



God Is Government

Isaiah 33:22

*"For the LORD is our judge, the
LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD
is our king; he will save us."*

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BIBLICAL AND WORLD HISTORY MASTERCLASS

Overcoming In Christ

OVERCOMING IN CHRIST

"1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

- 1 John 5:1-5

Who is the one who overcomes the world?
But he who believes that Jesus is the Son of
God.

Overcoming In Christ

In 1959, the clarion call for what would become the Civil Rights Movement in song was, We Shall Overcome. It was a song of protest. Because of segregation and Jim Crow, marchers marched, people protested against injustice, and as arms were locked and the movement expanded, you would always hear the song being sung, We Shall Overcome. In that case, it was overcoming unrighteous racial injustice. Of course, that song was picked up by many different groups who were protesting different things, and it became a staple of overcoming something that was wrong, that needed to be made right.

It was a song of a protest. There is a need today to protest, but the protest that I am speaking of as we move along is the protests where the evil one is holding us hostage, where we're living with spiritual handcuffs on or chains around our lives. Some of it is due to our sins, others of it is due to our circumstances.

All we know is we have been overcome by the oppressive nature of what we are dealing with. But I would like to shift the song a little bit from We Shall Overcome to We Have Overcome. Because in the scripture that I read to you, it says anyone who has believed in Christ has overcome. That's what it says. But that ought to create a curiosity as we begin our series, because if you will look at me at Revelation just a few pages over, also written by the Apostle John, in chapter 2 verse 7 we read, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches, to him who overcomes. In verse 11, He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches, he who overcomes.

In verse 17 he says, He who hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches, to him who overcomes. In chapter 3 verse, in chapter 3 verse 12, he who overcomes. So, wait a minute, 1st John 5 says you have overcome, but the same author John when he writes the book of Revelation says he who overcomes. So, on one hand I have overcome, on the other hand I need to overcome. So how do I put this together and what does it mean? John is writing to the seven churches of Asia Minor, as you'll see in a moment, seven is the number of completion, so this is the message to all churches for all time, and he's talking to the whole congregation. He says I want you to tell this to the whole congregation, but in each one of

those scriptures I read you he said he who overcomes, meaning it's possible to be in the church and in the congregation and not be one of the overcomers.

So, you could be here this morning and not overcome because he says he who, so he talks to everybody and then he comes down to the individual and says let me talk to you, he who. So forget the folk around you as we walk through this, because it's whether you decide to overcome, because your neighbor can't overcome for you. But he tells the whole church everybody who has come to Christ has overcome.

The Greek word overcome, the K-O, is a word that means to prevail, to win one's cause, or to be victorious in different and difficult circumstances. So, it has to do with being victorious in the midst of, or over, or in, or through whatever the circumstances are that are illegitimately holding you hostage. So right now, if you have something that should not be holding you hostage, but that is holding you hostage, then you need to be an overcomer, okay, because that's what the word means.

But why do you tell me, John, that I have overcome, and then, John, you come back to Revelation and tell me, well, you need to overcome. We all know it's possible to be married and not happy, amen? In other words, you can have a legal status that's not equal to your present experience. The paper may declare you to be something, but your experience says something else.

When John says you have overcome, he's dealing with your legal status. Christ has made every believer an overcomer legally, but what you have legally does not mean that's what you're experiencing personally. If you're unhappy and married, that doesn't make you unmarried, it makes you miserably married.

If you are defeated and Christian, that doesn't make you unchristian, that makes you a defeated Christian. So, what he's trying to tell you and us is that the goal is to make our legal status our experiential reality. So that's why the word is you have overcome spiritually, legally, because you come to Christ, but you may not yet have overcome in terms of it working out in your life, in terms of you experiencing it.

In fact, the only reason you need to overcome is there's something to overcome. To overcome means to overrule a sin or a set of circumstances that are illegitimate. It is to overrule them, like the Supreme Court overruling a lower court or the referees overruling a call on the court or on the field. It is an overruling. It is to say to that other thing, your decision is not final. So I want to say to you as we move forward, whatever is illegitimate in your life, sin and or circumstances, God wants you to overrule and not have it overruling you, particularly on an ongoing basis, and therefore God wants you to experience overcoming.

In fact, I'm going to go a little bit deeper. One of the reasons why God allows some things that He does not approve is to give you the experience of being an overcomer. Okay, now I may throw you a little bit. God does not sin. God does not endorse sin, but God allows things throughout Scripture that He does not approve of in order to demonstrate His greater glory. Now if we intentionally do things, that will bring consequences, and those consequences can be daunting, but at the very same time, God wants us to experience, as we'll see in some of these scenarios we go through in chapter two and three in the weeks to come, this principle.

If it's pouring down raining outside, I mean it's raining cats and dogs, and you own an umbrella. You are an overcomer because you have in your hand what you need to keep it from raining on you, but if you walk around using your umbrella as a cane, strolling, you are an overcomer, but you're getting wet because you will not be experiencing overcoming without the umbrella open. So, it's not that you're not an overcomer, it's that you're not experiencing overcoming because what you have to overcome it, you're not using as it was meant to be used, so you are being defeated even though you have it.

So many believers, or all believers, have salvation making you technically and legally an overcomer, but your spiritual umbrella may be closed so you're not overcoming. Okay? So, the goal is to get us to open up our umbrellas, so the devil stops raining on us. The Bible makes it clear, if you are going to be an overcomer, a prevailer, that the link has to be made between your state and your standing, between your position and your practice, between what's legal and what you experience literal.

It's the difference between the Emancipation Proclamation and Juneteenth. There was a year-and-a-half gap before the folks in Texas found out they were free from the Emancipation Proclamation, so even though they were legally free, they weren't literally free because the

information was not gathered and gained. So Juneteenth is celebrated as a reminder of what was legal that became literal.

The tragedy of Juneteenth is that many folks still stayed slaves after they found out they were free because they had been there so long they weren't going to take a chance on exercising their freedom. Because, you know, you can get used to being a slave, to sin, circumstances, to people, to problems. Even though you're in church talking about freedom at last, he whom the Son says free is free indeed.

You got the right quote, it's just not your experience. To understand, stay with me here, to understand the key to being an overcomer in whatever needs to be overcome in our lives, you have to—watch this—begin to look at Jesus differently. Okay, let me say that again.

If you really, really, really want to be an overcomer, prevail, you must begin to look at Jesus differently. Before he ever gets to talking about being an overcomer in chapters 2 and 3, he gives us chapter 1. He begins in chapter 1 of the book of Revelation, verse 1, saying the revelation of Jesus Christ. He says, I'm going to disclose Jesus to you.

He says in verse 4, I'm writing to the churches. He takes this look at Jesus in verse 7. Behold, he is coming with clouds. Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. So, it shall be.

Jesus is talking in verse 8, I am Alpha and Omega, who was, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. He tells John in verse 11, write a book. John then says in verse 12, I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, Jesus speaking to him, and having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands.

In the middle of the lampstands, I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe, reaching to his feet, girded across his chest with a golden sash. His head and his hair were white like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire.

His feet were like brandished bronze when it had been made to glow in a furnace. His voice was like the sound of many waters. In his right hand he had seven stars.

Verse 17, when I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man, and he placed his right hand on me and said, do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the Living One. If you and I are going to be overcomers in practice, not in principle, you're going to have to see the Jesus that John saw.

This is not Jesus meek and mild. This is not Jesus in a manger. No, no, no.

This is Jesus on fire. He says it is like the burning of a furnace. He says when he spoke it was like the rushing of many waters, like oceans and seas just thundering, and he says when I saw this Jesus, it knocked a brother off his feet.

I fell down like a dead man walking. See we got this namby-pamby Jesus, and that's not the overcoming Jesus, because we really do not understand who Jesus is since his resurrection and ascension. See when John is writing, Jesus has already died, already rose, and already gone back to heaven, and when he sees this Jesus who's now up in heaven, this Jesus is in charge.

This Jesus is controlling the agenda. This is not a feel-good Jesus. This is not a Jesus that's just patting you on the back, playing patty cake with you. This is not a Jesus who's just kind of just going along to get along. This is the Jesus that knocks you off your feet, and if you're not relating to that Jesus, you're not relating to the overcoming Jesus. You're just relating to the Jesus that you, you know, you read about, you feel good about, he did all the miracles, and he was such a nice guy, and he died for my sins, and all that.

Oh no, no, no. It's a little bit more than that. Let me show you what I mean.

In Colossians chapter 2 verse 15 it says that when Jesus died, he disarmed the rulers of this present age. Okay, let me put it this way. If you pull out a gun on me, you get to control me. You get to control me because you have all the power, and you have all the fire. So, you tell me sit down, I'm going to sit down. You tell me get up; I'm going to get up. You tell me go over there; I'm going to go over there. I'm going to do whatever you say because you have got the power. You have the power.

You got a gun on me. However, if I ever discover that there are no bullets in that gun, I'm taking off my preacher jacket, and we're going to get it on. Because if I ever discover you are controlling me with an empty weapon, we're going to have to, we're going to have to, there's going to be more than one hood pastor in this church, because if I ever discover, Colossians 2 15 says, I disarmed them.

So, the reason why the devil can defeat us is because he can deceive us into thinking there are bullets still in the gun. But what Jesus did on the cross, the scripture says, is he disarmed them. He took away the authority, so now you're beaten by deception.

That feels like reality, looks like reality, seems like reality. That's why the scripture says in Romans 8 37, you are more than conquerors in him who loved us and gave himself for us. That's why John 16 33 says, in me you're going to have peace because I have already overcome the world.

He speaks in these superlatives because it is your connecting with this risen Christ. Romans 5 10, after he says God demonstrated his love toward us that while we were sinners Christ died for us in verse 8, he comes to verse 10 and he says, and we are saved or delivered by his life. So the overcoming comes with this life.

Flat tire, out of gas, motor doesn't run, something is wrong and you're stuck. You call AAA and AAA sends out a vehicle bigger than your problem. One day I was stuck on the side of the road from my engine going out.

They sent this truck, this thing, lifted my car, put it on its bed. I sat in the front seat while it drove me back to Dallas because what they sent out was big enough to handle what was stalling me. If you have the wrong kind of Jesus, if you're looking at Jesus the wrong way, you're not looking at the one big enough to dispense what is needed to move you out of your stalled situation.

If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you don't have AAA, you got triple G. God, God, and God. That's God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. You've got triple G. And what he wants you to know is when you begin to look at him differently and relate to him as the risen Christ who is ascended, who's now functioning with fire in his eyes.

Not soft skin, but hair like wool and a voice like thunder. That's who you're dealing with and that's who you must relate to. You say, but my problem is so big, and it's been there so long.

My problem is so big you don't know how long I've been dealing with this addiction. You don't know how long I've been dealing with this circumstance. You don't know how long.

My problem is so big. Let me explain something. Anybody who can lift 700 pounds can lift 200 pounds. Okay? You show me a weightlifter who can lift 700 pounds. If you bring them a 200-pound weight, that's not going to be a problem because they can lift 700. On the cross, Jesus Christ lifted the sins of the whole world for all men for all time on Calvary.

So, what did you tell me the size of your problem was? You're dealing with somebody who handled the world and its sin and its accompanying circumstances. It may be bad, but it isn't that bad. But if you're connecting it to the wrong Jesus, that is a misconception of the biblical risen Jesus, then you're applying it to somebody that's too weak to handle it.

And so, your view, my view of Jesus has got to be adjusted. If we're going to experience the victory of this exalted Christ that John is talking about before he ever gets there, he wants you to know that Jesus has veto power over that which has to be overcome that's illegitimate.

Okay, so that raises a question.

Where can I find his power? Okay, come on, because if it's all that and a bag of chips, I want some of that. I don't want to be overcome anymore. Look at chapter 12 of Revelation verse 11, and they overcame him, here's our word, because of the blood of the Lamb, because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

At one verse, we'll shift how you relate to Jesus. When you shift how you relate to Jesus, he shifts how he relates to you, because now you're relating to him as he is, not as you want him to be. Because a lot of folks come to church worshiping a Jesus as they want him to be, not as he declares himself to be.

And isn't it terrible when somebody is talking for you, trying to describe you to you when you know you? So, Jesus says, let me explain this to you. It says they overcame him.

Referring to Satan in that context. They overruled him. They prevailed against him when three things were in place. These three things can be summed up in one word.

Their identification with Christ. Now follow me closely here. When they properly identified with Christ, they prevailed.

Let me say this as I get into this. God places victory in your reach, not in your hand. Big difference. Overcoming is in your reach. You can get it, but it's not in your hands. See what a lot of folks come to church, and they want God to drop victory in their hand.

He puts it within your reach because he needs to see you exercise faith to get it in your hand. Okay? So, you can talk about it all day, you can pray about it all day, you can come to church all day, but if you do not grab what has been provided, you don't get what you could have.

He says they prevailed, overcame, because of their identification with the cross, with the confession, and with the commitment. What does that mean? It means that they began by the blood, he says, to understand that the cross 2,000 years ago was relevant right now. See for many people, the cross is a historical event. 2,000 years ago Jesus died on the cross, and I believe he died for my sins, I accept him as my Savior, and because of that I'm saved, I'm going to heaven, and all that's true. But these folk are overcoming him by the blood in the present, in the present of this text. They're not just overcoming him because the blood worked 2,000 years ago.

That's why when Paul described his identity in Galatians 2:20, he said, I am right now crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, it's Christ who lives in me, and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. He says, if you want to look at my life now, I am controlled by the cross. That is, I am controlled by the work that Jesus Christ did 2,000 years ago that affects my decision-making in the present.

It is my current point of reference. If what Jesus did 2,000 years ago, which is why he left us with communion, you don't make it relevant today, it becomes a 2,000-year-old event that you'll benefit from eternity and it'll be useless in time. In other words, the reality of what

Jesus accomplished on the cross, which was why he said when he got up from the dead, Matthew 28 19, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Translation, I'm in charge now. I'm in charge now. I haven't come to take sides; I've come to take over. I'm in charge now. I call the shots. Okay, so if he's not calling the shots, you don't get to overcome.

If he's not calling the shots, you don't get to overcome. So, this goes beyond praise the Lord, hallelujah, and isn't God good all the time? All the time God is good. That sounds good, but he says the cross is my point of reference.

Who died, why he died, and the victory that he accomplished, I'm going to transfer to today. He says secondly, they overcame him by the word of their testimony. Watch this now, stay with me.

You will not overcome whatever you're needing to overcome if you are a secret agent Christian. So, let's get that straight, okay? If you're an undecided voter, you're not going to be an overcomer, okay? If you're a spiritual CIA representative, if you're a covert operative, forget overcoming, because Jesus Christ with fire in his eyes is not trying to help folk to overcome who are embarrassed to be associated with him. He says you deny me before men, I will deny you before my father, Matthew 10.

You confess me before men, I will confess you before my father. If you don't want to be associated with me in public, you just want this private meeting with the saints on Sunday, but you don't want other folk to know that you are a follower of Jesus Christ, which was the point of your baptism when you went public to say I am publicly proclaiming my identification with Jesus Christ, don't be calling on me for overcoming in your life when you don't want to be associated with me. The word of their testimony.

Let me say it another way, trying to camouflage it by talking about I believe in God won't cut it, okay? Using God's name won't cut it. God has placed everything in the hand of his Son. At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father.

So, the Father is glorified when Jesus is the superstar, and you going to tell me he was wounded for your transgressions, bruised for your iniquities, the chastisement of your peace was on his shoulders by his stripes, you are healed, and you can't identify with the risen Christ? He said it's by the word of your testimony. Oh, and then he hits us with a zinger. He hits us with a zinger, number three, because he says, number three, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

They overcame him because of a love relationship that they possessed with him that transcended dying. Now that's some serious love when it transcends dying, but it's not unusual. Most parents, if they had to, would give their life for their children.

Most parents, because of the depth of their love. You have men who would give their lives for their mates because of the depth of their love, it was a choice between the two. So, in the human level we know what it is to sacrifice the life for love, right? He says to be an overcomer, because he got fire in his eyes, to see an overcomer. That's why Paul says in Luke 9, he says, I die daily. Every day when I get up in the morning I say, "I am dead to me and I'm alive to you. You are my life."

You're not just a place I go on Sunday, you're my defining definition. You are my life. If any man would be my disciple, he must decide and deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

That there is this understanding that I am pursuing a relationship with somebody that I want to fall in love with more than life itself. In other words, this is a serious commitment, but you probably got some serious stuff to overcome. So, this is not casual Christianity here.

We have people constantly saying, oh bless me, oh bless me, oh bless me, so God gets a visit once a week, and they think something miracle is supposed to drop from heaven, when it's part-time Christians wanting a full-time deliverer. He says, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, you got to deal with the risen Christ now, and the risen Christ is in charge. That's why I love what Paul says.

Paul says, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Now you don't go looking for death, you don't go wishing death, but he says for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Paul says, I don't know whether to stay here or to go home to be with Christ.

He said, "I'm betwixt and between. If I stay here, it's to serve Christ. If I die, it's to go be with Christ, and if I suffer, he says, I reckon that the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed unto me."

So, he's saying basically I'm in a no-lose deal. Living, dying, it's all Christ. If I've got to be rejected because of Christ, if I've got to be misunderstood because of Christ, if I've got to be not liked because of Christ, not because of my foolishness, but because of Christ, then that's the way it is.

Once you have now identified with Christ, you have positioned yourself to be an overcomer. You have positioned yourself to see the move of God overrule in the circumstances of life. So, there must now be a shift in perspective.

You must change your look. You must look at Jesus now differently as the sovereign on fire Lord who now rules, and you must look at everything else, you know. We all believe in the Son, S-U-N.

We believe in the Son, right? Everybody believes in the Son, but I don't know too many people go around this all day looking at the Sun, just walking. Yeah, I believe in the Son because I'm looking at the Sun all day. Let me tell you the main reason you believe in the Son.

I believe in the Son, we believe in the S-U-N. The main reason we believe in the S-U-N is because of it we see everything else. We don't go looking at the Sun all day, but we look at everything else all day.

But because of the Sun you see everything else. Well, what's true in the physical world because of the S-O-N, you're supposed to look at everything else. Everything else is supposed to be because of Him shining whether you see Him or not, and therefore brought in line with Him.

As I've said before, at 67 I still don't wear glasses. I don't wear glasses at 67. Haven't had surgery, don't wear contacts, and let me explain how that happens, okay? My left eye is off.

My left eye is off. It's like 20-50 or something. So if I cover my right eye and just look at you with my left eye, things are fuzzy.

Things are fuzzy because my left eye is a little off. But my right eye is 20-20. See my right eye is what they would put in the category of perfect vision.

So, my right eye can see clearly, but my left eye is fuzzy. But because my right eye is 20-20 it compensates for the weakness in my left eye. The only reason I'm not wearing glasses is not because I'm perfect, but because I'm covered.

My right eye overcomes my left eye so that my left eye becomes subject to my right eye so that I don't wear glasses so that I am not submitting to the weakness. I'm overriding it with strength. You know, I got up.

And if you understand that I have already overcome and you're walking through this thing you need to overcome, it's sin or circumstance, but you're looking at me and you're saying, okay Jesus I thank you Lord you've already overcome this. You've already overcome my emotions. You've already overcome my circumstance.

Any of you who like pro-wrestling? Let me explain something. It's fake. Okay let me explain something. If you like pro-wrestling, it's fake. It's been pre-scripted. They have already decided who the winner is going to be. That has been pre-decided, pre-destined, pre-determined, elected. That has all has been decided before the match even started. You're looking at the match and you see other wrestlers coming out right in the nick of time to jump in the match. All that's scripted.

How's a man going to be against the rope being beat to a pulp, all of a sudden he gets energy out of nowhere, turns it around, flips it over. They even pay if you bleed. If you bleed they pay you more because you made it look more real.

So, they have scripted this thing. But even if you're being defeated, even if you're being thrown down, even if you're being abused, if it has already been pre-destined that when this

thing is over you're going to be more than a conqueror, that thing is going to turn around in some way, somehow. I know the devil's been slamming you.

I know circumstances have been beating you. I know sins have been owning you. I know it looks like the evil one is controlling you, but Jesus Christ on the cross has already pre-scripted that you are a winner. He's already pre-scripted that by relationship to Him you're overcomer. He's already pre-scripted that Satan has no longer any control over you. He's already pre-scripted that greater is He that's in you than He that's in the world.

He's already pre-scripted that those folk don't control you anymore. He's already pre-scripted that that circumstance doesn't control you anymore. I know you're being thrown down. I know you're being beaten up, but you can now look at it and declare, I am an overcomer and I'm coming back at you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.