

- I. **In order for us to enjoy Christ as our kingdom reward, we must love the Lord's appearing, which is His appearing and manifestation to us today and His presence with His people at His second coming, by staying on the constricted way of being watchful in life and faithful in service to be constituted as the bride of Christ**
- Loving the Lord's appearing and loving the Lord Himself are inseparable. In the prophetic picture presented in 2 Timothy 3:2-5 of Christianity in decline, four particular kinds of lovers are mentioned: lovers of self, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure, and lovers of God; whatever one loves, his whole heart, even his entire being, is set on and occupied and possessed by; this is crucial! Whether there would be a day of glory in the church's victory or grievous days of the church's decline depends altogether on what kind of lovers we are; history tells us that the root of the church's decline was the loss of her first love toward the Lord. To maintain the victorious standard of the church, we must be lovers of God for the fulfillment of God's economy; the Lord has promised to give the crown of life and the inheritance of the kingdom to those who love Him. [2 Tim. 4:1] I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus...and by His appearing and His kingdom. [2 Tim. 4:7-8] I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
  - The incorruptible crown is a symbol of glory and beauty given as a prize, in addition to the Lord's salvation, to the triumphant runner of the Christian race. The crown of righteousness will be awarded not according to the grace of the Lord but according to His righteousness, and the One who awards it will be the Lord as the righteous Judge. [James. 1:12] Blessed is the man who endures trial, because when he has become approved by testing, he will receive the crown of life, which He promised to those who love Him. [James. 2:5] ... which He promised to those who love Him?
- II. **In order to be awarded with Christ as our crown of righteousness in the next age, we must experience and enjoy Him as our subjective, lived-out righteousness in this age**
- There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness to the believers. Christ is our objective righteousness for us to be justified before God at the time of our repenting unto God and believing into Christ. Christ is also our subjective righteousness as the living out and genuine expression of Christ, which is the transcendent condition of expressing God by living Christ. [Rom. 3:24] Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. [Phil. 3:9] And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith.
  - These two aspects of righteousness are typified by the two garments of the queen in Psalm 45:13-14. One garment corresponds to the objective righteousness, which is for our salvation. This signifies that the Christ becomes the righteousness of the church to meet the righteous requirement of God for her to be justified before God. Her being covered with gold signifies the church's appearing in the divine nature. The other garment corresponds with the subjective righteousnesses, which are for our victory. The overcoming believers are Christ's corporate queen, taking Christ as their royal abode for them to be found in Christ and for Him to become their subjective righteousness. This embroidered clothing, another garment, the second layer of her covering, signifies that the church will be led to Christ at their marriage clothed with the righteousnesses of the saints to meet the requirement of Christ for their marriage. It is the transforming work of the Holy Spirit who is working day by day to embroider Christ into us stitch by stitch to be our wedding garment. The degraded recovered church needs to pay the price to live Christ as her subjective righteousness that she may be clothed with Christ as her God-approved conduct. [Psa. 45:13-14] The king's daughter is all glorious within the royal abode; her garment is a woven work inwrought with gold. She will be led to the King in embroidered clothing...
- III. **"The Lord will...save me into His heavenly kingdom"**
- The heavenly kingdom, which equals the crown of righteousness, is "the kingdom of their Father", "the kingdom of My Father", "the kingdom of Christ and of God", and "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ", which will be a reward to the overcoming saints.
  - The overcoming believers will participate in the heavenly kingdom, the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens. In the heavenly kingdom the overcomers will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father, they will drink the cup of the new covenant anew with their Lord. They will feast with the Old Testament overcomers. They will inherit eternal life and thereby have a fuller enjoyment of the divine life, and to enter into the Lord's joy and thus gain their soul, save their soul, and enjoy the salvation of their soul, they will also reign with Christ and rule over the nations. [2 Tim. 4:18] The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. [Matt. 13:43] Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father... [Matt. 25:21] ...Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master. [Rev. 20:6] ...but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Some dear saints do not like to be a Christian who takes such a narrow way. They may not like it today, but sooner or later the Lord will force them to like it. We have been chosen by Him (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:2); it is not up to us. We must overcome. If we do not overcome today, we will have to overcome tomorrow. In a school all the students must graduate. If they do not study well, they will not graduate with the rest of their class. Nevertheless, eventually they still need to graduate. Therefore, they have to remain in school for another period of time and must be forced to study until they graduate.

*<Excerpts from "The God-Men", Chapter 3, "The God-Men and the Overcomers">*

"The Lord...will save me into His heavenly kingdom." This was the proclamation of an old warrior on the spiritual battlefield just before his death. It was also his message to the companions whom he had to leave behind on the road to the kingdom of the heavens. May he always be our pattern in our pursuit of the kingdom of the heavens. May he often be our encouragement as we run the Lord's race. May we be like him, wagering our entire life to endeavor to pursue the reward of the kingdom of the heavens. In the end may we also be able to declare like Paul that there is a crown of righteousness laid up for us by the Lord, who will save us into His heavenly kingdom.

*<Excerpts from "Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures", vol. 5, Chapter 48, "Entering into the Kingdom of the Heavens">*