

## OVERCOMING IN CHRIST

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### Revelation 21:1-8

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Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

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The book of Revelation starts off by saying it "the Revelation of Jesus Christ". The word Revelation is the Greek word apokalupsis, where we get the English word apocalypse, which means "an unveiling, uncovering, revealing, revelation". It is then, a revealing of the "end times", the very last of days, the final events leading up to Christ Jesus, coming down on clouds from heaven, conquering His enemies, and then physically reigning on earth, and then also the eventual throwing the devil into the lake of fire. (**Revelation 20:10**) Yet a major theme that is presented in this book, speaks throughout, of those who overcome in Christ Jesus. In the beginning chapter we are told, "Blessed is he who **reads** and those who **hear** the words of this prophecy, and **keep** those things which are written in it; for the time is near." Indeed it is! That supports the theme in Revelation of "Overcoming in Christ Jesus" as it is not those who just hear the words of truth, but those who read or hear and then **keep** the words.

As we know, and we will further consider from Scripture, it is one thing to say you are a Christian, and that you know Jesus, and it is another to express the evidence, to live one's life as a Christian—a child of God, to where we have Christ working in us. Just as Jesus tells us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (**Matthew 5:16**) That is

not just a friendly suggestion, but a command from our Lord, God, and Savior, that we are intended to be His light in this dark and dying world.

We are believing on Christ and then receiving Him, to be born again, born of the Spirit, (**John 1:12-13**) to where God then works in us, and continues working in us, to overcome this world in Christ Jesus. Hopefully that isn't making anyone here anxious, for "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (**Romans 8:31**) But if it is, it may be the Holy Spirit speaking to you, calling for you to begin putting your trust in Him for His salvation in Christ Jesus. When Jesus stated, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (**John 14:6**), He was most certainly saying that He is our Way, Truth, and Life, from the beginning of our faith in Him, and then throughout eternity. He is not a one-time Jesus, He is our Life! To those of us who have believed on Christ and have received His Spirit, that should be consoling and assuring to you, for "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (**1 John 5:12**) Just before that the Apostle John tells us, "He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son." The Apostle Paul assures us that Christ Jesus gives us His Holy Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (**1 Corinthians 1:22**), yet we are still intended to be and should be a living testimony of Christ Jesus, not just in our words but in what God has and is working in us.

While this is a warning for us to not give up, to not get complacent in our faith, you know, going back to our old ways, we are told to continue in the faith IN Christ Jesus so that we will overcome. We are to be encouraged in this Revelation too, that we are blessed, and will be greatly blessed as we keep, hold on to, cling to our faith in Christ Jesus; living our lives IN CHRIST. God is presently building His eternal kingdom, through Christ, and His kingdom, while it will have streets of gold, pearl gates, and other perfectly beautiful things, His kingdom is with Him, Christ Jesus, and with His people.

About 700 years before Christ, Isaiah, the prophet, said this, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever." O Zion, You who bring good tidings,

Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young." (**Isaiah 40:3-11**)

In that passage of Scripture we have 4 key things that are mentioned. 1. The preparing the way for Christ, 2. the Word of God [alone] stands forever, 3. His reward is with Him, and 4. His work is before Him. That voice crying in the wilderness is prophesying of John the Baptist, who preached to the people just prior to Jesus coming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (**Matthew 3:2**) When Jesus came on the scene, He began preaching the same thing, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (**Matthew 4:17**) Repent, meaning having a change of mind and heart, to seek the Lord for His salvation. What Isaiah is saying is that we are all like the flowers and the grass, that grows up and then dies. We are to seek the Lord presently for His salvation, as we are not guaranteed tomorrow, that today IS our day of salvation. If we live another day past today, then that day too is our day of salvation. We are to be living our lives as Christ Jesus is our salvation from one day to the next. Yet the good tidings, that is the great news for us, is that our Good Shepherd has come and is coming again and He will gather together all of His beloved sheep and that His reward is with Him and then that His work is before Him. What work is that? The work that He has done in us! The Apostle Paul has told us in **1 Corinthians 1:30**, that Christ Jesus is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. It is the work that Christ Jesus is doing in us that gives us His wisdom to live our lives in Christ, according to His Word, makes us right before God, makes us holy and acceptable to God, and then saves us, delivering us from sin and death. IN CHRIST ALONE!

As Paul made clear to us, it is in Christ alone that we are saved, and that we are His workmanship, from the beginning of our faith until He takes us home. **Ephesians 2:8-10**, "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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." We indeed are intended to be the work that is before Him and that when Jesus comes to redeem His people we are to be ready and be, as Jesus said as a child, "about our Father's business." (**Luke 2:49**) That doesn't mean that we are striving and doing a bunch of good works to please God. WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP!

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (**Romans 8:14**) When Jesus comes, He will recognize who are His, those who He has been leading, but also those who are trying to make it on their own merit and ways.

We are told by the Apostle John, "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen." (**Revelation 1:7**) What that says is that most people of the nations on earth are not going to be rejoicing and excited to see Jesus when He comes. Jesus introduces Himself at the beginning of Revelation saying to the Apostle John, and to us the readers and hearers of the written Word, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (**Revelation 1:8**) Jesus then tells John to write what He tells him concerning the 7 churches in Asia, which is now the country of Turkey. My quick synopsis of the first chapter is not intended to be exhaustive but to lead us to what Jesus tells each of the 7 churches in Asia which is elaborated on in **chapters 2-3**. It's good stuff to read and to meditate on, as it is what Jesus is looking for in His people, what He expects of His people, to be about our Father's business, as He is working in us, to be His work that is before Him, to be His living testimony. What Jesus speaks to each of the 7 churches is one of many examples of Scripture that reveals to us that we are not just believing on Christ and then living our lives any way that we please. As the Apostle Paul tells us, "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." We are His! To each of the 7 churches in Asia, Jesus speaks of the good and the bad that is going on within those churches, and then with each church Jesus says, "he who overcomes..." and then He speaks of a specific reward that they will inherit.

About half way through the book of Revelation, we are told about the great dragon or serpent, called the "Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren [Satan], who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they **OVERCAME HIM by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.**" (**Revelation 12:9-11**) What that is saying to us, is that we are believing on Christ, for dying on a cross for our sins, shedding His blood for the remission of our sins, and then as Christ Jesus rose from the grave on the third day, He conquered death, and therefore made it possible for us to also have eternal life, IN HIM! For us then, we are believing on Christ, receiving Him, and then living our lives in the faith we have IN CHRIST, and we then become His living testimony. Saying one is a Christian is one thing. Being a Christian,

a child of God, is to be a living testimony to others. Once again, that evidence will be clear when Jesus sees His work before Him and He gathers together all those who are His.

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."

We know from later in the chapter about the temple. "But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it." (**Revelation 21:22-24**) Going back to what I read previously, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them (us) and be their (our) God." When we have come to know God and His ways, to trust God, as all His ways and works are perfect, and to honor God, by obeying Him, and giving Him the praise and worship He deserves, we will be most definitely rejoicing, as we see our Lord, God, and Savior, in all His glory and beauty and that we will forever be His people and He will be our God. We have been told by Jesus that the greatest commandment of God is to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and then to also love others as ourselves-meaning to love, respect, and treat others as we would want to be treated, or better yet, to treat them with the same love that Jesus has shown His church, laying down His life for us.

When it is frequently quoted, "they OVERCAME HIM by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony", what is many times left out is "and they did not love their lives to the death." If we are loving God and others with all that is in us, we aren't literally hating our life in Christ though are we? Yet, our regard for our own welfare and happiness should be inextricably linked to loving God and His creation, His people, and not clinging to our love of the things of the world but we are first and foremost to be clinging to Jesus, and His Word, for HE IS OUR LIFE!

I'm certainly looking forward to seeing the new heaven and new earth, whether that is a literal mountain coming down from heaven or whether it is symbolic imagery, nevertheless, we are promised, "**God Himself will be with them and be their God.** And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have

passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." All things will have to be made new as God would not dwell among us in His full glory otherwise.

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. **He who overcomes** shall inherit all things, and **I will be his God and he shall be My son.**"

Do you see the main emphasis in that phrase. First we are told, "God Himself will be with them and be their God." Then, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." If you love God, your life will show it. As Jesus said, "**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**" (Luke 12:34) If you love God, you'll be as excited as I am that "God Himself will be with [us] and be [our] God" and He will be my God and I will be His son. While that is already true, for those who have received Christ Jesus, the fullness of that promise is yet to come. That promise is for all who will overcome in Christ Jesus. We are told who will not be overcoming and inheriting eternal life. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." We though will overcome as we continue to know God, trust Him, and honor Him as we live our new lives in Christ Jesus, clinging to Him for He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Ultimately, we are His living testimony, His work that is before Him, our Lord, God, and Savior.

"He who testifies to these things says, "**Surely I am coming quickly.**" Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Revelation 22:20-21)