claimed to introduce her followers into the deep things of God (cp. 1 Cor 2:10), but in reality she was introducing them to the deep things of Satan. The faithful in Thyatira had dared to stand against the pressure exerted by Jezebel and her group. In return, Jesus promised not to add a further burden to the faithful beyond that of putting up with further ridicule and social ostracism brought on by their daring to label fornication and eating meat sacrificed to idols as sinful activities in which Christians should have no part (2:24). This group of loyal Christians valued their relationship to God more than their jobs, their families, and their very lives.

To these faithful believers, Jesus says, “**Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come**” (2:25). Jesus again returns to the faithful remnant and concludes with a call to “**hold fast what you have**”²⁵ until He returns. He doesn't say leave the church; He says, “**hold fast**” (*krateo*) your integrity and your works. This is no minor warning. The tendency of believers is to lose ground rather than hold fast and move ahead. This warns against the universal principle that things always tend to degenerate rather regenerate. It's much like the second law of thermodynamics, which simply put says life goes from order to disorder and not vice versa. Things naturally go downhill unless there is great effort against those forces that, like gravity, tend to pull us downward. So there is always the need to cling to the Lord and hold tightly through a close walk with Him in the Word.²⁶

This verse also provides an important answer for some Christians who seem to have the notion that God is impossible to please. Some get this from parents or teachers or preachers or from books, not from God Himself. Here, Jesus says to those who have resisted this false prophetess, simply “hold on.” He’s not asking for anything else from us and He promises things won’t get any worse. Just hold on. There may be some of you this morning that are almost to the end of your rope. You’re discouraged, you’re depressed, you’re feeling like a failure, and life seems ready to crush you. Just hold on to what you have. Yes, holding on until Jesus comes may seem like a long time, for we don’t know when that will be. One thing is certain—it can’t be any further away than our own death because to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (Phil 1:21-23; 2 Cor 5:6-9).

5. The Call (2:26-29). After a sobering wake-up call the church at Thyatira is ready for some hope. So Jesus says, **“He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; ²⁷ AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star.”** In 2:26, Jesus gives the clearest definition of an overcomer in these seven letters: **“he who keeps My deeds until the end.”** Most anyone can run, walk, or crawl a 100-yard dash. It doesn’t matter how much you weigh or how slow you are, you can travel 300 feet down a track. Obviously, not everyone will set a world record—at least not for speed. But most will eventually cross the line. But a marathon is another story. Here Jesus calls us to a marathon. This requires a determination to persevere and to finish well.

The reward for such faithfulness was the privilege of reigning with Christ in His earthly kingdom.²⁷ The Lord intended the prospect of this blessing to motivate the unfaithful in the church to return to God’s will for them and to encourage the faithful to persevere. Believers who are faithful will receive authority in heaven from Jesus Christ and will “rule” (lit. shepherd) others during the millennium.²⁸ It will be run like our world today, with prime ministers, governors, and mayors who will rule for and with Christ. Where you sit then depends on how you live now. You may not live in a position of power now, but if you serve the Lord faithfully, God will give you a position of power and prestige in His kingdom.

The Old Testament passage Jesus quotes here in 2:27, which comes from Psalm 2, seems like an odd choice in that it speaks of ruling in judgment on the wicked. But if you examine the psalm more closely, you note that the immediately preceding verse offers this promise, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession” (Ps 2:8). The authority we receive from Jesus, He goes on to say in His letter to Thyatira, will be like the authority He Himself receives from His Father.

Jesus also says that He will give the overcomer the **“morning star”** (2:28).²⁹ Jesus is promising all overcomers His own eternal presence,³⁰ for at the end of Revelation He says, “I am...the bright morning star” (Rev 22:16).³¹ The overcomer will experience great intimacy with His Lord.

But there also seems to be another emphasis. The text literally says, “the star, the morning one.” This means the brilliant or bright one, the brightest of all the stars. The star of the morning may be considered the brightest, and the symbolism here indicates the glory that the righteous will experience in the coming kingdom. Daniel the prophet says it best: “the righteous will shine like the stars forever and ever” (Dan 12:3).

Jesus closes this letter with the familiar call: **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:29).** All seven letters close with this statement. Yet, beginning with this letter, the last four letters place this call after the promises to the overcomer. Again, we see the personal and loving concern of the Spirit of God for His people and His desire that we all respond in faith and obedience.

A wealthy couple had a son that they dearly loved. Unfortunately, the mother died, leaving the care of the boy with the father. He knew that he needed help to raise the boy so he enlisted the aid of a housekeeper, who came to take care of the boy. She came to love him as if he were her own son.

The boy was stricken with a disease and died at a young age. Soon after, perhaps because of a broken heart, the father also died. Because no will was found, the decision was made to auction his personal belongings to the highest bidder.

The housekeeper attended the auction, not because she could afford the expensive furniture or the pricey antiques. She came because she wanted a picture of the boy that hung in the living room. When the auctioneer got to it, it sold for a few cents.

When the woman took the picture home, she noticed a piece of paper attached to the back. It was the father's last will and testament, written in his own handwriting, which read simply; "I will all of my inheritance to the person who loved my son enough to buy this picture."

God the Father loves His Son. And if we love Him, the Father will stop at nothing to bless us, even granting us the privilege of reigning and ruling with Him.³²

Copyright © 2004 Keith R. Krell. All rights reserved. All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, and 1995 by The Lockman Foundation, and are used by permission.

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any articles written by Keith Krell, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: by Keith Krell, Timeless Word Ministries, 2508 State Ave NE Olympia, WA 98506, 360-352-9044, www.timelessword.com

Notes

¹ William Lobdell, "Pollster Prods Christian Conservatives," *LA Times*, 2002-SEP-14, at: <http://www.latimes.com/features/religion/>

² Steven J. Lawson, *Final Call* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 132.

³ The title "Son of God" is only used here in the book of Revelation though it is practically equivalent to "Messiah" (cf. Ps 2:12; Luke 4:41; John 1:34, 49; 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 20:31).

⁴ Sonship is a rulership term in the New Testament and used rather sparingly.

⁵ Burnished (highly reflective) bronze feet in this context picture a warrior with protected feet (cf. Rev 1:15; Dan 10:6). Bronze is usually a symbol for judgment. Consider the brazen altar and the brazen laver in the Old Testament tabernacle. These were the pieces of furniture used in judging sin.

⁶ Jesus sees the good and commends it in every area. It is this balance of truth that is so important to us for credibility. We meet people with whom it is right or it is wrong and there is no middle ground. They cannot tolerate that there may be a mixture. Yet, life and people usually contains a mixture of good and bad. It's usually not black and white.

⁷ The noun "love" (*agape*) only occurs twice in Revelation (2:4, 19). Three of the four times the verb *agapao* is used (1:5, 3:9; 20:9), it speaks of divine love, and the fourth (12:11) of the willing sacrifice of the martyrs.

⁸ The word *pistin* can mean either "faith" or "faithfulness." Some commentators prefer to translate *pistin* in this context as "faithfulness," but this is nearly synonymous with "perseverance." "Faith" seems to be the better option.

⁹ D.L. Moody once said, "The measure of a man is not in how many servants he has, but how many servants he serves." A businessman once asked Lorne Sanny, then president of the Navigators, how he could know when he had a servant like attitude. The answer was, "By how you act when you're treated like one." Lawson, *Final Call*, 137.

¹⁰ Kent Crockett, *Making Today Count for Eternity* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2001), 155.

¹¹ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation: ECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 155.

¹² This wicked woman claimed to be a prophetess and had a significant following. Prophets were very important in the early church, particularly prior to the completion of the New Testament. After the apostles had died off and before the church had a complete Scripture, prophets were relied on to proclaim the Word of God. These men and women were highly honored in the life of the church, but Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 14 about the potential for abuse of their influence. This woman is a case in point. I would assume she was a gifted speaker with a charismatic personality. Immature Christians were drawn to her.

¹³ To commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols was expressly forbidden at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:29). It is also worth noting that in the Bible, idolatry and immorality almost always went together, and whenever God's people toyed with false worship, immorality was not far behind.

¹⁴ "But" (*alla*) is the same strong contrasting word Jesus used with the Ephesian church and the Pergamum church.

¹⁵ Lawson, *Final Call*, 138

¹⁶ The critical problem with Jezebel was that her leadership was causing people to go astray. She was propagating errors similar to the two committed by the Nicolaitans: eating meat sacrificed to idols and committing fornication (cp. Rev 2:20 with 2:14-15).

¹⁷ In the same way, we should be patient with each other as God is patient with us.

¹⁸ The Bible speaks frequently of the danger of a hard heart. It can destroy one in time and in eternity.

¹⁹ Jezebel's error was poison to the life of the church in which she operated. It was widely known in churches elsewhere and had prevailed long enough to allow her to attract a group of followers whom the Lord called "her children" (Rev 2:23).

²⁰ The word "I" (*ego eimi*) is very emphatic in the Greek text.

²¹ The word "minds" (*nephros*) literally means kidney. The ancients viewed feelings and emotions as abiding in the kidneys.

²² In Acts 5 we have the story of Ananias and Sapphira, two members of the earliest church in Jerusalem. Together they agreed to lie about a piece of property they sold, claiming they were giving *all* the proceeds to the church when they only gave *some*. Now the apostle Peter made clear that they had the perfect right to keep some of the money, in fact, all of it if they wanted to. But they did not have the right to lie to the Holy Spirit and to the Church. As a result, both were struck dead. Bam! Here is the final statement in the story: "Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events." I guess so! I think great fear would come also upon the church today if God disciplined us in the same way. I'm thankful He usually doesn't, but that's the point of God's judgment on Jezebel and her cohorts: "Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds."

²³ Cf. Ps 7:9; Prov 24:12; Jer 11:20; 17:10; 20:12.

²⁴ The question that ought to be asked is: how much do you love Jesus? You can always tell how much you love Jesus by how much you hate any trace of that which nailed Him to the cross. Do you hate the things God hates? In John 2:17 Jesus was “consumed” (*katesthio*) with zeal for God’s house. This word can mean, “eaten up” or “devoured.” Are you eaten up with such holy zeal or have you become complacent about the impurity and shallowness of today’s church?

²⁵ A parallel construction in Rev 3:11 says, “Hold fast so that your crown will not be taken away.” The believers there had accumulated some heavenly treasure according to their list of commendations mentioned earlier. However, continued faithfulness, perseverance, and diligence were required as well as separation from false teaching that immorality was permissible. If they would fall away into idolatry and immorality they would put themselves in danger of losing what they had.

²⁶ See Hampton Keathley III, *Studies in Revelation* (Dallas: Biblical Studies Foundation, 1997), 76.

²⁷ Cf. Rev 1:6; 12:5; 19:15; Ps 2:8-9; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 20:4-6.

²⁸ Cf. Rev 3:21; Luke 19:11-27; 1 Cor 6:2-3; 2 Tim 2:12.

²⁹ More than likely, the key to the meaning of the morning star is found in Revelation 22:16, which says, “I am the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star.” This links Jesus with the throne of David and describes Christ as the star. Jesus is descended from the royal line of David and is the star, the King himself, who was prophesied in Numbers 24:14-19 as the star who would come out of Jacob and possess the scepter.

³⁰ The one who has put his or her faith in Jesus Christ has him right now. In the letter to the church at Laodicea, Jesus says, “If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I *will* come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev 3:20). But the promise here is that we will enjoy Him in a new and intimate way, and for eternity, when we have overcome and done his will to the end.

³¹ Peter also refers to the “morning star” (see 2 Pet 1:19). However, in that context, it seems to be a reference to the fuller understanding we will receive at the return of the Lord for the church when the Lord is personally present to enlighten us.

³² Erwin W. Lutzer, *Your Eternal Reward* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 159.