

REVELATION Chapter 2 part 1 -- Letters to the Churches in Ephesus and Smyrna

Compilation of prophetic commentaries by Gaetan



In verses 4 and 11 of chapter one, John named seven churches (groups of believers, not buildings) which existed in seven Asian cities: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. All of these were names of explicit, definite cities of Asia Minor, today known as Turkey. They were all within close distance of each other and only a short distance from the isle of Patmos. The Lord undoubtedly told John to write to these particular seven churches because he wasn't far from them. Also, being one of the oldest disciples and an apostle of the Lord, these churches no doubt looked to John for guidance and leadership, even in exile.

The letters reveal churches in different levels of obedience and/or apostasy, and give rebukes, guidance and promises from the Lord to each one.

Though written to literal churches in Asia, we can read the letters today as warnings, advice and counsel regarding any situation existing in our selves or in our church and take it to heart. The churches themselves do not symbolize different so-called church ages, but are examples of various kinds of churches which have existed throughout the entire church age. In other words, any one of the things spoken of in these seven letters could be true of a lot of different churches, even today.

In this sense then, even though these churches were in Asia in John's Day and are part of ***"the things which are,"*** or were in 90 A.D., they typify all the churches which shall come ***"hereafter."*** Read them all and see where you fit!





REV.2:1 Unto the angel of the church of **Ephesus** write; These things saith he that holdeth the **seven stars** in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the **seven golden candlesticks**;

**** REV.1:20...The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.**

“...who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks...” This shows that the Lord is ever present among His churches and people. “And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Mt.28:20)

REV.2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them **which say they are apostles**, and are not, and **hast found them liars**:

**** 2PE.2:1** *But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

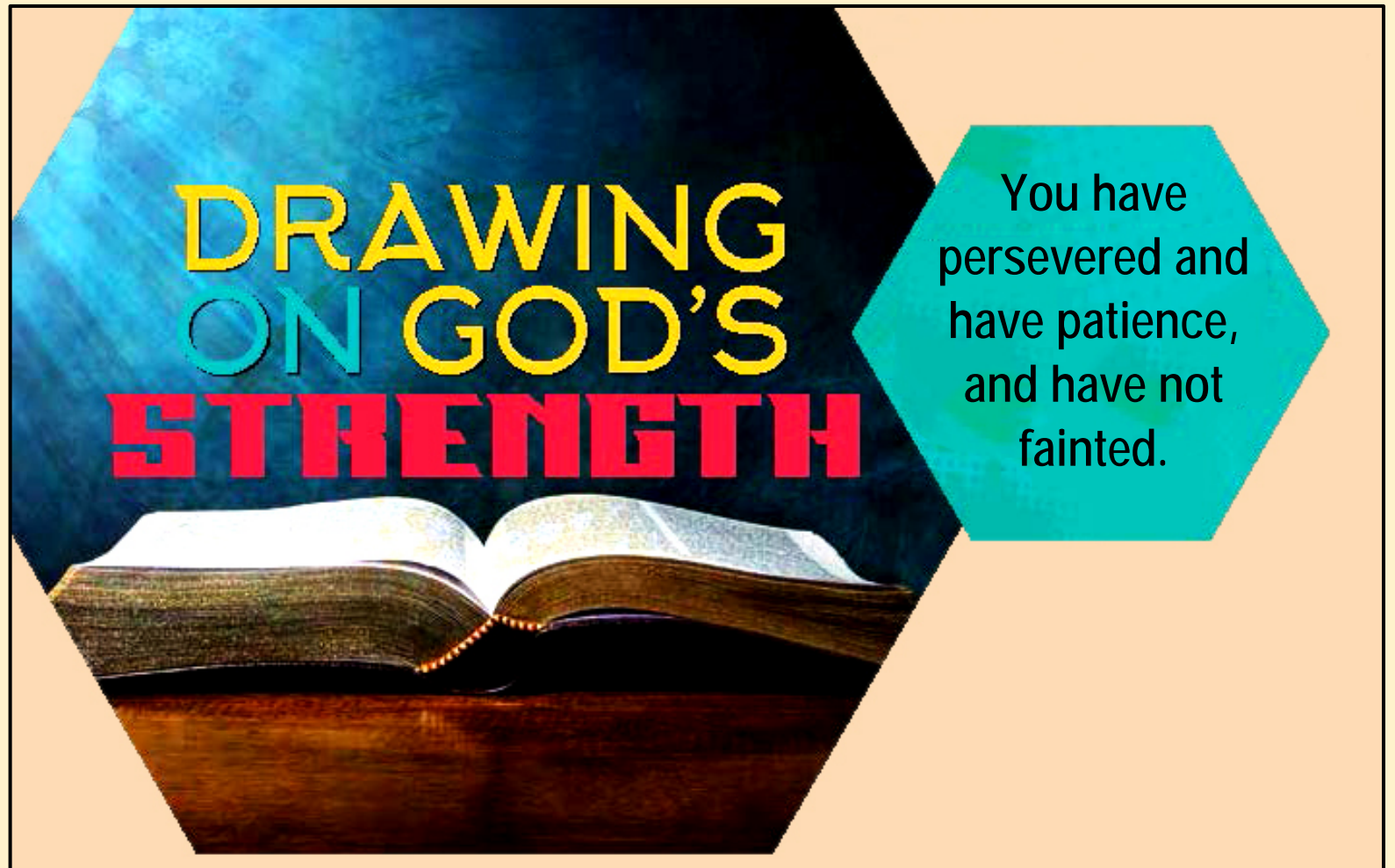
**** 2CO.11:13-15** *For such are **false apostles**, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be **transformed as the ministers of righteousness**; whose end shall be according to their works.*

REV.2:3 and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and **hast not fainted**.

**** 1CO.13:7** *beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things.*

**** LUK.18:1** *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and **not to faint**.*

REV.2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy **first love**.





The first love which characterized the Ephesians (and all new believers) was the zeal and ardor with which they embraced their salvation as they realized they loved Jesus because He first loved them (*1 John 4:19*) and that it was, in fact, His love for them that had made them **“alive together with Christ.”** (*Eph.2:5*)

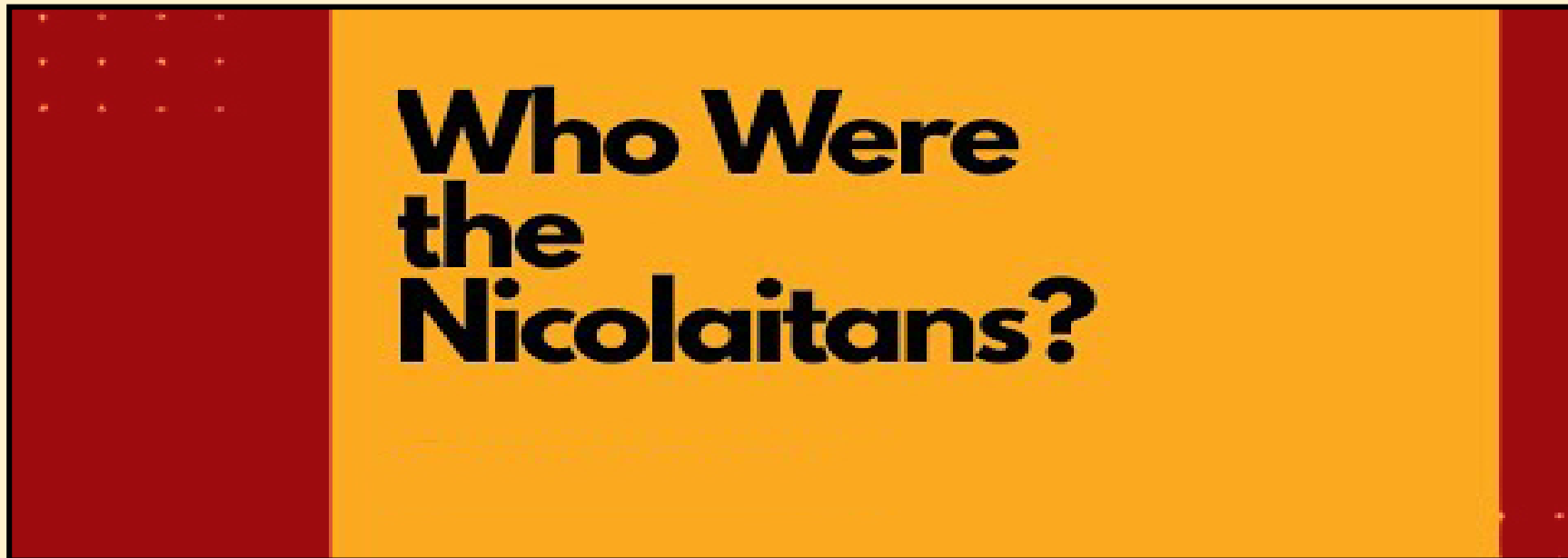
So overwhelmed were they by the joy that came from understanding their former state—dead in trespasses and sins—and their new life in Christ, that they exhibited the fruit of that joy. But with time they had lost their warmth and zeal for Him, and when that happened, they began to **“go through the motions”**

of good works, motivated not by the love of and for Christ, but by the works themselves. What was once a love relationship cooled into mere religion. Their passion for Him became little more than cold ideology. This is still a warning to all of us.

**** MAT.22:37, 38** Jesus said unto him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.*

REV.2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, **and repent**, and **do the first works**; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

REV.2:6 But this thou hast, that **thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes**, which I also hate.



The Bible doesn't explain who the Nicolaitanes were. What was this thing God hated but man loved and would not stop doing? Who are these Nicolaitanes? Maybe we'll understand it when we know what the name means. The word comes from two Greek words: "*nikao*" which means "*to rule over or to conquer,*" and "*laos*" which means "*the laity or the people.*"



Put these definitions together and you get a domineering ruling class within the body of Christ whose main agenda is to get the upper hand, conquer, subordinate, and subdue those whom they consider "*less gifted,*" "*less knowledgeable,*" and "*less qualified*" than themselves! Such an administrative system later became a hierarchy of priests and clergy lording over the flock. Could it represent any domineering Pharisaical leadership lording over God's people down through the ages?

**** MAT.20:25, 26** *But Jesus called them unto him, and said, ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;*

**** 1PE.5:2, 3** *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

REV.2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **to him that overcometh** will I give to eat of **the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

**** GEN.3:22, 23** *And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore, the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*

**** REV.22:2** *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*





When God gave Adam the job of keeping the garden and tending it, Adam was going to live forever—he could have lived forever if he'd eaten of the tree of life! He didn't forbid them to eat from the Tree of Life, think of that, He only forbade them to eat from the Tree of Education, the Knowledge of good and evil. They could have eaten from the Tree of Life and lived forever!

But because they sinned, disobeyed and ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, then He had to remove the Tree of Life from the Garden so they wouldn't live forever and do any more damage. Just think if wicked unregenerate cruel man had immortality, look how much damage he could do!

REV.2:8 And unto the angel of the church in **Smyrna** write; these things saith the first and the last, **which was dead, and is alive;**

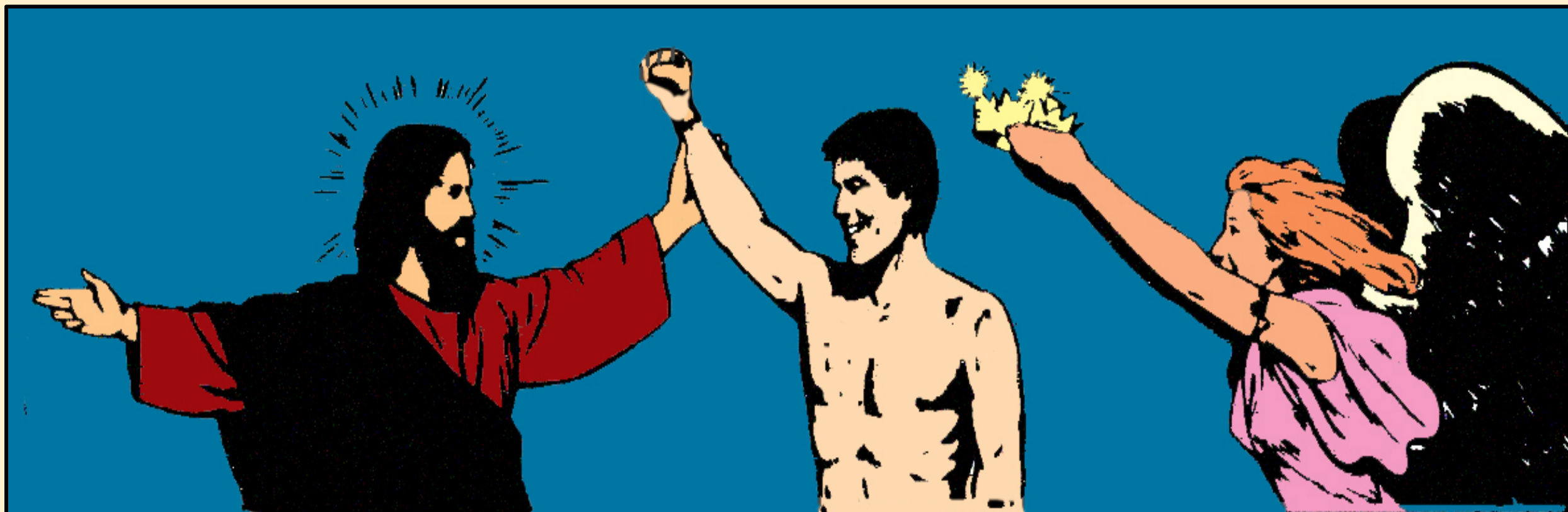
REV.2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and **poverty, (but thou art rich)** and I know the blasphemy of them **which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. A real believer may be poor materially, but the Lord indicates that, spiritually, he is rich.**

**** REV.3:17, 18** *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich...*



**** LUK.12:21** So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is **not rich toward God.**

**** ROM.2:28, 29** For **he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly...** (JOHN.8:44)



REV.2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful** unto death, and I will give thee a **crown of life.**

**** JAM.1:12** Blessed is the man that **endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.**



But remember, these crowns have nothing to do with your salvation! Rewards are something you work for and earn by your faithfulness, your diligence, your hard work and soul-winning! A lot of people get confused by the Bible verses on rewards and crowns and apply them to Salvation, thinking they've got to work for their salvation. --But you can't work for your salvation! --It is a free gift of God! (See *Eph.2:8, 9; Tit.3:5; Mt.16:27; Rev.22:12.*)

We don't earn salvation; we can't work for salvation—it's a gift! But we can work for rewards and we can earn special praise and special commendation from the Lord! A special, "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*" (*Mt.25:21.*)



He says that some He'll make rulers over one city, some over a few cities, and some over many cities! *"For he that is faithful in that which is least is also faithful in that which is much."* (Lk.19:17; 16:10) So although your works in this life aren't going to help you get into Heaven, they'll have a great deal to do with your reward, the way you shine, a great deal to do with your position once you're there. So *"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!"*

REV.2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh **shall not be hurt of the second death.**

If you are born twice, first time physically, second time spiritually—you will only die once! Because you will only die the physical death once and your spirit will never die, because Jesus died in that torment so your spirit would not have to die. But He says for the sinners, the one who does not receive Jesus and his sins are not forgiven, that in the end of the world they are going to be raised from the dead at the Last Judgment and judged according to

their works, some in the Lake of Fire and some are going to be living outside the Heavenly City.

"And this is the second death!" (Rev.20:14.) Why? Because they were only born once and they never got saved, they never received Jesus, they were never born again. When you receive Jesus, this is a new birth for your spirit, you're a new inner man. So, if you're born twice, you only die once--death to the body but the spirit is free, the spirit doesn't die. But if you're only born once and you're not born again, you die twice! One for the body and one for the spirit!

So that's what Jesus was doing on the cross when He died for us: He not only died in the body but He suffered even the feeling that the sinner has in the death of the spirit. Now what this death is of the spirit we don't really know, Jesus calls it Hell, for some, like fire! It's a terrible, terrible thing whatever it is, some kind of suffering for your sins. After all, if you don't believe in Jesus' suffering for your sins, then you have to suffer for your own sins.



You don't have to be hurt of the second death. You can receive Jesus at this very moment. It is a free gift of God. For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)



Please pray this simple prayer:

"Jesus, please forgive all my faults. I accept that You are the Son of God and that You died for me. I invite You into my heart and life. Thank you for your gift of eternal life and please fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Help me to read and understand Your Word. Amen"

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