

## Overcome The World ...

By

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*“And who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God” (1 John 5:5).*

This text was written by one who was quite familiar with the conflict that had raged between the world and Jesus. From his slave camp on the Island of Patmos he had recorded and smuggled past the guards a vision-a Revelation- of a conflict between the world and the church continuing down to the last syllable of time,

In John’s vision he saw Satan as the arch-deceiver, so successful in the art of deception that he has the whole world, save a handful of saints, willingly following and worshipping the “beast” and opposing Christians. John’s vision pictures the prosperous, the powerful and the popular majority united in hatred for Christ and His saints. We are already seeing the fulfillment of this prophecy, where “family life” programs in public schools are so designed as to make Christian morals and parental authority despised by the children. It is conspicuous on numerous comedy shows on television, where the basis of humor is the ridicule of Christian chastity. Most movies are seen only by persons of college age and younger, so most adults do not realize the vicious assault that is being made by the anti-Christ through the movies. Current examples are the propaganda films, “Z” and “M.A.S.H.” in which Christians are made to appear as warmongers, murderers, and stupid dupes. Magazines are filled with praise for public figures who oppose Christianity, and stories featuring witches and the black arts.

As conditions grow more chaotic-the natural result of turning from truth to the Deceiver-we hear more propaganda about progress and the emergence of a “better world”. In spite of the experience of history and Biblical warnings, men still think that out of all the confusion a new world must somehow appear. I’m beginning to think that perhaps the young are the ones who, after all, really do see the situation “like it is”. They see destruction, hypocrisy and the fatal end of it all. It should cause them to believe the Bible which predicts the pollution and destruction of the earth. The present turmoil is actually but the progression of what the Bible terms “the spirit of error” and the “Law of sin” (1 John 4:6, Rom.7:23). The apostle Paul declares that in the last day “men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness but having denied the power thereof ...” (2 Tim. 3:2-5).

In the face of this Christians have the clear command to “overcome the world”.

## WHAT IS THE WORLD?

There are two worlds. This is hard to believe in a day of science, when men refuse to believe anything that does not in some way bring in money-profit. Material-bound man cannot believe that there is a Living King in Heaven, in touch with man on earth. They do not believe that there are angels under the King's command, to minister to saints on earth. Yet this is what Jesus taught, and it is what Paul, Peter and John believed.

Christians are citizens of THAT world, "for our citizenship is in Heaven" (Phil. 3:20). We have "set our minds on things that are above", "where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God." (Col. 3:21).

Therefore, when Scripture speaks of overcoming the world it is referring to the world in which we live. It means human governments, the business world, the social world and all things of the world which are to pass away. Jesus spoke of Satan as the "Prince of this world". (John 14:30; 16:11) If man were not so calloused to the supernatural, concerned only with material worth and sensual pleasure, he would be able to see all about him the influence of Satan. The practice of witchcraft did not die with the Salem trials. It is big business today. Well-known public figures frequent their séances and midnight orgies. The magazines are filled with their writings, encouraging all manner of psychic phenomena and devil-worship. Their ritual murders are matters of record to the police and have not been withheld by the press. These are not fairy-tale witches, but real people with vast followings.

Add to this the mounting destructiveness which is so world-wide and uniform that it can be explained only by admitting that it is guided by a central mind. The Bible says that mind is Satan's.

Paul wrote that Christ died for us in order to "deliver us out of this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), which He will do at His second coming. But in the meantime we must live in it. Hence we are told to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15). This means that while living in the world we must OVERCOME it.

## **THE MANNER OF OUR WARFARE**

A Christian does not join the revolutionary band that marches in the street singing "We Shall Overcome." Revolution against lawful government is strictly forbidden by God (Rom. 13:1-3).

The Christian warfare is not physical nor material; neither can he overcome the world on behalf of any other but himself. His overcoming is in a personal manner.

A Christian overcomes the world when he overcomes its customs. The fads and fashions of the world are not allowed to rule his life. In contrast to the ways of man stand the commandments of God. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3).

He overcomes the world's dread of Poverty. What is it that occupies the mind and energy of modern reformers and social leaders? What else but the abject fear of material loss. "Poverty" is the word on the lips of rebels, preachers, politicians and the pseudo-intellectuals. How ironic that the church-founded by the One who voluntarily became poor, Who had no place to lay His head, Who preached that "a man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesses" (Luke 12:15) should devote itself to waging wars for material prosperity and hold such a dread of poverty. The Christian overcomes this covetousness and fear.

The Christian overcomes the clamor for honor. It is strange that those who follow Christ-Who said that the greatest among us is the one who is a servant, that "that which is exalted among men is an abomination with God" (Luke 16:15) should have such an insatiable desire to have the world's honors heaped upon them. Stranger still is the unholy competition in progress for the richest building and the greatest prestige in the eyes of the world. Such ambition, rightly called "worldly ambition", is to be overcome by Christians.

Christians are to overcome worldly pleasure. Joy and happiness promised by Christ are not the kind advertised and sought after by the world. Seeking pleasure in this life has never brought fulfillment. Man was created for life in God's image, not life that is fed on the husks of this world's delusive dream in the midst of sin. Young people hooked on drugs, with their lives in shambles, their dreams shattered, along with their bodies and minds; admit to the quest for "meaning". But God created man to live in His image, in a world of righteousness. Such a world is promised to all saints as their eternal home after this world is gone. (2 Peter 3:13). One can find meaning in his life and, therefore, true pleasure, only as he seeks to conform to the image of God as revealed in Christ. Instead of becoming addicted to worldly pleasure, he must overcome it.

### **THE SOURCE OF POWER**

"And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (1I John 5:4). This faith is further defined: "he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (Vs. 5). If you really believe in THIS world, you will not even try to overcome it. But if you believe in Jesus, then you believe in His Kingdom and all that it means. Hence, you look to His p6wer, not the power, for example, of the U. S. Government. You look to His truth, not the propaganda being promoted in the Public Schools and on television.

To believe is to believe in His commandments, though they appear to the world as totally impractical and outdated. Every day a new voice arises in the sacred cow institutions of higher education telling us that the message of the Bible is unreasonable, its rules impractical and its miracles only myths. Either we believe these worldly-wise disclaimers of God, or we believe Christ. We can't have it both ways. To have faith in Christ means we believe that His commandments are right, that they are not only practical and relevant, but that they are the ONLY true way. Faith is to accept His commandments as the best way, no matter how they may appear at the moment-whatever the situation. And remember that John adds, "And His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

This is perhaps the greatest test for today's young people: to place faith in Christ's teachings, His commandments, in the face of the whole world trying to ridicule them and do away with them.

The power to overcome is sealed by the victory that Christ has already won over the world, the flesh and the Devil. We overcome because we believe that Christ is victorious, now and forever. In the end He will put all enemies under His feet. He promised, "He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world ..."; "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (1 John 4:4, John 16:33). Christ is greater than all the world; hence, He is greater than any government, greater than the ADL and the anti-Christ-controlled news media. He is more powerful than all the armaments of the world, greater than any drug habit, the nicotine habit or the liquor habit. With true faith in Him, the Christian can stand against "the wiles of the Devil" (Eph.6:11) and all the pressure the world can muster.

It is time for Christians to cease lip service to Christ, engaging in worldly activities in His name, and begin exercising real faith to overcome those very things in the world which mar the image of God and His purpose.

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