

The Overcoming Sons of God

by George Kirkpatrick

Among those who call themselves by the name of Christ are two types of Christians: the overcomers and those who are overcome. Understanding these differences will bring us into conflict with the basic teachings of the organized religious system which states that once we come to Christ and get baptized, we are home free, heaven bound, and fullfledged sons of God. The Pentecostals take it one step further, teaching that after your initial acceptance of Christ and water baptism, you must be baptized in the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues as evidence of this baptism; then you are home free, heaven bound, and fullfledged sons. There is no overcoming in this teaching because there is no need to go any further in Christ.

There is a world of difference between the words "overcome" and "overcomer". The Greek word **overcome** is HETTAS and means "*to be inferior, to be conquered, to be forced to yield, and set below.*" The word **overcomer** is, NIKAO, which means "*to be victorious, to win, to be victorious over all our enemies.*" The word overcomer is also a legal term which means "*to prevail in a court of law.*" As we begin to look at those who are overcome, we must discover what they are overcome by. Paul writes to the church at Rome:

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21

Paul warned the church at Rome not to be overcome with evil. Our first reaction to this would be, "*I am not evil.*" We must search deeper to understand what Paul was referring to as evil. The word evil is the Greek word KAKOS and means "*a bad nature.*" Our thinking is not as it ought to be. Our actions and feelings are wrong and we become troublesome, injurious, and destructive. These acts may not manifest themselves in the physical, but often these injurious, destructive acts are in our minds. If they are not dealt with, then they will manifest themselves in the natural, and we will be overcome.

When Paul wrote to the Romans he was not dealing with their fleshly activities, but with their mental processes. Paul was trying to change their way of thinking. Paul was stating, we first must be victorious in our thinking before we can be victorious in controlling our actions. We cannot overcome evil with good until our way of thinking changes. Paul understood how important this is. From the book of Corinthians, he gives us the key to becoming victorious over our thoughts.

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" II Corinthians 10:5

First, we must control our imaginations. Our imaginations cause more problems than almost anything else in our mind. If our imaginations are not controlled, we can imagine anything about any situation or anyone, including God. Many have failed in what would seem to be God's work, because they imagined God wanted them to do something, go somewhere, or start something. They failed because God had not ordained their actions. It was not because they did not have a heart to serve God, but what they did was not in His will. They were not operating in their calling. Many times seeking God's will takes longer than doing the actual work.

Another damning thing that comes out of our uncontrolled imagination is jealousy. Jealousy has broken up more marriages, destroyed more men in high positions, and has divided and separated God's people. Many pastors are jealous of another pastor because the other pastor has a bigger church, a better parsonage, or makes more money...; the list is endless. Because of these jealousies, God's people suffer. The all wise Solomon proclaimed:

*"For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance."
Proverbs 6:34*

Solomon knew if a man's imagination was not controlled, then it would manifest itself as rage when he took his vengeance. He also addressed jealousy in Song of Solomon:

"Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." Song of Solomon 8:6

Again we witness the effects of uncontrolled imagination. Solomon states jealousy is as cruel as the grave. Jealousy is as coals of fire burning in a person until it comes forth as a vehement flame. The word **vehement** is the word JAH, the shortened form of JEHOVAH. Paul wrote to the Hebrews:

"For our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:29

Our God is the vehement flame that will judge those who have not cast down their imaginations. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians we are to cast down every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. What is it that exalts itself against the knowledge of God? It is our worldly, earthly knowledge we know in the natural. Paul warned the church at Corinth concerning worldly knowledge:

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." I Corinthians 3:18-19

Those who believe God accepts our worldly knowledge only deceive themselves. Many pride themselves because of their knowledge of sports, world events, financial affairs, or who they are in the world. Today the organized religious system educates their leaders in seminaries. Students come out with the wisdom of their religious order instead of the wisdom of God. They know theology, hermeneutics, and the precepts and doctrines of men, but they have not been taught to seek the wisdom of God which He gives to all men liberally when they ask, James 1:5. As Paul related, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. We must cast out these things in our lives which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.

When the Holy Spirit directed Paul to exhort the church at Corinth to overcome evil in their lives, he told them they were to cast down imaginations and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ is an overcoming activity. This is something we must do on a daily basis. Jesus spoke through the pen of Mark concerning the mind:

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Mark 7:21-23

All things that are manifested in the flesh, begin in the mind. If we do not take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, then evil thoughts will proceed out of our hearts. These evil thoughts are why the church system suffers. They have failed to deal with adulteries, fornications, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness (*wantonness, unbridled lust*), an evil eye (*an eye that is always looking for something perverted or lude*). Out of the mind also proceeds blasphemy (evil speaking, slandering another's name), pride, and foolishness in their midst. As Jesus informed us, "All these things come from within." Our mind is what defiles us before God.

Peter, who was given the keys to the Kingdom, gives us knowledge of what we are to do so we can stand before God clean and undefiled:

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." I Peter 3:10

We need to learn to control our tongue so that we speak no guile. The word **guile** means "*deceit or deception,*" pretending to be something we are not, speaking words to deceive. Guile and deception run rampant in the church today. The Lord Jesus told us to let the tares grow with the wheat. The tares look like the wheat, but they produce no fruit in their lives. They have been overcome with evil. Their minds are on the things of this life. Their desire is to look good, but there is no evidence of overcoming in their lives. The tares will be allowed to grow until the time of harvest. This day of separation is close at hand. Paul continued to warn those in the church at Corinth who were being overcome.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." I Corinthians 1:26

Not many wise after the flesh will attain to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Paul informs us the mighty also will not attain to the high calling in God. The mighty are those who are self-reliant, who can accomplish on their own. In Christian circles, this would be known as self-righteousness. They do not need God. They can accomplish on their own. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we know these will not attain to the high calling of God.

Paul also included the noble in this group. The word **noble** means "*well-born.*" These are those who depend on their family tree and what their family name means in the world or the community in which they live. It also includes what their family has accomplished to make the family name well known. In the Christian community, these are those who depend on their denominational name and their well known exploits. Paul does not exclude these from the Kingdom of God, but what he reveals is not many of the wise after the flesh, the self-reliant, or those who are rich in family heritage will answer the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Jesus gives us insight into the erroneous teaching that "*all we need to do is to receive Jesus and be baptized.*" We must go beyond even the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Jesus relates:

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7:21

Just because we call Him, Lord, Lord, does not mean we are home free or heaven bound. As Paul revealed, we must overcome all the evil in our lives. What are some of these evils?

"But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil." James 4:16

Boasting is evil. When we boast it is nothing more than pride of life. Those who boast can only talk about their past success, their past glories, their past accomplishments. As Jesus reveals, this boasting is evil. They become empty, bitter, depressed, and unable to cope with the realities of their mundane existence. Then they turn to boasting about their past achievements. Their past success becomes their whole life. As John recorded:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." I John 2:15-16

We are not to love the world, neither the things in the world. If we love the world, then the love of the Father does not issue forth from us. All that comes out of our mouths are the things of the world. As John related, the pride of life is not of the Father. It is simply the things of the world proceeding out of our mouths. It is from the abundance of the heart (*mind*) the mouth speaks. If past successes are all we can talk about, then our boasting has become evil, and we are overcome. James points out one of the main evils we must overcome:

"But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." James 3:8

James informs us an unruly tongue is evil and full of deadly poison. The tongue is probably one of the hardest evils to overcome in our lives. Man cannot tame his tongue unless his heart (*mind*) changes. We must allow the Holy Spirit to change our thought patterns. Jesus informed us He only spoke what He heard the Father saying, John 8:28. If we are to overcome, we, too, must be quick to hear and slow to speak, James 1:19. The all-wise Solomon informed us:

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." Proverbs 18:21

If we want to see good days, we must train our tongue to speak life into every situation. As Solomon warned, we will eat the fruit our tongue produces. Our tongue can be a well of life or a tomb of death. We need to speak life, and then we will see good days. Paul warned Timothy of another evil that pervades most every life:

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." I Timothy 6:10

Paul proclaims the root of all evil in our lives is the love of money, and we realize it's not the love of money alone, but the love of the things money can buy. Coveting today is called "the American way." This has even entered the church. It is called the prosperity message. This has been taught as scriptural. The teachers of this heresy overlook what the beloved John revealed by the Holy Spirit:

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." III John verse 2

John wrote above all things he desired to see the soul of God's people prospering and being in good health. These are the important things. All the money in the world cannot buy a soul or good health. But the "name it and claim it" teaching has taught covetousness; and as Paul related to Timothy, ". . . they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." These have been overcome by the things of this life. Many who have come to

the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ have been enticed and trapped by the things of this life. Peter enlightens us as to what their end will be:

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." II Peter 2:19-20

When we are overcome by desiring the things of the world, then we are brought into bondage. Peter refers to it as the pollutions of the world. When we become entangled again in the bondages the world puts on us, our latter end is worse than it was before we came to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God informed Israel while they were still in the wilderness:

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil:" Deuteronomy 30:15

These same two paths are set before God's people today. He has given us insight into His Kingdom. He makes it very clear what we must overcome and become to enter into His presence. We can choose life by overcoming, or we can choose death when we are overcome by desiring what the world has. Jesus gave us our first overcoming message:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

As we look at the life Jesus lived as He walked the earth in His humanity, we see He overcame the world. There was nothing in this worldly existence that had any drawing in His life. Paul informs us in his letter to the Hebrews:

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15

Jesus was tempted with every temptation known to man, yet He was without sin because He desired to please His Father more than anything the world had to offer. Peter gives us insight why God sent Jesus to this earth:

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." I Peter 2:21

Many believe the only purpose the Father had for Jesus' birth was to be the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice for sin. This certainly was one of the most important reasons for His coming, but the forgiveness of sin is only the first step in our long journey back to entering into the presence of God. Jesus came to give us an example of how we are to walk so that we may be accepted in the Beloved. Jesus overcame the world as an example to us. We also are to be overcomers.

Jesus appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos to give him a revelation of Himself. Jesus made a profound statement to John which we all need to heed:

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be His God, and He shall be My son." Revelation 21:7

Jesus tied three things together the church should be proclaiming: overcoming, inheritors, and sonship. The overcomers will become inheritors and His sons. You cannot teach overcoming without teaching sonship.

What promise did Jesus give the overcomers? He promised the overcomer will "inherit all things." The most important word in this scripture is the little word ALL. It is the Greek word PAS and means "all, everything, the whole, nothing left out or added". We need to ask ourselves if the overcoming sons are going to inherit all things? If this is true, where is the inheritance for the overcome? The overcome have no inheritance in God.

From the beginning of time God has shown us sonship and overcoming as being one. Through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whose name was changed to Israel, we have a complete picture of God's overcoming sons. God promised Abraham a son. Abraham tried to produce this son through the flesh. He brought forth Ishmael by the bondwoman he brought from Egypt (*the world*). This was not the son God had promised. When Abraham was one hundred years old, Isaac the son of the true wife was born. After Isaac was born Ishmael began to mock Isaac, *Genesis 21:9*.

"Wherefore she (Sarah) said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." Genesis 21:10

The son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with the son of the true wife. Abraham loved Ishmael and he grieved when he had to send Hagar and Ishmael away.

"And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Genesis 21:12

Abraham's seed would be called in Isaac. Through Paul's writing we discover Abraham had only one seed:

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ." Galatians 3:16

Abraham's seed would be called through Isaac; and Abraham's seed was Christ. As we begin to see the sonship message through Abraham and Isaac, we learn Abraham is a type of God the Father who had only one son. Isaac becomes a type of Jesus who became the Christ (*the Anointed*).

Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born. The number **one hundred** means "*spiritual perfection*." When Abraham ceased from his own labors, God fulfilled His promises to him. When God changed Abram's name to Abraham, he promised Abraham He would make him the father of many nations. When Abraham was one hundred, he came into spiritual perfection, and brought forth the promised Spiritual seed, the seed which will make up God's Kingdom, the seed Isaac which is a type of Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father. It is recorded of Isaac:

"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him." Genesis 26:12

Isaac received an hundred fold blessing from the Father. Jesus came to sow a seed in the hearts of man, but John recorded:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12:24

Jesus was speaking of Himself. He had to allow Himself to be killed and planted in the earth in order to bring forth much fruit. When Jesus walked the earth He had twelve disciples. On the Day of Pentecost, there were one hundred and twenty in the upper room when the Spirit came as a rushing, mighty wind. One hundred and twenty = 12 x 10. We are advised in the book of Revelation of those who will rule around the throne. This group is 144,000, or 12 x 12 x 1000 equals 144,000. More understanding concerning this application will come when we look at Isaac's son Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. It is recorded in the book of Genesis:

"And the man (Isaac) waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great." Genesis 26:13

Isaac became very great in the land. In comparison, the greatest man who ever lived was Jesus Christ. There is not a continent on the face of the earth, where Jesus' name is not known. This can be said of no other man who ever lived on planet earth. It is said of Isaac:

". . . Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them." Genesis 26:18

Wells are symbols of knowledge. When Jesus came to earth, he gave all who would hear, the knowledge of the Father. He stated, "The only ones who know the Father are to whom the Son reveals Him." Jesus opened the knowledge of the Father's will through His Word, the knowledge of who the Father is to all who would hear. The first words in the New Testament are:

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Matthew 1:1

Jesus was not only the Son of the Everlasting Father, He was the son of Abraham and the son of David. Through Abraham we are shown the true seed, and through David Jesus received His throne.

Isaac was the younger brother of Ishmael. Ishmael represents the heathen nations. Isaac represents the true seed. Isaac had twin children, the eldest was Esau (*known also as Edom*) and Jacob. Jacob, whose name means supplanter, was the youngest. The word **supplanter** means *"one who takes the place of another."* We all know Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup. Esau represents those who sell their birthright in God for the pleasures of this life. When the time came to receive a blessing of the father, there was no blessing for Esau, because Jacob, the supplanter, had already received the father's blessing. We witness this same thing happening today in the organized, religious system. Many have sold their birthright in God. They sold out, because as Paul wrote to Timothy . . .

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." II Timothy 3:5

Those who have sold their birthright in God have a form of godliness (*form religion*), but they deny the power. The power is the Holy Spirit anointing. These will not allow the Holy Spirit (*cloven tongues of fire*) to cleanse and purify their lives. These will not overcome or go into sonship. Why is this? John recorded:

"But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:" John 1:12

Many have received Jesus and believe on His name, but if they deny the power (*those who have not given pre-eminence to the Holy Spirit*), they will not become His sons. When it comes time to receive the blessing of the Father, they will not receive it because they have denied the power. These have traded their birthright in God for their religious beliefs.

Jacob was a bond servant to Laban. He married two of Laban's daughters: Leah and Rachel. Leah and Rachel had two concubines, Zilpah and Bilah. Jacob produced ten children through Leah and the two concubines.

The name **Rachel** means *"ewe lamb."* Rachel represents the barren church system which is bringing forth no fruit. God miraculously opened Rachel's womb. She called her first son Joseph. The name **Joseph** means *"another son."* God had promised Rachel another son. After Joseph was born, Jacob knew he had to free himself from his father-in-law, Laban. So Jacob fled to return to his own country with Rachel who was heavy with the promised son. In comparison, Jesus also gave us a promise of another son.

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8:29

We are predestined into sonship. **As Paul revealed, Jesus was the firstborn of many brethren, or Jesus was the firstborn of many sons.** As Paul revealed, Jesus came to...

". . . redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Galatians 4:5-7

We become heirs and sons through Christ. Christ is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power given whereby we may come into sonship. This is accomplished by the overcoming process.

After Joseph was born, and Jacob and his family had fled from Laban, Jacob came to Jabbok. Jacob changed the name of Jabbok to Peniel. There, Jacob wrestled all night with the angel of the Lord. The angel spoke to Jacob:

"And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Genesis 32:28

Jacob was no longer the supplanter. He had become a prince. A prince is the son of the king. And as a son, Jacob had power with God and with man. The angel told Jacob (*Israel*), *"Thou hast prevailed."* Jacob had overcome the old life, the old ways, and the old nature. He had become the son of the king and had power with God and man.

The word **Jabbok** means *"he will empty out."* We must all come to our Jabbok. There, we too must wrestle with God until the cleansing process is complete. When this cleansing process is finished, then our Jabbok will become our "Peniel." The word Peniel means "face of God." When we have been purified, cleansed, and made whole, then we can stand in God's presence and see Him face to face. Paul revealed our future hope to the church at Corinth:

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." I Corinthians 13:12

Now we see the image of God in a mirror. The mirror gives a reverse image. We do not see Him clearly. At this time we only know God in part. But He is revealing Himself more and more every day until we come to our Peniel and see Him face to face. When this time comes, we will know all things. As Paul states, "we will know even as we are known." We are known by our name. So we will know all things as well as we know our own name.

Jacob is a type of Jesus. Jesus was our supplanter. He took our place on the cross and paid for the sin of all mankind. When Jacob's name was changed to Israel, he became a type of Christ Jesus, the risen, glorified Christ. Jesus became the Christ, or the anointed of the Father. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter related:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:36

The phrase hath made meant Jesus was going to become something He was not before. God made Jesus both Lord and Christ. The name **Lord** means "complete in authority." The name **Christ** means "anointed." When Jesus became Christ, He was no longer the anointed, he had become the Anointing, the Power of God. Jesus related this change to His disciples after His resurrection:

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18

Jesus had become the power by which we can overcome and come into sonship.

When Jacob's name was changed to Israel, he had one more son, Benjamin. The name **Benjamin** means "the son of his right hand." Not much is recorded of Benjamin because he is a type of sonship that God is going to establish in the end of the age. Jesus spoke of those who will be at His right hand:

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" Matthew 25:34

Those on the Father's right hand are those He predestined from the foundation of the world to inherit the Kingdom of God. These will be the overcoming sons who have allowed the Holy Spirit total and complete access to their lives.

Jacob (*Israel*) had twelve sons. The number twelve represents God's government. We know by Paul's revelation that government is a gift of the Spirit.

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." I Corinthians 12:28

We know we cannot obtain the gifts of the Spirit without having the fruit of the Spirit evident in our lives. The fruit of the Spirit can only be obtained when we allow the Holy Spirit to rule and reign in our lives. It is only by the Spirit that we can overcome. And it is only by the Spirit that the sons will come forth.

As stated before, when Jacob's name was changed to Israel he became a type of the risen, glorified Christ Jesus. Jacob had eleven sons before God changed his name to Israel. As Israel, he brought forth the son of his right hand. This was his twelfth son. Twelve is the number of government. The sons of God's right hand will rule and reign around His throne. These make up the 144,000: $12 \times 12 \times 1000 = 144,000$. The 144,000 are virgins who have not been defiled with women, Revelation 14:4. Women represent the church system. The 144,000 were not part of the church system. They were born of the true church, brought into Spiritual perfection by the Holy Spirit, cleansed, purified, and brought into glory by the cleansing fire of God to victoriously become overcomers, inheritors, and the sons of the living God. Thus through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whose name was changed to Israel, we have a complete picture of the overcoming sons.

All who come to the saving grace of Jesus Christ want to come into sonship. Many, as soon as they get saved, claim to be the sons of God without any overcoming in their lives. As we try to prove this concept in the Word, we find not one shred of evidence to support this erroneous idea. Paul wrote to the Hebrews:

*"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."
Hebrews 12:6*

When the church hears about chastisement, scourging, and suffering, they are turned off because this is not what they want to hear. They want to be told as soon as you come to the altar you become sons, and you cannot lose your salvation. But Paul reveals the Lord chastens and scourges those He loves. These are those God has called to be His sons.

The word **chasten** means *"the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals)." God is not going to allow children who have a corrupt mind, or the morals of an alley cat to enter into His Kingdom. He may receive us in this condition, but we must change into His image and likeness, if He is going to receive us as His sons. This again is the overcoming process we must go through if we are to walk in His presence. Paul continues:*

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Hebrews 12:7-8

A bastard is one who has no father. If we claim God as our heavenly Father, then He will deal with us as sons. Many fall away when the time of instruction begins. The reason for this is they do not want to change their way of thinking. Of course they probably have been taught, ". . . *God accepts us as we are. He knows we are human, and does not expect us to be perfect . . .*".

Peter was given the keys to the Kingdom. If we are going to enter into the Kingdom, we must heed the words of Peter:

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." I Peter 5:10

If we are to become sons, we must endure chastening. The reason for this chastening is not to overcome us, but to teach, train, and bring us into God's sight as special children, desiring the things He has for us. When we endure chastening, we will have a change in our mental processes. Now if we cannot be taught in this manner, then the scourging will begin. And as

Peter stated, after we have suffered a while, this is when God gets our attention and we begin to overcome the things of this life and desire to live as the Spirit directs; or we choose the old life and fall away from God. Paul revealed to the church at Rome:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14

When we are led by the Spirit, then we have forsaken our way, and we begin to live our lives as the Spirit directs. Peter proclaimed after we suffer awhile, then we will come into perfection. Perfection does not mean we will never make another mistake. The word **perfect** means *"to be complete, whole, and mature."* We will have grown up in our thinking, no longer tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. The Holy Spirit will also establish us, making us stable in our walk. We have the promise of a stable walk through the pen of Isaiah:

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." Isaiah 40:4

Our valleys will be exalted and our mountains will be made low. God has promised to fill in our valleys (*the low places in our life such as depression and disappointment*), and bring down our mountains (*or our mountain top experiences*). He will tear these down so we can have a level, even walk with Him.

Isaiah revealed the crooked will be made straight. God will also straighten out our twisted, distorted way of thinking. He will make the rough places plain. The word plain means "level or even." When we have rough times we must commit them to the Lord. When we do this He will show us how to get through the rough times.

Peter also stated, *"... God will strengthen us ..."*. The word **strengthen** means *"to be made strong."* He does this so we can stand in the Day of Adversity. There are times in our lives when we must stand alone. Paul witnessed these times. In his second letter to Timothy, he related:

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." II Timothy 4:16-17

Many times Paul had to stand alone. We feel sometimes as if we are the most forsaken people on the face of the earth, but this is when we grow. Paul had an overcoming spirit, and he knew when everyone failed him, God would stand with him. This is the confidence we must arrive at to get us through our times of adversity and trials. We, too, must have an overcoming spirit if we are to succeed in God's victories in our lives.

Peter also revealed our God will settle us. The word **settle** means *"to plant us on a firm foundation."* The only foundation we can have in our lives is the Word of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit. This will give us understanding and insight into what God is doing, and what He expects us to do. Without this insight we wander aimlessly, trying to find understanding in times of utter chaos in our lives. It is only by and through the Word, as the Holy Spirit reveals its truths, that we can overcome and walk into sonship. It is in these times we can understand the words with which Paul encouraged the Hebrews:

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."
Hebrews 12:11

God's chastening, His scourging, and the suffering we go through is not to overcome us, but rather it is so we may become overcomers. When God corrects us He only uses what is necessary to yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness in our lives. These are grievous times, but these are the times we know God's love is real. These are the times He makes the necessary changes in our lives so He can bless us.

God has made many promises to the overcomers. Not only will they inherit all things, they will become His sons. Jesus revealed many other promises to John on the Isle of Patmos:

"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."
Revelation 2:7

When Jesus spoke, He was speaking to the true church of our day. To the overcomers, He has promised they will eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst (*middle*) of the Paradise of God. This means the overcomers will have come full circle. They will have come again into their created place in Him. When man sinned, the Lord proclaimed:

". . . 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." *Genesis 3:22-23*

When man partook of the knowledge of good and evil, he became as God, knowing good and evil. The knowledge of good was in that tree, but there was also the knowledge of evil. Unfortunately, man has forsaken his knowledge of good, and only uses his knowledge of evil to destroy. This is why we have murder, rape, robbery, and all other forms of lawlessness. This is why God stated: *". . . now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever:"* Man could not be allowed to live forever in his sinful condition. Man had to be taught and trained to overcome his sinful nature, so God set him out of the Garden of Paradise.

"So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." *Genesis 3:24*

When man was driven out of the garden, God placed a flaming sword to keep man from the Tree of Life. The sword indicates a weapon of war. Paul wrote to the Hebrews concerning the sword:

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." *Hebrews 4:12*

To the Ephesians, he wrote:

". . . take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:"
Ephesians 6:17

The flaming sword God placed at the east end of the garden was the Word of God. The word **flaming** indicates "fire or cleansing." Those who will eat of the Tree of Life in the midst of the paradise of God are those who will have been cleansed and made ready through the cleansing power of the anointed Word of God. Paul referred to the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit. As stated before the sword is always a weapon of war. Paul informed us:

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;" II Corinthians 10:4

If we are going to pull down the strongholds in our lives, we only have one weapon to work with, the sword of the Spirit. It is by this means we will be able to deal with our sin (*strongholds*), and enter again into the presence of God and eat freely of the Tree of Life. The Word of God is the overcoming weapon God has placed in our hands to bring us into sonship. When we continue to apply the Word of God to our lives daily, our minds will be changed. It takes this changed mind to overcome our old, sin nature. Jesus continues His revelation to John:

"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." Revelation 2:11

There is much confusion concerning the second death. Many believe the second death is living for all eternity in a place called hell. The word **second** means "the second time, or again." The word **death** was translated one hundred and seventeen times as "death." It means "death, cease to exist, loss of life." There is no indication in God's Word that the word death means to live for ever in another place. God would not have used the word death and certainly not the second death if man was going to live in eternal punishment. The phrase second death indicates a death had already taken place before. The first death is the death of the body. The second death is the destruction of the soul.

Jesus gives assurance to all those He has called:

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Revelation 20:6

Those who take part in the first resurrection are those who have been resurrected from among the dead. Paul wrote much about being dead in sin, or being dead to sin:

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Romans 6:13

Those who are God's instruments of righteousness are those who are alive from the dead. The original text stated "alive from among the dead," [Interlinear Greek English New Testament by Berry]. These are those who are the first resurrection, upon which the second death will have no power. Jesus continues:

". . . death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Revelation 20:14

It should be obvious to all who read this, that if hell is the second death, then how do you cast hell into hell? Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. When the death of the body takes

place, those who are dead will remain in their sin. Jesus very clearly reveals who will partake of this second death:

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21:8

As Jesus promised, only the overcomers will escape this second death. Those who escape this second death are those who have heeded what the Spirit is saying to the churches, and have made the necessary changes in their lives so they can enter into His Day of Rest.

"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 hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Revelation 2:17

God has promised the overcomers hidden manna. The phrase **hidden manna** means "secret or mighty." God is going to reveal mighty secrets hidden from the foundation of the world to the overcomer.

Israel was given manna in the wilderness. Manna was referred to as angel food. The word manna means "What is it?" This is a question. So what is the hidden manna God is going to reveal to His overcomers? It is the mystery of His creation. The overcomers will understand God's creation. God will answer every question we have as to why He created man and why He takes so much time with us, when He knows we are but dust, *Psalms 103:14*.

God also promises the overcomer a white stone with a name written on it that only the one who receives it will know. In ancient times, when a person went to trial for a serious crime, those who presided over the trial had two stones: a black stone and a white stone. If the one on trial was given a black stone, he was found guilty. A white stone meant he was exonerated from all guilt. When the overcomers stand in the presence of God, the white stone will be their evidence they have been completely exonerated from all guilt of this life. Jesus continues His revelation to John:

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:" Revelation 2:26

As we read the words of Jesus, we know this is a continuing process. We must continue our overcoming walk to the end. Matthew also recorded Jesus' words:

"And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Matthew 10:22

Many are assured when they go to the altar and confess their sin, that they are saved. But we know by Jesus' words, only those who endure and stay steadfast to the end, will be saved. Overcoming is an enduring process.

We also have Jesus' promise we will be hated by all men, and yet the church system wants to be friends to everyone. Because of this there is no enduring evidence in their lives.

Jesus also promised the overcomers will have power over the nations. He continues:

"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father." Revelation 2:27

This fulfills the promise God has given from the beginning. God instructed Adam and Eve to take dominion over all His creation and subdue it, Genesis 1:26. God has promised the overcomers power over all nations (*heathen Gentiles*); and the overcomer shall rule (*shepherd*) the nations with a rod of iron. The rod is the symbol of authority. Iron is the symbol of strength or power. God will give the overcomers the power and authority to again subdue all His creation, and bring it under their dominion. Jesus explained to John in the twelfth chapter of Revelation:

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne." Revelation 12:5

The sun-clad woman is the true church who will bring forth the man child (*male son*) who will rule the nations with the rod of iron. The manchild company are the overcomers who will inherit all things. Jesus brought further insight to the overcoming sons in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation:

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Revelation 19:15

The overcoming sons are those who have the sharp, two-edged sword coming out of their mouths. The two edged sword is the Word of God. The phrase **two edged** means "*two mouths*." The Word of God speaks to the physical man and to the Spiritual man. The overcoming sons will be part of God's judgment upon the nations' heathens. Jesus continues His insight into His overcoming sons:

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Revelation 3:5

As Jesus revealed, the overcomers will be clothed in white raiment. The white raiment is our robe of righteousness. Jesus gave insight to John as to who these clothed in white raiment are:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:7-8

Who are those who will make up the bride of the Lamb? They are those God has clothed in white raiment which is the righteousness of the saints. This clothing is only promised to the overcomers, those clothed in the righteousness of God.

God makes the overcomers a wonderful promise, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." This promise is not made to those who are overcome, and never grew up into the headship of Christ. Jesus will only confess the name of the overcomers before His Father. The overcomers alone will be known of the Father. Jesus continued His revelation to John concerning the overcoming sons:

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which

is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name." Revelation 3:12

The overcomers will become pillars in the temple of God. The pillars are the strength of the building. They will become the superstructure. God has promised the overcomers they will go no more out. These will become a permanent part of God's house and will make up His temple. These are those who will inhabit His Kingdom. He has promised to seal these with His name and write upon them the name of His Holy City, and give them a new name. God's overcoming company will make up His Holy City, New Jerusalem, which is the bride of the Lamb, *Revelation 21:10*. Jesus made one more promise to John concerning His overcoming sons:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Revelation 3:21

The message Jesus gave to John is very simple. Only the overcomers will sit with Him in His throne. As Jesus stated, He overcame this life and has sat down with His Father in His throne. It should be plain by His Word, if we are going to rule and reign with Him, then, we too must occupy His throne with Him.

God's overcoming message is throughout the whole Bible. Matthew recorded Jesus' words concerning the overcomer:

"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34

Only the sons of God's right hand will inherit the Kingdom. God has prepared His Kingdom for His overcomers from the foundation of the earth. Those who overcome will inherit, not only the Kingdom, but all things; all the promises God has made throughout all history to His creation man. The overcomers will inherit the earth and the fullness thereof.

Paul caught the vision of the Kingdom early in his ministry. When Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, it ruined his religion. Paul traded his religious beliefs for the truth of life. Paul wrote to the Romans:

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Romans 8:17

The word **children** means "a male son." Only the sons will inherit. They will become joint-heirs with Christ. The phrase joint heirs means "to be an heir with, or joint participant." When we become joint heirs, we become one with Christ. Any promise always comes with a condition. We will become joint heirs, if we suffer with Him. The message of suffering has been replaced with the false teaching of a rapture. Those who suffer for the cause of Christ will be glorified with all those who overcome through sufferings. As Paul shared with Timothy:

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." II Timothy 3:12

Suffering, yea longsuffering, is a fruit of the Spirit. If we walk and live in the Spirit, then longsuffering is part of our lives. Suffering comes with a promise:

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us:" II Timothy 2:12

The promise of ruling and reigning is only made to the overcomer. But remember, it is the overcomers who have the promise of suffering. The beloved John wrote about what we must overcome:

"I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." I John 2:13-14

The young men are those who are strong, God's Word lives in them, and they have overcome the wicked one. The wicked one is the old man nature. This is also called the man of sin which dwells in each of us. Overcoming the wicked one, the man of sin, should be our utmost concern if we are going to become inheritors of all things. John gives us further insight concerning overcoming:

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." I John 5:4

It is only through faith in our God, His promises, and His Word, that we can gain the victory in this life. God sent Jesus in the flesh to show us the way we must live to overcome and become His sons. As Jesus stated:

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Overcoming must be part of our everyday walk, if we are to walk again in the presence of our Creator, enter again into the paradise of God, and eat again of His Tree of Life. Eternal life will dwell in us because of the Spirit. We must allow the Spirit to grow in us until it consumes the old man. This is the overcoming message God wants us to become part of. Praise God!