

GOD

We Can Overcome because Christ is Coming Back

The most significant event in all history was the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We can read about it in the four Gospels, but let's just take a look at Acts, Chapter 2, where we'll begin in verse 31. On the Day of Pentecost twelve apostles had just received the gift of holy spirit which they manifested by speaking in tongues, and now Peter was addressing the multitude that had come together.

Acts

- 2:31 He (*David*) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell (*gravedom*), neither his flesh did see corruption.
- 2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.
- 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost (*holy spirit*), he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.
- 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Peter in this first teaching of our Grace Administration covered the two things one needs to do to get saved, born again of God's spirit: confess Jesus as Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9). Verse 39 states that this salvation was not just for Judeans:

- 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Forty days after he was resurrected, Jesus Christ ascended up into heaven:

- 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

So, here we are today, living in the Grace Administration. As promised, when we confessed Jesus as Lord and believed God raised him from the dead, we received the gift of holy spirit, power from on high, that we can manifest to make great things come to pass as we believe. As we believe, we can claim our five sonship rights, including our ministry of reconciliation, bringing others to the new birth as we hold forth God's Word.

But we're still in a world run by the adversary, the Devil, who with his host of devil spirits and the people under his control exerts a negative influence to try to hinder us from achieving our goals.

II Corinthians

- 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:
- 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The Devil is the god of this world. The word “world” here refers not to a physical place but to the age, or time, in which we live (it’s the Greek word *aiōn*). He’s always trying to keep people from hearing and believing God’s Word.

But the light of God’s Word can still shine for those who will hear:

- 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (*a figure for “through the work of Jesus Christ”*).
- 4:7 But (*For*) we have this treasure (*this light of the knowledge*) in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We shine as lights as we hold forth the Word of God we know:

Philippians

- 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.
- 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:
- 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (*the kingdom of the adversary*), among whom ye shine as lights in the world;
- 2:16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

Each one of us born-again believers standing in the household can shine as a light. The adversary is not happy about that. If he would have known that would happen, things would have been different, as we see in I Corinthians chapter 2:

I Corinthians

- 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:
- 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

So, today the adversary has to deal with not just one light, but lots of lights: each one of us. And, in spite of his efforts, we can overcome and prevail:

I John

- 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.
- 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect (*fully matured*), that we may have boldness in the day of judgment (*today, when man does the judging*), because as he is, so are we in this world. Because we are born again of God’s spirit, with Christ inside, we can live with the love of God and we can overcome the world as we believe:
- 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even our faith (believing)*.

In order for us to overcome the world with the adversary's influences, we need to believe. At times, attacks by the adversary might try to hinder our believing or even tempt us to fear, but we know one great truth that will, as we keep our thoughts on it, help strengthen our believing to overcome the world in every situation. This is the truth that Jesus Christ is coming back. We see this first expressed in Acts, Chapter 1:

Acts

- 1:10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;
- 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

This proclamation gives us hope: we have the hope of the Return of Christ. Some of the details of Christ's Return and events surrounding it are presented in I Corinthians chapter 15, verses 51 through 58 and I Thessalonians chapter 4, verses 13 through 18. We should be greatly comforted knowing these truths. No matter how bad things get in this present world, we know that our Lord and Savior is coming back and we will enjoy eternal life, even enjoying future rewards for our walk today.

So, keeping our eyes on the Hope of Christ's Return will help us to overcome and prevail today. Let's look at Colossians, Chapter 3, where we'll begin in verse 1:

Colossians

- 3:1 If (*since*) ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
- 3:2 Set your affection (*thoughts*) on things above, not on things on the earth.
- 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
- 3:4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Rather than living our lives dwelling on the sense-knowledge things of this world, we should focus our thoughts on the things of God. Our "old man" sense-knowledge nature died with Christ, and we now live on a higher plane through his accomplishments. We look forward to appearing with Christ in glory when Christ returns. So, what should we do in the meantime? We'll begin in verse 12:

- 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering:
- 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.
- 3:14 And above all these things *put on* charity (*the love of God manifested as you renew your mind*), which is the bond of perfectness.
- 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

- 3:16 Let the word of (*pertaining to*) Christ dwell in your richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
- 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

II Corinthians

- 4:14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.
- 4:15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.
- 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man (*senses man*) perish, yet the inward man (*Christ in you*) is renewed day by day (*as we speak in tongues*).
- 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;
- 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen (*by the senses*), but at the things which are not seen (*focus our minds on spiritual things*): for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

We have the hope of Christ's Return to look forward to. So today, rather than concerning ourselves with the temporary afflictions and pressures we encounter in the world, we focus our minds on the spiritual things, on God's Word which lives and abides forever.

Titus

- 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
- 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (*in this present age*);
- 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the texts, the latter part of verse 13 more accurately reads: "...and the appearing of the glory of the great God, *even* our Savior Christ Jesus". The glory of the great God is His Son. As we keep our eyes on the hope of Christ's Return, we endeavor to live a godly life.

I John

- 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence (*boldness*), and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

As we abide in fellowship and walk according to God's Word, we can be bold as we stand before the *bema*, knowing that we will receive rewards.

I John

- 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons (*beloved children*) of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.
- 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

As sons and daughters of God, we have a lot to look forward to.

Romans

15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost (*holy spirit*).

The words “God of” are not in the text: the verse more accurately begins: “Now the hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing...” As we keep our eyes on the hope of Christ’s Return, we can experience great joy and peace as we believe and abound with the power available to us.

Only God knows when His Son Jesus Christ will return, but in the meantime, we know what to do, always keeping our eyes on the Hope. II Peter chapter 3 provides added insight:

II Peter

3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days (*the days after Pentecost*) scoffers (*mockers*), walking after their own lusts,

3:4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God, in His foreknowledge, knows the last person who will hear His Word and believe. God is no slacker: He will not delay or be tardy. When the last person becomes born again of His spirit, the promise will be fulfilled and Christ will return. This could happen at any time. So, what do we do before this happens? Go to verse 13:

3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for (*expect*) new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

God wants us to be diligent, or search diligently for with the desire of obtaining (the Greek word is *spoudazō*) peace as we live our lives standing on His Word.

We’ll conclude by considering a record in II Thessalonians, chapter 2 that ties in nicely with what we just read regarding the Return of Christ and events surrounding it.

II Thessalonians

2:1 Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2:2 That ye be not soon shaken by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

An important point is that rather than “day of Christ”, which refers to our gathering together as we meet Christ in the air when he returns, six of the seven Critical Greek Manuscripts read: “day of the Lord”. The “Day of the Lord” will come later, after we are gathered together, and represents the time of judgment of those left behind, after the period referred to as “the wrath”. Even today, with things deteriorating in the world the way they are, people are proclaiming that “the judgment day” is near, or imminent. We’ll see from God’s Word that this is not true:

2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

The day of judgment will not come until after a very important event takes place. “A falling away”, from the Greek words *he apostasia*, more accurately mean “a departure”. This refers to the departure of all those who have been born again of God’s spirit, our “gathering together” mentioned in verse 1. Only after we are gone can “that man of sin”, the Antichrist, be revealed. Only then can the Devil outwardly show his true colors, and those remaining behind will be plunged into the period of time called “the wrath”.

Look at verses 6 and 7, where we’ll see more of this great truth:

2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he (*the Antichrist*) might be revealed in his time.

The word “withholdeth” is from the Greek word *katechō*, meaning “to hold down” or “to restrain”. The revealing of the Antichrist is being restrained, or held back, until something happens.

2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (*prevents*) will let, until he be taken out of the way.

Who is preventing the Antichrist from being revealed, setting in motion the events leading to the day of judgment? We are! We, the born-again believers, are the lights of the world. As long as we are here upon the earth these events cannot happen. They can take place only after we are “taken out of the way” by our being gathered together when Christ returns. Only then, in the absence of true spiritual light, can the adversary get away with showing his true colors.

Jesus Christ is coming back. As we keep our eyes on the Hope of his Return, recognizing that our presence here even holds the adversary back, we are even more equipped to overcome the world by our believing.

- Dr. Rick Batt