

The Kingdom of God - What will it be Like? – 2

Last time we saw how Jesus will take complete control over the government of the nations, and assign positions of authority to his **immortal faithful** - *“All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him. For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence...” - Psalm 72:11.* These immortal rulers have been qualified, Jesus supremely so, for this work, by what was accomplished during their mortal lives.

- The immortal **rulers** will be those who have **fulfilled** what Jesus asks of **all believers**. He promised in his message which he sent through John to those who lived in Asia Minor, *“To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life” - Revelation 2:7.* *“He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death” - v.11.* *“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations” - v.26.*

What have they overcome? This is answered by the apostle Paul, who describes his own struggle, which is that of every believer. While he could say that *“I delight in the law of God according to the inward man”* he also had to admit that *“what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing.”*

- Was there some unseen, outside force influencing Paul’s actions? Paul says no - *“Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.”* The enemy was inside Paul - *“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find” - Romans 7:18-25.*

What Paul and John, with the believers in Asia Minor, and all others of faith had to **overcome** were those natural desires of human nature - *“my flesh”* which run contrary to what God wants. So pervasive is the natural enmity of human nature against the will of God, that the Scriptures utilize figurative language and personifies the rebellious and contrary trait of human nature as *“Satan”* = “the Adversary.”

- For example, Peter said to Ananias, *“why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?”* And he then points directly at the source of Ananias’ bad behaviour - *“Why have you conceived this thing in your heart?” - Acts 5:3.*

What the faithful have **overcome** are *“the works of the flesh”* which include: *“sexual immorality...idolatry...hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness” - Galatians 5:19.* Instead, by the guidance of Jesus’ teaching, they strive to develop the *“fruit of the Spirit”* which describes *“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”* In so doing, explains Paul, *“those who are Christ’s have crucified” (overcome) “the flesh with its passions and desires” - Galatians 5:22.*

- The native **human character**, when uneducated by the **refinements** of moral teaching, displays the innate **animal disposition**. But those who will govern with Jesus over the nations in his Kingdom, have **overcome** that natural animal disposition and have submitted to the **instruction of God** to *“be converted”* = turn around their way of life. The instructions of God working in them has changed their character from an **ignorant, selfish rebel** to an educated, loving and **God-honoring servant of God**.

These are the ones whom God will have the pleasure of welcoming into his everlasting Kingdom - **Luke 12:32** - and be the means of achieving His purpose of completely subduing all opposition on earth to His authority - **1 Corinthians 15:25**.