

The Heavenly Courtroom

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Introduction

Wouldn't you like to discover how your pain can be turned into eternal profit?

This is the question I asked myself in 1971 when I began to wonder why my life seemed so empty. You may have experienced some degree of success in your life like I had; yet you may feel empty.

Perhaps you are a person who like me back in 1971 has had either no, or very limited, experience with God. Or maybe you are some sort of God follower, but are experiencing pain, challenges and even suffering that you can not make any sense of. Maybe you are Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, or a follower of some other faith, but your experience with your religion has not made sense to you. I invite you to ponder with me the questions that I've asked myself and God since 1971.

Let's look at God's original plan for mankind. Adam was created to have intimacy with God and His Word, the Tree of Life, and through that intimacy he was commissioned to plant the Kingdom of God on earth with his God-given dominion. He was to resist Satan. He was to have the Word planted as a seed into his heart, cultivate it, and see the resulting fruit, as the Kingdom of God would grow supernaturally.

Now we still have the same goal, but this time we have a new power source, which is the resurrection of Jesus. And through His resurrection living in you and me, we are to supernaturally resurrect the sufferings, challenges, failures, and pain that this world may throw at us, as fruit for finally constructing the Kingdom of God.

God has planted in human hearts the desire for comfort, peace, and protection. But seeking those things first will make them an

idol in your life. You will strive for those things rather than for God himself who alone can give you true comfort, peace and protection.

However in seeking God first He will put you on the front lines of warfare in the spirit world. Your expectations for comfort, peace and protection may seem unfulfilled. Seek Him first and his power in you will convert all of your discomfort and sufferings into eternal treasures for you and others.

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Chapter 1 Our Purpose in Life

Why am I writing this?

If you find yourself in a dark place then I would like to share with you the revelation I have received from the Lord while I walked through my dark places. In a very dark place, revelation of this knowledge will produce: **Peace, Patience, Purpose, Power, and Perseverance.**

What is our root purpose in life?

When the Lord dealt with me about what is my real purpose for Him in my life, it increased my faith and gave me **Peace, Patience, Purpose, Power, and Perseverance** in my trials. This chapter is about our purpose.

Acts 2:40 (KJV) says,

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”

The word *untoward* in the King James Version means *crooked, perverse, leanness, without direction*. I would go further and say that it also means *without purpose*.

Back in 1971 when I asked God “Why am I here?”, I was searching for my purpose in life. God has put that longing into every person’s heart. The challenge is: Are we honest enough to ask the question and listen for God’s answer?

I believe that most people would like to have their life count for something. We all have different and varied “sub-customized purposes” in life, depending on how God has gifted us and depending on His customized plan for our lives. We are not all

called to be stay-at-home mothers, but many are, and that is their “sub-customized purpose.” We are not all called to be wealthy executives, or pastors, or missionaries, but many are, and that is their “sub-customized purpose.”

I submit that there is a common root, or main purpose, for all of us.

What I am writing about is designed to go to the root purpose for us all. That is the objective of this book. As you read through this, you will see that even though we all have different and various God-ordained plans for our lives, we all still have one common God-ordained purpose that should reign in our lives over everything else.

That primary purpose, I believe, is building a Kingdom here on earth in joint venture with God, or in other words, a new society, so that God could be with His creation. This can also be defined as “Glorifying God.”

God wanted to create a Kingdom on this earth that would be operated by His creation, Man. However, His design was and is like a “joint venture.” His goal is to live in intimacy with His created people for eternity. Our purposeful response to His greatness and His love should be worship.

The summary.

God created Adam and Eve and gave them dominion over the earth. His intention was to be in constant intimacy with them and for them to exercise the authority that God gave to them to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

We know that Adam and Eve did not maintain their intimacy with God, and therefore turned their authority over to Satan. Satan then established his kingdom here on earth, now referred to as the “world system,” or Mystery Babylon.

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Then Jesus came to ambush Satan and defeat him in the heavenlies through the Cross and resurrection. After it was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent to inhabit man once again, but this time the Holy Spirit has the power of resurrection. Knowing that great power is given to us, we are now called to establish the Kingdom of God on this earth, through warfare.

Ephesians 1:18-21 says,

“the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”

Go with me into the story of building a Kingdom for God on this earth.

Genesis 1:26-29 says,

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

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Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.”

Notice that God created us in His image, which means, among other things, that we have the power to bear fruit. Notice that the issues mentioned in the above Scripture include **dominion, multiplication, fullness, and fruit**. I believe that God is a “farmer” and that everything in His creation works on the seed principle.

God gave man dominion over this earth, even over Satan.

Psalm 8 (Amplified Bible) says,

“O Lord, our Lord, how excellent (majestic and glorious) is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory on [or above] the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and unweaned infants You have established strength because of Your foes, that You might silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I view and consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained and established,

What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of [earthborn] man that You care for him?

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Yet You have made him but a little lower than God [or heavenly beings], and You have crowned him with glory and honor.

You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field,

The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent (majestic and glorious) is Your name in all the earth!”

If you look at Genesis 1, above, and Psalm 8, taken together they show that man has been given dominion to rule this earth.

The Kingdom was for God to pour out His intense love. God had and has a love that He “aches” to pour out.

A major motivating factor for God was to have Adam come to the Tree of Life and to be in joint venture with him. God desires friendship and intimacy with man and woman. He enjoys our company. He is love, and He loves us more than we can imagine. Many God followers have no idea that God has a deep unfathomable love for them. A pastor who is a friend of mine said that he has observed that it is possible to find God’s will and miss God Himself. It is that intimacy with Him that produces everything that He wants and everything that you need.

Isaiah 62:5 says,

“For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.”

Can you imagine that romance for you and for me reflects the heart of God?

Paul Billheimer wrote:

Romance is at the heart of the universe and is the key to all existence.

My wife Carol had a very unusual experience several years ago. I was awakened in the middle of the night as she was saying in a very loud and passionate voice, “I love you, I love you, I love you!” At first, I thought that she was talking to me. But while she was asleep and was dreaming, she had a vision of the Lord Jesus standing at our bedroom door. She said that the power and intensity of His love and the light overwhelmed her. She said that she had a great desire to go to be with Him. I am so glad that she waited!

Ephesians 2:4-5 (Amplified Bible) says,

“But God – so rich is He in His mercy! Because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us,

Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him, for] it is by grace (His favor and mercy which you did not deserve) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ’s salvation).”

Getting back to the story. The Tree of Life was the key.

God’s plan was that His man and woman would go to the Tree of Life, which the Bible verifies is the Word of God, and there they

would hear God speak. Once man heard God speak, a seed, the Word, was planted into his heart. Man's heart is the soil that the Word needs to produce fruit. Adam did not only have a physical garden to take care of, but he himself was the ground where the fruit was produced by God's word to rule and reign on this earth. Part of the fruit-bearing process depended on Adam taking the Words that God spoke to him, and re-speaking them to everything on earth.

Another key ingredient. Adam was a man filled with the Spirit of God.

God needed a man filled with His Spirit to set up His Kingdom here on earth. Jesus came to cleanse us so that we again could be filled with the Spirit of God, so that we could set up His Kingdom here. The Bible calls Jesus the Second Adam.

How did He cleanse us? He cleansed us by swapping places with us through a New Blood Covenant. He became sin for us. He could then insert His Spirit back into us like He had originally made Adam.

Adam gave dominion over this earth to Satan.

Now there were two issues. First Man was out of touch with God and had forfeited God's indwelling Spirit. Secondly, Man gave Satan control over the earth. Satan utilized this control to organize his own kingdom here, now called the Mystery Babylon, or the system of the "world," of which Satan is the prince. There needed to be a two-fold solution.

God's idea of bringing His Kingdom to earth depends upon His power source, which is death and resurrection.

During different times in the history of America, a lot of well-meaning Christians attempted to set up God's Kingdom on earth, but they utilized the wrong power source and really had the wrong idea, not God's idea. They did that by trying to set up worldly government systems, etc. I do not believe that bringing in the

Kingdom of God during our lifetime means improving the world's system of government, finance, and business. That is all part of Mystery Babylon, and it is destined to be destroyed. While I do agree that we should affect the present systems of the world, it is not that they should be finally reformed, rather it is just so that they are temporarily in a better position to bring in His Kingdom.

Remember when Jesus was tempted by Satan in Luke chapter 4, He refused Satan's offer to inherit the kingdoms of the world, or the world system. Jesus did not want to reform. His goal was and is to replace.

Luke 4:5-8 says,

“Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.”

And Jesus answered and said to him, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.””

Bearing fruit and overcoming defeats Satan in our realm of influence.

However, it may also have far-reaching effects (see Luke 11:21-22). Reforming the present system does not affect Satan. God created Adam who was supposed to resist Satan as God gave him authority to do so.

Now in the final Kingdom construction, a man made of dirt, like Adam, has to defeat Satan. Jesus, the Second Adam, did just

that through the Cross and Resurrection. However, now Jesus, in us, “dirt people,” again will overcome the satanic authorities that still hold people in bondage and keep blinders over their eyes so that they cannot see the Truth of the Gospel. Our job is to distribute Jesus’ defeat of Satan in our realm of influence until the Gospel is preached to all nations.

Jesus’ purpose was and is to destroy the works of the devil. Now He needs us as His representatives here on earth to distribute His victory.

1 John 3:8 says,

“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

The following is a quote from Watchman Nee.

The Gospel of Grace deals principally with blessing while the Gospel of the Kingdom is especially directed against the demonic oppression of Satan.

If Christians view the saving of souls as their greatest responsibility on earth, they have failed to accomplish the highest will of God. They ought to realize that there exists an even greater responsibility than that of the saving of souls. Christians are to bring this age to an end by bringing in the kingdom of God.

As you will see in later chapters, the Kingdom of God in the *now* is something that can only be wrought by God through fruit in your life, by His power, not by your efforts of reform. I believe that what it looks like in the *now*, is as we overcome, the Kingdom

of God is born and transferred to other's hearts. Then they do the same, and so on. When this has reached its' fullness in God's eyes, then the New Heaven and New Earth will be manifested.

Recap.

Please remember that God's idea with Adam was that He would hear God speak from the Tree of Life, a seed would be planted in Adam's heart, as described in Mark chapter 4, and fruit would grow. The fruit would be supernatural; the power of God would operate, not the capability of man. Man needs to know that our greatest contribution to the joint venture with God is to be good "dirt," good soil. In addition, the death and resurrection in our own lives that agriculture demands must take place for the seed to bear fruit.

It is interesting to know that seed, time, and harvest require the death of the seed, and the resurrection of the fruit. This is where we will see how God uses your sufferings to destroy evil.

Our purpose here on earth is to be overcomers, defeating satanic issues and beings in our realm of influence, which directly contributes to establishing the Kingdom of God on this earth.

Take a look at the end from the beginning.

In the following chapters, we will track with God how He had planned the recovery of His goal to establish a kingdom here with man as a joint venture partner. We will look at various Old and New Testament examples. But to conclude this chapter, I want to show you the end from the beginning. Look to your left as if it were the time of Adam. Now look to your right as if it were the time to come. They both carry the same root purpose for all of our lives, which is to be a joint venture partner with God for establishing His Kingdom on earth.

Revelation chapter 21 indicates that the Kingdom of God is coming progressively to earth. The Kingdom of God is finally propagated after thousands of years since Adam's time. But notice, it is done so by overcoming, tribulation, suffering, death, and resurrection. I call this the re-creation, in which you and I are joint venture partners with God Himself. There is a required amount of our overcoming that defeats Satan's strongholds that is required prior to the re-creation of the New Heaven and Earth.

While I do not claim to understand all of the end-times issues and the order of events, I submit that there will be a time when God will bring the ultimate Kingdom to earth and put an end to the progressive process. I submit that the time clock for the *now* Kingdom to transition into the final Kingdom with a New Heaven and Earth, is when the Gospel is heard by all nations as it's written in Matthew 24:14:

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

But that cannot happen until we who are living in the *now* Kingdom do enough overcoming of Satan in our own realm of influence to make it possible for all nations to hear the Gospel. Remember in Acts 1:6-8 Jesus was asked when the Kingdom is coming. He did not give the disciples the time frame that they were seeking, but rather He responded by telling them that they were to be given power to become witnesses. The root word for witness is martyr. I believe that means also living martyrs, those of us who go through suffering and resurrection, who overcome Satanic issues so that the nations become the spoil we take from the enemy. We are also witnesses in the Heavenly Courtroom.

2 Peter 3:3-13 makes it clear that this earth will indeed change one day.

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“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

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 creation.”

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,

by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

But the heavens and the earth, which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be

dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

Notice Revelation 21:1-8 connects overcoming with the gradual coming of the Kingdom of God.

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

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

And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

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But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

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Chapter 2 Overcoming Destroys Evil

God “destroyed” the devil at the Cross.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says,

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

These verses say that Satan was “destroyed.” What does that actually mean? He seems to be running around doing a job of destroying others. It does not mean to annihilate. Satan is still operating; he has not been annihilated.

The word *destroy* is defined in Strong’s Concordance as:

1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative;

1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency;

1b) to deprive of force, influence, power

Why are we engaged in spiritual warfare?

Both Old and New Testaments make a major focus on spiritual warfare. The real human warfare in the Old Testament is somewhat a type and shadow for spiritual warfare in the New Testament. The term *overcome* is used to describe biblical spiritual warfare. *To overcome* means “to prevail in a legal courtroom contest”. While Ephesians chapter 6 calls it wrestling, it is in fact a wrestling match in a legal courtroom setting; the good guys against the bad guys.

I would like to alert followers of Jesus to the fact that as His follower, you have enlisted in the spiritual military. I want to also say that this branch of the military is not simply the infantry or air force; it is the Navy Seals. I am not at all belittling the infantry, air force, or any other branch of military service that puts our brave men in harms way to protect their country, but I am saying that it is a known fact that the Navy Seals are a special force for some of the fiercest battles.

The Lord asked me the question, “What is the purpose of warfare from the point of view of the ‘good guys’?”

I felt like the Lord gave me this answer.

“Is it not to disable the enemy from future influence, from future violence, future attacks, from future stealing? Is it not to set his slaves and prisoners free? Is it not also to take his spoils, the wealth, both material and human, that he has acquired? Is it not to free captives?”

Consider this question in terms of World War II.

The following outline summarizes this book.

1. Jesus died on the Cross and was resurrected so that we could be saved and have His life inserted into us. He overcame Satan, or in other words, defeated and destroyed him in a legal sense.

2. The attack on Jesus at the Cross was illegal. In short, it was an ambush to destroy Satan. Satan had no right to kill a sinless man. In doing so Satan was deemed guilty and “destroyed,” at least in the heavenly places. I have been told that there were at least 21 illegal acts done by the Sanhedrin court when they tried Jesus.

3. Since God gave the dominion over this earth to man, now man must distribute Jesus’ victory here on earth. That is, of

course, a man with the Spirit of the resurrected Jesus living inside of him.

4. Our distribution of this victory comes through our overcoming evil issues in our realm of influence. This often includes curses from former generations.

5. Our suffering can be illegal as was Jesus' because we are justified by faith, therefore we are also considered without sin. However, we often must go through the overcoming courtroom process, which includes suffering, in order to prevail.

6. Jesus told us in Luke 11 that when we overcome a strong man we not only defeat him, that spiritual being, but we also take his spoils. Spoils include the souls of men.

7. To confirm this Paul said in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 that he dies so others may live. He said in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 that the eyes of the unbelievers have been blinded by spiritual enemies. Then he went on to say in chapter 4, that the light of the Gospel is in us, and comes out of us as we are crushed. He said, "I die so that you may live."

8. The New Heavens and New Earth cannot come until the Gospel has been preached to all nations. The Gospel cannot be preached to all nations, or people groups, until the blinders have been removed from their eyes (2 Corinthians 3-4). The blinders cannot be removed until there has been enough overcoming to pull those blinders off. As I mention in another chapter, Revelation chapters 21 and 22 show the Kingdom of God coming gradually, then suddenly.

Matthew 11:12 says,

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."

Footstool.

I have heard people disagree with this idea I expressed above that we as humans on this earth can really have any eternal effect on the evil spiritual forces at work on this earth. They rightfully say that Jesus completed the work against evil at the Cross and resurrection. However, as I express in this book, Jesus and the Father God do not have authority to operate here on earth except through us, and the Holy Spirit in us. The amazing Scriptures that so clearly confirm this have to do with God's Footstool.

Psalm 110:1-7 says,

"The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.

The LORD has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.

He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries.

He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; therefore He shall lift up the head."

Hebrews 10:12-13 (Amplified Bible) says,

"Whereas this One [Christ], after He had offered a single sacrifice for our sins [that shall

avail] for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

Then to wait until His enemies should be made a stool beneath His feet.”

Notice the above Scriptures say very clearly that after Jesus rose from the dead He was seated at the right hand of God and waited until someone destroyed His enemies. The word *footstool* in the Old Testament means ‘to put a foot on a vanquished foe’. In the New Testament it means ‘to stand upon and crush’.

I asked the Lord that if the Father is seated in Heaven and if Jesus is seated at His right hand, then who is here on earth doing the judging. He quickly gave me an understanding in John 16 that I had always had a difficult time understanding.

John 16:7-11 (NIV, 1984) says,

“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;

in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;

and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”

Notice in this Scripture above, that the Holy Spirit inside of us is the one who finishes the judgment process on satanic beings.

What is overcoming?

Overcoming is a major topic in the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments. As I mentioned above, overcoming is winning a legal case in a Heavenly Courtroom.

God gave us power to overcome.

It is difficult enough to imagine the power of God that was demonstrated in Creation. Just imagine God-Jesus speaking and those words creating everything from nothing! However, overcoming is even more powerful than that because it utilizes the power of resurrection, the power that raised Jesus from the dead (see Ephesians 1:19).

Now we are distributors of Jesus' overcoming power. But overcoming is not just making it out of a dark tunnel with our skin still on. No, it is being the victor over another in a wrestling match, disabling him, and then taking the key in his pocket and going to the prison to let many prisoners out.

I have a strong warning here.

This wrestling match can be very deceptive. More often than not it seems like a "normal earthly suffering." It seems like things in one's life have gone bad. Look at Job. He had no idea that Satan was behind his suffering. However, when Job finally overcame, not only was he set free, but others were as well.

Overcoming is a legal matter, a guilty verdict against Satan, or against a curse or a demonic being under Satan's control.

This legal verdict not only breaks the evil power over your life, but also over the lives of perhaps thousands of others who have also been under that evil control, perhaps the same curse or the same demon. You literally take all the property of that demonic force.

Luke 11:20-22 says,

"But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you."

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.”

1 Chronicles 26:27 says,

“Some of the spoils won in battles they dedicated to maintain the house of the LORD.”

Revelation 18 describes that property. It speaks of much material wealth, but also the souls of men.

Revelation 18:11-13 says,

“And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:

merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble;

and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.”

The Heavenly Courtroom

What if a Sheriff came to your door to serve you with a summons to appear in court for a crime you did not commit? You noticed that the summons had your name on it. You would have to go to court to prove that the person for whom the summons was intended had died, and you just happened to have the same name. You then

discovered that the person who accused you of the crime would be jailed if you could prove your innocence.

So it is with you as satanic forces bring trials and sufferings into your life. You can defeat them in the Heavenly Courtroom. You let all interested parties know that the person who committed the crime, the sin or the curse, has died and that this accusation is illegal. You may have the same name on the surface, but you are a new person, a new creation, born anew. The old man had died. You are a resurrected being over whom satanic powers and curses have no power.

You show them the Word of God, and the Ancient of Days, the Judge, makes His verdict in your favor. Your accusers are arrested instead of you.

Colossians 2:13-15 (ESV) says,

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses

by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

However, the courtroom experience took longer than expected. It took a toll on you tempting you to grow weary and to even get you to agree with your accusers.

Just make sure that your testimonies, the words of your mouth, do not convict you of the crime. Keep your words rooted in faith, calling those things that are not as though they are, like Abraham did. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. Do not hit the delete button by your words.

Galatians 2:20 says,

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

If you are a born again child of God and walking in His Spirit (defined later), then it is illegal for the curse to come on you, it is illegal for the demon or stronghold to affect you, it is illegal for sickness to overwhelm you.

Why is it illegal?

Because through the Blood Covenant Jesus took upon Himself your sin, your curse, your sickness, and your strongholds. They were all put on Him, and you were re-born into a new race, the New Creation, which is no longer subject to the effects of sin and death.

You are justified.

Romans 5:9 says,

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

But, you may say: Why do I still feel these curses, etc.?

Great question. Satan’s goal is to deceive mankind, and he has indeed deceived many. However, the fact that it is illegal does not mean that you will not feel the effects of it. Sometimes God will keep you from the effects, but often He will not. Why? Because feeling the effects of the illegal attack is what gives you the opportunity to overcome them, declare them illegal in the highest court in Heaven, and forever deprive those curses and demons of their power to perpetrate them again. It’s about ambush as a military tactic. In fact, when you do overcome them in your

life that also brings in the Kingdom of God to this earth in the *now*.

It is up to us to declare our curses, our suffering, unlawful.

Matthew 16:18-19 (Amplified Bible) says,

“And I tell you, you are Peter [Greek, Petros—a large piece of rock], and on this rock [Greek, petra—a huge rock like Gibraltar] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it [or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it].

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind (declare to be improper and unlawful) on earth must be what is already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose (declare lawful) on earth must be what is already loosed in heaven.”

The definition for *bind* or *bound* in the Strong’s Concordance is: to put under obligation of the law, duty, etc., when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, maintain one’s cause.

To further explain.

God knew that man would become independent and sin. He knew that His Creation, angels and other spirits, would rebel and attempt to inherit the earth and disrupt His plan for God’s Kingdom here. But how could He defeat the fallen angels, Satan and demons and still be true to His Word of giving this earth to man?

He would have to make it attractive for Satan to kill the Messiah. When Satan did engineer the crucifixion of Jesus Satan broke the law because he killed an innocent man, a man with no sin.

1 Corinthians 2:8 says,

“which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

The resurrection of Jesus did far more than we can comprehend. When Jesus was resurrected He was the first born of a new race, one that was no longer under the dominion of Satan. Jesus is Last Adam of a new race. We, as part of that race, now have dominion over Satan. Since Jesus bore all our sin, took our curses, and we are now part of the new race, it is illegal for Satan to put curses on us. Therefore when we find ourselves experiencing the effects of the old race, the effects of sin and curses, we have the choice of making it illegal thus putting the same defeat on demons in our realm of influence that Jesus put on Satan.

We are to be distributors of Jesus’ victory over Satan. The New Testament says that we are to glorify Jesus, or to unveil Him. Not only are we to glorify Him to people who need Him, we are also to glorify Him to Satan and his underlings.

The following is a quote from Watchman Nee’s book “God’s Plan and the Overcomers”.¹

“The Failure of the Church.

The reason for the church to remain on earth is to maintain and demonstrate the victory of the cross of Christ by binding Satan in every place, just as the Lord himself – the Head of the church – bound Satan at Calvary. On the cross the Lord has already judged Satan according to God’s law. Now God

¹ Nee, Watchman- God’s Plan and the Overcomers. Christian Fellowship Publishers Inc., New York

entrusts to the church the task of executing that judgment on earth.

Knowing well how the church would affect his defeat, Satan began to persecute and kill the church. He later changed his tactics to deceive the church with falsehood. He is a liar as well as a murderer. Yet the church fears neither his smiling face nor his angry face. The book of Acts is a record of life out of death for the church. God utilized the attacks of Satan to demonstrate through the church the victory of Christ. Unfortunately, the church gradually failed – as shown in such instances as the lie of Ananias and Sapphira, the greediness of Simon, the creeping in of false brethren, the seeking by many believers of their own things, and the forsaking by many of the imprisoned Paul.

God Looks for Overcomers.

Now whenever the church fails, God finds a few in the church – called to be overcomers – that they might bear the responsibility which the church as a whole ought to but fails to bear. He chooses a company of the faithful few to represent the church in the demonstration of the victory of Christ. He has His overcomers in all the seven periods of the church (as represented by the seven churches described in Revelation chapters 2 and 3). This overcomer line is never cut. The overcomers are not some special class. They are simply a group of people who conform to the original plan of God.”

The Principle of Overcomers.

Throughout Bible history, God has always chosen a few to overcome for the many. It is similar to the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant over the Jordan (which stands for death) so that that waters would move back and allow the rest of Israel to pass over to the Promise Land.

The following is a quote from J. R. Miller.

Christ is building His kingdom with earth's broken things. Men want only the strong, the successful, the victorious, the unbroken, in building their kingdoms; but God is the God of the unsuccessful, of those who have failed Heaven is filling with earth's broken lives, and there is no bruised reed that Christ cannot take and restore to glorious blessedness and beauty. He can take the life crushed by pain or sorrow and make it into a harp whose music shall be all praise. He can lift earth's saddest failure up to heaven's glory.

Do you feel unworthy, or perhaps have a failure mentality?

Do you feel like perhaps you have not pleased God in the past? Do you feel like you could not possibly be used by God to overcome a spiritually evil, curse, or sin? Has your religion or denomination disciplined your brain to think and accept lies about what the Bible says about God, His love for you, and the work that He did at the Cross to recreate you into a new person?

When Jesus was resurrected from the dead He was the first born of a new race of people, scripturally called the New Creation. You are also a new born person. This was a supernatural miracle.

This race is no longer under the dominion of Satan, the world system, and your old "flesh" nature. The New Testament confirms

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this in many places. It says that old things have passed away, and that all things have been made new. God who was resurrected now lives inside of you, and that qualifies you for things that might otherwise be or seem impossible. Whatever Satan throws at you is no longer legal. It may hurt for a while, but if you stand on the Truth of the Scripture, amazing things will happen. Just dig into the New Testament and allow the Holy Spirit and the Word of God renew your mind and your thought life to truth.

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Chapter 3 Abraham Destroyed Evil

Abraham's life is a powerful example of overcoming for us.

Abraham was chosen by God to be the original “father” of the new race of people of God, first to be called Israel, and then - the Church, added later as a branch. Notice that God did not choose a God follower, some Old Testament saint, such as Abel, Enoch, or Noah. No, He chose an idolater named Abram. God chose someone unworthy, like us, so that His blood covenant would be totally an issue of favor and grace and not at all earned. In fact, as I will point out, the very fact that Abram was under a curse made him the perfect choice for God.

Abram was part of a very large wealthy corporate family who were very good in their worship of idols. I understand that they were moon worshipers as well. They had many types of idols for the solving of their earthly problems. Being without a child was one of the most desperate conditions of Abram's day; he knew it was a curse. Actually, in the beginning, it was Sarai who was barren, but later it was even less likely for the couple to conceive because they were both beyond childbearing age.

It always amazes me how Abram had so much respect coupled with obedience for a God that he could not see with his eyes or hear with his ears, much less for a God which his family was not familiar with.

The following is a brief history of Abraham's life with God as told in Scripture.

I think it is important to cover his history before getting to the point of Abraham's overcoming. I believe that this history will allow you to “walk in Abraham's shoes” during your pain and

suffering. Many years ago God used the story of Abraham walking Isaac up the hill to sacrifice him in my life to teach me some practical lessons on overcoming and destroying evil for some personal suffering and pain in my own and my family's life. I pray that as you go through suffering and pain in your life that Abraham's example will give you faith of turning your "Junk into Jewels," your pain into destroying evil!

Genesis 12:1-4 says,

"Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran."

Notice how Abram obeyed immediately even though what he heard God speak seemed to be impossible, that is the promise that he would have offspring that would be a nation, or a multitude of people.

Then later God spoke again.

Genesis 15:1-8 says,

"After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!”

And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”

Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Then He said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.”

And he said, “Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?””

Remember, Abram’s biggest curse was being without child.

God showed Abram that He would cut a blood covenant with him, swapping natures and blessings and curses. God chose childless Abram with whom to cut a covenant so that He, God, could overcome the curse of being childless. Does that mean that God would become without child? Indeed, yes. For three days while Jesus was in the grave, God Almighty was “without child.”

Abraham understood the blood covenant when God cut the covenant with him in Genesis chapter 15. Abraham expressed his doubt at the promise of God, “And he said, “Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?” (Genesis 15:8). Have you ever asked

God a question like this? God told Abraham to cut several animals in half and to place them on either side of a ditch so that the blood could run down it. Normally both parties would walk down such a ditch after they have swapped names, weapons, and coats. They would pronounce the blessings and curses of the covenant. Often the curse for breaking the covenant was death. However, this time God put Abraham to sleep and He Himself walked the blood ditch for both parties, represented by a smoking oven and a burning torch. Prior to resting, Abraham had to drive away the vultures, which I submit represents a type of spiritual warfare on our part. God knew that Abraham and his descendants could not keep the covenant, so God swore to His own death to keep both sides of it. Eventually He gave His Son, His very own flesh for the broken covenant. In effect God was saying to Abraham, “If you fail in this covenant and therefore are condemned to the curse of death, don’t worry, I will die for you. I will walk the blood ditch for both you and Me.”

Abraham understood the significance of his very unusual time with the Lord described in Genesis chapter 15. He must have had some background in the idea of a blood covenant. He must have known that entering into the Covenant of Blood meant you were totally and forever giving yourself away to someone else. Once you did it, nothing would ever be exclusively yours again. All that you were, all that you had or ever would have become the equal property of your covenant partner.

Genesis 15:8-17 says,

“And he said, “Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?”

So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”

Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.

And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him.

Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.

And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.

But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.”

The Ishmael event.

Abraham and Sarah decided to “help” God to fulfill His promise and take things into their own hands as it described in Genesis chapter 16. Sarai admitted she could not bear children so she convinced Abram to conceive a child with her maidservant Hagar, the Egyptian. That did take place and the child Ishmael was born.

But almost immediately Sarai was upset about the whole matter and Hagar became despised in Sarai's eyes. Genesis chapter 21 describes the evacuation of Hagar and Ishmael. Ishmael became the first in the generation of what we know as Arabs today.

The promise of a supernatural birth.

After the Ishmael incident God came to Abraham and Sarah and promised that they would have a son from their own flesh, which at the time seemed impossible.

Genesis 17:1-9 says,

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.

And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.”

Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:

“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.

No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.

Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

Genesis 17:15-22 says,

“Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her.”

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”

And Abraham said to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!”

Then God said: “No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him.

And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.”

Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”

Isaac was born.

Genesis 21:1-8 says,

“And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken.

For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him – whom Sarah bore to him – Isaac.

Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me.”

She also said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age.”

So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.”

Here is where Abraham really overcomes!

Here is our example for overcoming. God made a blood covenant promise to Abram for something that seemed, and even was, impossible in the natural realm, and that is the bearing of a natural child with a barren wife, during the time in their lives when they were even naturally beyond childbearing age. The child Isaac was born, supernaturally. One would think that the story would be over. But then something very unusual happened. God asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac on an altar and kill him.

Overcoming by going up the hill with Isaac. This is where the real overcoming takes place.

Genesis 22:1-18 says,

“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.”

So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.

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Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven,

and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son –

blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

(Notice the great blessing in verse 17.)

Why kill Isaac?

Years ago I had wondered why God asked Abraham to take Isaac up the hill and kill him as a sacrifice. That sounded to me like something people would do for idols, not for God. Then God made it personal for me, speaking to me very clearly in my pain of overcoming something.

I was in need for an instant miracle, but did not see God do that. It was a life and death situation, but still no instant miracle. Then six months later there was a miraculous overcoming that cleared up my concern. When I asked God why did He just not solve the problem with an instant fix. He spoke clearly and said, “Abraham and Sarah were under the curse of being without child. Just because I gave Isaac to them supernaturally did not clear up the curse, Satan still had claim on Isaac’s life. I told Abraham to take Isaac up the hill and to face the worst that this curse could put on him, the loss of his son. It was I that walked Abraham up the hill. I did this instead of allowing Satan to have his way.”

Then Jesus asked me a question: “Where was Isaac saved, at the bottom of the hill, in the middle of the hill, or at the top of the hill?” I said, “No, over the top of the hill.” Jesus said, “Yes, that is the only place where you will find the Lamb who will take your curse. Now that you have walked your precious possession all the way over the top of the hill, the curse is gone and done away with for good. If I had done the miracle at the bottom of this hill, the curse would have prevailed down your generational line. You have overcome, and you have allowed My power to destroy that evil, that generational curse from your forefathers, forever, for eternity.”

God and Abraham both experienced a supernatural birth of a son, and then later “lost” that son through a death from a curse.

But God had the power to resurrect His Son Jesus, which was the whole point of the dealings with Abraham.

Abraham's faith.

I have often wondered why Abraham could still hang on to faith to the extent that even when God told him to take Isaac up the hill and kill him as a sacrifice, that Abraham believed so strong that he thought that God would raise Isaac from the dead after the execution of his own son. Romans chapter 4 and Hebrews chapter 11 give us some insight.

Romans 4:17 says,

“(as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed – God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.”

Romans 4:20-24 says,

“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,

but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”

Hebrews 11:17-19 says,

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,”

concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

When God made covenant with him, Abraham knew there was no longer any room for doubt. His revelation of God during that time convinced him that God could not lie. He had given Himself to Abraham and that could not be taken back. Now we are in a blood covenant with God through Jesus. He cannot lie. He lives in us, we have His nature, and He took our old sinful nature.

While teaching this chapter as a Bible study, a person asked me, “Do you suppose that Abraham heard satanic voices speak as he was walking up the hill with Isaac?” It really hit me hard. I believe with all my heart that Abraham did indeed suffer the temptation from satanic voices as he walked up the hill. I always do. What about you?

Abraham was childless to begin with, and then later was willing to become childless again, taking his promise all the way to death.

That is the mandate for overcoming.

God became childless for three days.

After the death of Jesus on the Cross, God the Father was without child. The word *forsaken* that Jesus used at the Cross,

means ‘total abandonment’.² I believe that this is one reason that God chose Abram who was without child with whom to make a covenant. Jesus took on Abraham’s childlessness through the blood covenant. This is where the major and powerful overcoming took place. This is where Satan’s grip on this world and its people was loosed. Jesus was resurrected because His death was illegal. He was without sin. Death could not hold Him. Therefore He was raised to a new life, as a new species of beings that had never existed before. This is a species that is no longer subject to Satan’s dominion over people and this earth.

Acts 2:27 says,

“For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”

Acts 2:31 says,

“he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.”

What about your curses that you have been suffering?

Do you ever feel like there is no hope? Join the ranks of many Christian believers. Some would argue that since Jesus took our curse at His Cross, that therefore we are immune from the effects of it. Perhaps there are times when we are. I cannot explain it all. But I do know and I can explain one thing, not only from personal experience but from Scripture from cover to cover, that often God allows us to feel the effect of our curses so that we may overcome them and therefore forever destroy the evil that they have caused not only to our families, but perhaps even to a multitude of others,

² Strong’s definition of the word *forsaken*: to forsake, leave to one’s self a person or thing by ceasing to care for it, to abandon, leave in the lurch to be abandoned, forsaken especially of the dying (to leave behind).

many of whom you may never know about until you get to Heaven.

If you have never studied or even thought about the idea of generational curses, I want to give a very brief description here. Moses asked the Lord if he could just see more of Him, His glory. And the Lord answered him with some interesting ideas about forgiveness and generational sins.

Exodus 33:18 says,

“And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.””

Exodus 34:5-7 says,

“Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.””

Notice that what the Lord said seems like a paradox, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. That seeming paradox is reconciled by the fact that Jesus did indeed absorb our sin and our generational curses. God could not just “make it go away.”

Why does God allow us to feel our curses?

As humans, we have been given dominion to rule this earth. Jesus did the major overcoming of Satan at His Cross, but we are now the distributors of His victory.

Now when God inserts His Holy Spirit inside of us, we are to distribute this dominion over satanic curses and beings in our realm of influence. Those sins and curses that had some dominion over our First Adam nature do not have dominion over our Second Adam nature. However, in order to really destroy this evil, we must go through the same process as Abraham and finally Jesus did, we must go through “death and resurrection” while still in this body.

Philippians 3:10-11 (Amplified Bible) says,

“[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope]

That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body].”

Destroying evil!

As it was with Abraham and Jesus, so it is with you. You will be asked to walk your sufferings all the way up the hill until the

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Lamb appears. The Lamb made the death of Isaac illegal and the evil behind the curse was destroyed.

God called Abraham, unlike the idols that demanded Abraham to call on them. One of the main reasons God chose Abraham is that God needed someone with the infirmity that Abraham had in order to destroy the very core of evil. God used Abraham's curse of being without child to send Jesus to the Cross so that He, the Father of Lights, could be without child for a season. That set you and I free, and billions of others.

What is it that you have as an infirmity, a curse, or an old sin, a suffering? Listen to the call of God to bring you so close to Him that He through you will overcome and thus set a multitude of others free.

God does not "use you" in a selfish way. He sees your infirmity that is *using you* and that will kill you, at least spiritually, and in His healing process destroys evil with it.

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Chapter 4 Daniel's Overcoming Example

Twice in the Book of Daniel God gives us examples of overcoming suffering, even to the point of death, and how it worked to further the Kingdom of God.

I believe that the stories of Daniel in the Lions' Den and the three men in the furnace from the Book of Daniel confirm the point that God's primary purpose for our lives here on earth is to be agents for bringing God's Kingdom to earth, His original idea for creation. It also confirms that often that involves overcoming, which often involves challenges and even suffering.

These stories further confirm that our task is to allow God to continually conform us into His image, so that as overcomers we can claim that the attacks from the evil forces upon us are illegal, just as the crucifixion of Jesus was illegal. That is how we overcome, by persevering while being conformed to the image of Christ in us. The fact that Jesus was righteous and without sin is what caused Him to overcome death and defeat Satan. So in the same way, His righteousness in us causes us to overcome and defeat the spiritual forces in our lives.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (Amplified Bible) says:

“And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit.”

Please notice as you go through these stories that Daniel and his fellow Israelites were captives in Babylon. Mystery Babylon in

the Book of Revelation represents the spiritual evil world system that governs this earth. Therefore I submit that these stories are examples to us for the magnificent and unfathomable resurrection power of God working in our lives as we go through overcoming the evil forces in our lives.

As you read these stories, consider what the probability was for survival. How impossible were the circumstances? What about your circumstances? Do they look impossible?

I believe that God's Kingdom, and we, experiences bonuses as we go through the fires and lion's dens of life with victory, in His power. Others will be blessed by our sacrifices.

The story of the three Hebrew young men in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:1-4:3).

Daniel 3:1-18 says,

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.”

And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,

that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;

and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.

They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;

and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?

Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”

Notice the faith of these three young men. I believe that their faith in who they were in Christ is what protected them in the fire.

Daniel 3:19-25 says,

“Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Jesus was the fourth man in the fire, but He is the only one that did not come out at that time. He took their penalty, their suffering, and their sin.

Daniel 3:26-27 says,

“Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.

And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.”

Now look at the result. The Gospel was preached throughout the entire inhabited earth!

Daniel 3:28-30 says,

“Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!

Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.”

Daniel 4:1-3 says,

“Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace is multiplied to you.

I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.”

The story of Daniel in the lions’ den (Daniel 6:1-28).

Daniel 6:1-21 says,

“It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom;

and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss.

Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.

Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”

So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever!

All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."

Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.

And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever!”

Look at the reason why Daniel was not touched by the lions. Innocence. (Strong’s Concordance definition: to be clean, be pure, to be clear, be justified). I believe that Daniel chapter 9:5 shows how Daniel normally started his prayers. He confessed his sins and the sins of his people. That is one of the main ingredients of Daniel’s innocence.

Daniel 6:22-23 says,

*“My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found **innocent** before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.”*

Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

Look at the result of Daniel’s overcoming. First, those men who had accused Daniel were cast into the lions’ den. Second, the Gospel was preached throughout the entire inhabited earth.

Daniel 6:24 says,

“And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions – them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.”

Imagine, when these evil people were thrown into the lions' den, they were broken to pieces even before they hit the ground!

Daniel 6:25-28 says,

“Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end.

He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

Let us be “Daniels” who allow God to conform us to His image so that we may glorify Him.

Chapter 5 God Used Job to Ambush Satan

Job had expected to live a life of ease and luxury. After all, he had reverence for God. So the trials that lied ahead surprised Job. You may find, like Job, that people may criticize and judge you during your times of agony. But Job's suffering shaped his character and allowed him to see the God, which he had previously only heard about, face-to-face. That face-to-face encounter and Job's response to it defeated the satanic influences in his life that had brought on his suffering.

My wife and I saw a fictional secular story, which featured a grandfather who had suffered and his grandson who was living a self-indulgent "plastic" lifestyle. The grandfather was determined, before he died, to teach the young man about real life and turn him from self-centeredness. The result was that unless that young man had experienced fear and certain degrees of suffering, that he was not really alive yet. He had not yet experienced life. With us, experiencing real life is meeting Jesus face to face. That did not happen to my wife and I until we had experienced fear and loss. Her experience happened when she was a child; mine was later on in life.

Job was one of the first overcomers in recorded Scripture.

If Job only knew the whole picture while he suffered. But we can!

My opinion is that God included the Book of Job as a primitive example of overcoming for us. I believe that the subject of overcoming satanic forces is an extremely important issue that God wants us to be aware of.

There have been too many partial and inaccurate commentaries about Job. While there have been many wonderful commentaries, of the ones that I have seen, I believe that they still

missed the major point; that is, overcoming satanic forces. In my book, Job's Journey³, I cover many important issues in detail that I will not expand on here.

Job had no idea that Satan was behind his sufferings. He had no idea that his sufferings would put an overcoming defeat over the satanic enemies in his life.

In my book Job's Journey, I point out that God did not give permission to Satan to attack Job, rather He informed Satan that Job was already in his, Satan's, hand. This is confirmed in both attacks against Job by Satan, in chapters 1 and 2.

Job 1:7-12 says,

“And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”

Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”

So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for nothing?

Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

³ Job's Journey link <http://www.isob-bible.org/book-store/499-jobs-journey>

And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.”

Job 2:4-6 says,

“So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.””

I believe that this Scripture and the entire Bible points to the fact that God said to Satan, “Look, observe, behold, he is *already* in your hand.” The Lord showed this to me when I was struggling to understand and write something about Job. I felt like the Lord had called me to write a booklet, but I could not because there was a missing piece. When I heard the Lord show this to me, then I wrote Job’s Journey.

It was indeed legal for Satan to attack Job because Job was still functioning in the First Adam. In other words, he was operating in his “flesh nature.” As I point out in my book about Job, he was probably the most sanctified flesh man in Scripture at that time. God chose him to make a point with us, that even the best we can offer from our old nature “stinks.” Job had a reverence for God. He helped the poor and did many other godly things. He succeeded in business and in his other endeavors, but those were all of his own doing, his self-sufficient flesh nature. It also appears that he felt somewhat self-righteous. It is also quite

likely that Job had some generational curse that Satan had a hold of to torment Job.

Job had many experiences in the months following his horrible losses and his sickness that Satan put on him. Some of those experiences indicated that his faith in God was still there. At other times Job showed his doubt, discouragement, self-pity and self-righteousness. He even wished at one point that he had never been born. Have you ever felt that way?

His “friends” were legalistic and performance-oriented in their religion, telling him that his suffering was due to the secret sin in his life (Job chapters 4-31). While it is true that a sinful life can lead to suffering, that is not always the case, especially with godly people, and in any case, it is not the way to try to help someone.

Elihu speaks.

First, Elihu, a godly friend, spoke good things to Job in chapters 32-37. Elihu was angry with Job because Job justified himself rather than God. He was angry with the other three friends because their answers were not accurate but condemning (Job 32:1-3).

Job 32:1-3 says,

“So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God.

Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.”

Finally, after everybody had their turns to speak, God spoke to Job.

God spoke to Job as recorded in chapters 38-41. Hearing God speak is like no other experience in life! I cannot explain it, but it can be life changing if you take it seriously and act upon it.

Job received a revelation of the love of God as his redeemer, a revelation of the Cross of Jesus. He must have known about God being a redeemer already, but notice in chapter 33 Job talks about his ransom.

Job 19:25 says,

“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth.”

Job 33:24 says,

“Then He is gracious to him, and says, ‘Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom.’”

Look at what happened.

Job 42:1-6 (Amplified Bible) says,

“Then Job said to the Lord,

I know that You can do all things, and that no thought or purpose of Yours can be restrained or thwarted.

[You said to me] Who is this that darkens and obscures counsel [by words] without knowledge? Therefore [I now see] I have [rashly] uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

[I had virtually said to You what You have said to me:] Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; I will demand of You, and You declare to me.

I had heard of You [only] by the hearing of the ear, but now my [spiritual] eye sees You.

*Therefore I loathe [my words] and abhor myself
and repent in dust and ashes.”*

When Job said, “my eye sees You,” I believe Job received supernatural revelation knowledge. I do not think it means that his physical eye saw God’s physical being. I believe that when Job “saw God,” that he saw many things. He saw God’s overwhelming sovereignty. When he saw God, I believe, he also saw God as merciful and gracious, forgiving, the blood covenant God who swapped places with him. When we really “see” God through revelation knowledge we react as “undone,” as did Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 6. The first thing Isaiah did, Job did, and I personally did, was to repent. I told the Lord, on August 26, 1979, “I have made a mess of my life, please take over.” That is when the Holy Spirit flooded me, and I have never been the same. Look at what God says that backsliders like His Israel will say:

Hosea 14:7-8 says,

*“Those who dwell under his shadow shall
return; They shall be revived like grain, and grow
like a vine. Their scent shall be like the wine of
Lebanon.*

*“Ephraim shall say, ‘What have I to do anymore
with idols?’ I have heard and **observed** him. I am
like a green cypress tree; Your fruit is found in
Me.”*

***When Job finally confessed his sin and repented, that is all
God needed to make the satanic attack against Job illegal. The
tables were turned.***

Job 42:7-17 (KJV), says,

*“And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken
these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the*

Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.

And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

He had also seven sons and three daughters.

And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.

Chapter 5

And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

So Job died, being old and full of days.”

Notice in verse 10 above, that the Lord turned the captivity of Job. Satan received the penalty, and Job received the blessing. Evil was destroyed in the life of Job. Remember, Job had no idea what was going on. He did not know that Satan was the source and cause of his suffering. As you find yourself in the midst of trials and suffering, I pray that Jesus, through His Word and the Holy Spirit, will increase your hope and give you the perseverance to overcome now that you know the potential value in it. The Lord God will refine you in the fire; He will cleanse the dross of your old flesh life so that Jesus can be glorified in you. His character within you will become your manifested character. If you persevere God will also “turn your captivity” and destroy the activity of the evil that has caused your trials. You, like Job, will also see others set free.

Chapter 6 Gideon's Ambush

In chapter 4 we talked about Daniel in the Lions' den and about the three young Hebrew men in the fire. These men in the stories happened to be captives of Babylon. Also, at that time, most people in the entire known world were captives of Spiritual Babylon, Mystery Babylon, or the world's system as described in Revelation chapter 18. When Daniel and the three Hebrew young men overcame the attacks on their lives in Babylon, the Gospel was preached to the entire world, or to the captives in Mystery Babylon, to give them an opportunity for salvation.

The story of Gideon starting in Judges chapter 6 has a similar idea imbedded into it. All of Israel was in the promise land including Gideon, but they were all prisoners in their promise land. The Midianites and the Amalekites were causing great suffering and famine on Israel to the point where they were impoverished. But as in the Daniel examples, when Gideon overcame, God used this opportunity to set others free.

The suffering of Israel in Gideon's time was caused by their disobedience.

Abraham, Daniel, and the three Hebrew young men thrown in the fire suffered as righteous people, in God's sight, and in His righteousness. It is different with Gideon and the Israelites. They were disobedient. I believe that God chose Gideon because He knew in advance that he would be obedient. God Himself built a close face-to-face relationship with Gideon and led him into God's righteousness through the blood covenant. Then Gideon could make the attack from the Midianites illegal and accomplish the overcoming.

The Israelites were still prisoners after they had reached their promise land!

Judges 6:1-6 says,

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,

and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds, which are in the mountains.

So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them.

Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey.

For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it.

So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.”

For hundreds of years, the Israelites called out to God and He delivered them in their pain. Then they got into idolatry again and became prisoners to their enemies.

Why? Because they did not obey God’s voice.

Judges 6:10 (KJV) says,

“And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.”

The Old Testament shows God’s people living as prisoners in the promise land.

This is how the enemy works to trap you.

He looks for those works of your flesh (your old nature) that you will not forsake. He convinces you that you do not need to live on the Word of God, but that you can make it for yourself. He convinces you that you do not need to use God’s Kingdom and His system of bearing fruit. Unforgiveness is a major invitation for the devil to operate in your life.

After a while he latches on to those works and you can become deceived by a demon. You are not demon-possessed from the inside, but you can become demon-influenced from the outside. These become strongholds and you feel hopeless. You are a Christian in God’s promise land, but you are a prisoner like the people in the Old Testament. The types of prisons that we can experience are numerous. Lack of love, low self-esteem, mammon or trusting in the world, other people or anything else for your material needs, rather than God. Other types include self-righteousness, being a victim of abuse, unforgiveness, guilt, bitterness, addictions, sexual sins of many types, gossip, anger, and the list goes on. Some of the most difficult prisons come from rejection. Gideon was not immune from these prisons, he, along with most of Israel, was suffering greatly.

What did God do? What did Gideon do?

First, let us look at God’s strategy.

This story of Gideon is a perfect example of how God lures His and your spiritual enemies in order to defeat them. Judges 6:1-8:3 is a good read of the entire story.

When Satan attacked Jesus by crucifying Him, Satan was defeated. Why? Because it is spiritually illegal for Satan to attack a righteous person, or a person without sin. It brings a permanent defeat on the demonic perpetrator. Jesus rose from the dead because He was killed illegally. God used the ambush technique. So often evil spiritual beings and evil humans are destroyed by their own attacks. Often in Scripture we read, “they fell into the pit that they dug for others.”

It is the same with us. Paul knew this when he said in 2 Corinthians 12 that his “thorns in the flesh” (generational curses) were actually profitable. He also knew, by revelation knowledge, that his ministry became great by this principle. He knew that profit for the Kingdom of God would be a result.

So what about Gideon?

The people of Israel were not living a righteous life. They mixed their belief with worship to Baal. So God mentored Gideon in order to make him an illegal target for Satan, in this case the Midianites and Amalekites. God showed Gideon the blood covenant by the burnt offering He demonstrated. He did the same for Abraham in Genesis 15 and 22.

He further sanctified Gideon by having him destroy his father’s Baal idol. This was a very risky and bold move, and had the potential and even threat of death to Gideon! Little by little, God led Gideon on the path to become a righteous man, an illegal target for Satan. That is why it was so easy to defeat the Midianites and Amalekites with only 300 men!

Rather than just answering prayers to defeat Midianites, God disciplined a discouraged man. Gideon was not all that special, but just a suit of working clothes the Holy Spirit wore that day. As it

says, “But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon.” (Judges 6:34).

Position yourself for God to come to you like He did come to Gideon, to reveal himself as a deliverer, not only for you, but also to use your pain to deliver others. The Lord disciplined Gideon. Make yourself available.

The primary lesson that I want us to learn is that God taught Gideon to hear His voice!

Watch and see how the relationship between God and Gideon developed from glory to glory and how Gideon’s character developed as a result. See how Gideon cooperated with God’s leading, and how God provided the grace and the power. Gideon learned to obey His voice. That is really all he had to do. That is really any of us needs to do. Notice, God did not say, “You have not obeyed My laws or My precepts or principles.” He said, “You have not obeyed My voice.” One’s voice is personal compared to laws, commands, and precepts. Voice is personal; it is face to face. It is powerful to hear God’s voice.

The question is: How desperate are you to hear God’s voice? How desperate are you to obey His voice? Scripture is loaded with promises of blessings for those who hear and obey His Word. Wisdom, in Proverbs, refers to Jesus and His voice, Who is the Wisdom of God.

Proverbs 8:34-36 (Amplified Bible) says,

*“Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the man who **listens to me, watching daily** at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.*

For whoever finds me [Wisdom] finds life and draws forth and obtains favor from the Lord.

But he who misses me or sins against me wrongs and injures himself; all who hate me love and court death.”

The end of the story is that Gideon was used by God to motivate a victory and freedom for his people, not just for himself. As Isaiah 61 shows, it is God's plan to take His people from being prisoners to being priests. Gideon went from a sufferer to a comforter. He turned his junk into jewels. We can be used as Gideon was, and even to a greater extent. We have the resurrection life of Jesus in us. We can go through our "deaths" to resurrection, which will also affect many other people.

In this study we are going to see how God worked, and still works to turn our prisons into freedom. We will also see how Gideon responded to God so that we may follow his steps for our own lives.

Follow Gideon's path in Judges chapter 6. Read these Scriptures.

6:1 He was a victim of his forefather's idol worship.

6:1-11 He was hiding in his wine vat underground in order to avoid the Midianites who would come in hordes and wipe out the crops and steal the livestock.

In the same way today's Midianites, demons, rob the Word of God to keep us from being fruitful.

6:8 God spoke to the Israelites.

6:12 God spoke to Gideon personally.

Judges 6:12 says,

"And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!""

6:13 Gideon was honest with God.

6:18-21 God revealed Himself to Gideon as the covenant-making God.

Gideon brought his best to God. Gideon took up his cross.

The price of the goat and home-baked bread that Gideon brought was extreme for someone living in circumstances of poverty. Not only that, Gideon cooked soup!

Gideon saw the Cross of Jesus.

It could have just been an expensive meal, but God turned it into a covenant meal. In Leviticus 2:1 the meat or meal offering was to be burnt on the altar by the priest. The fact that the Angel of the Lord burned up Gideon's offering with the tip of His staff was a sign of the covenant. I believe that in Gideon's Hebrew mind, he saw a blood covenant that day between himself and God. He saw God exchange power, name, and circumstances with him.

The Blood Covenant changes your family, your name, and your inheritance. Gideon received God's name, God took Gideon's name. "Mighty Man of Valor" was the Lord's name, and "defeated, weak one" was Gideon's name. They swapped.

6:22 Gideon could hear God speak even better now.

6:23-24 He had the peace of God because of the Cross (Jehovah-shalom).

6:25-32 Gideon had to tear down family idols.

6:34 After tearing down the idols, Gideon was clothed [possessed] with the Spirit of God.

Judges 6:34 (Amplified Bible) says,

"But the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon with Himself and took possession of him, and he blew a trumpet, and [the clan of] Abiezer was gathered to him."

Gideon had the power of God. Gideon had the sense, faith and abandonment to obey God and stop obeying the reasoning and natural circumstances in his life. When we turn from idols we will find the result is always more of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The

first thing that happened is that the enemy attacked. When we tear down spiritual idols, we can expect a manifestation of the battle in the natural.

6:36-40 *He learned to fellowship with God at a very strong level of trust in spite of circumstances* (perhaps even because of them).

7:1-25. *God had Gideon reduce an army of Israelites that had gathered to join Gideon in a war against the Midianites from 32,000 people to 300.* Then they routed the enemy by breaking pitchers with torches inside of them and blowing trumpets. This eventually became all out attack by many more Israelites that joined the battle later. Israel experienced a wonderful victory.

Gideon bore fruit for the Kingdom of God. He became one of history's most successful deliverers of God's people.

In spite of the fact that Gideon had been subject to family sins, curses and the worshipping of idols, the Angel of the Lord (who I believe was a manifestation of Jesus) brought the Cross on the scene with the sacrifice, and was saying, "There is no way out for you, little boy, except that I take on the curse and sin that you have coming to you. By virtue of this covenant, I am taking your sin, your family curses, your generational sins that are passed down, and results of idol worship both by you and your ancestors. I will take your name (your identity), which is "cursed by God" and you will be called by My Name, O, "Mighty Man of Valor." Actually, Gideon means "cutter down, hewer."

God met Gideon where he was. God did not require him to be someone he was not. But God had faith in him. Gideon learned that you make it not in your own strength but by the power of God. The end result was fruit for the Kingdom of God. There was peace in Israel for 40 years, however, after that the Israelites went back to their Baal worship.

Warning. Do not let up on your intimacy with Jesus. He is the only One who can fill you. Be desperate to hear God's voice.

Judges chapter 9:22-35 records a tragic end to this story, which serves as a warning to each one of us. Gideon developed pride in his accomplishments. Although he would not take the people's offer to be their king, he did insist on their donating a vast wealth of gold and other spoils taken from the Midianites to him personally. Then he made a high priest's ephod or cloak and breast covering from the gold and cloth for himself. Gideon did not continue to find his reward and fulfillment in the Lord God he had met at the winepress. At that time Gideon and the Lord were close, tight, and in communication with one another.

God told Abram in Genesis 15:1 that He was not only his shield but also Abram's reward. God knows that when He does something special with a person, that the temptation to be filled with pride can be great. We need to continually be filled with God so that the lust for other earthly counterfeits will have no attraction to us.

In Greek mythology, the *Odyssey*, the Sirens were special sea Nymphs who were singing in a very seductive way. Ships full of sailors would pass by, the songs would have a lustful lure to them. Odysseus' ship was no exception. He ordered that the crew stuffed their ears with wax, strapped themselves to the mast of the ship, and hollered loud so that they would not run aground like all the other ships. This is similar to our attempting to regulate our flesh nature. It is not God's way to holiness.

Jason, another captain had the right idea. He hired musicians to be on board who played wonderful songs on their lutes. The crew enjoyed the music so much that the music from the Sirens did not tempt them. The result was that the Sirens turned to stone.

Chapter 6

Jesus told the woman at the well in John chapter 4 that if she drank of His living water that she would thirst no more. Keep drinking in Jesus and you will finish with a good report.

Allow God to speak to your heart! Listen for Him!

Do whatever is necessary to arrange your life to hear God speak. Take time, more and more time, in the Word. Listen to audios, read good authors, speak the Word, soak in the Word. Take time to be quite with God. Listen more and talk less.

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Chapter 7 Pharaoh is Ambushed

When we go through periods of challenges and even sufferings in our lives it is valuable to know that the resurrection of Jesus has the potential to turn our trials and even bondages into blessings. We can also apply the victory of His resurrection over the spiritual enemies that may be behind the sufferings. Nothing is beyond the power of resurrection. During those uncomfortable times knowing these facts will increase your hope for overcoming. Hope is based in the resurrection of Jesus (1 Peter 1:3), and Romans 5 states that it is increased in times of suffering.

The example of Moses and Pharaoh will show the truth of this idea, and it will also show us a shadow of our responsibilities in the overcoming lifestyle.

Daniel and the three Hebrew young men were already qualified to go into the lion's den and the furnace.

But God had to discipline Gideon and work with Job. He had to reveal Himself to Abram in the blood covenant.

Now in the Exodus, God needed His people to qualify for holiness and righteousness to be blessed to come out of Egypt.

In all these cases please bear in mind, none of these people were qualified to be overcomers in themselves. It was only that God chose them so He could empower them with His power. Normally He chooses those of us who are the very least qualified in our own power. It often takes a lot of "breaking" before He can even begin to use us.

God had already worked with Moses.

Hebrews 11:24-29 says,

"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.”

After many years of tending sheep in obscurity, Moses met God at the burning bush. God called that “Holy ground.” At that time, I believe, Moses was a different man than in his earlier years, when he was full of zeal and self-sufficiency.

I have read that the removal of shoes means the stripping of all of your rights. When Moses was stripped of his ways, his ideas, his idea of outcome, then he was qualified to stand for Israel’s exodus from satanic bondage.

I believe that one of God’s most favorite tactics is ambush.

Ambush: *An unexpected attack from a concealed position. Concealment before a surprise attack.*

The Old and New Testaments are loaded with the “passive victories” of God against His enemies. God’s established laws included the eventual destruction of beings, human or spiritual, by their own conduct. Satan was ambushed at the Cross of Jesus.

God's wisdom is so far superior to all other beings. It is the actual attack from evil beings that defeats them, if, we know and keep the truth!

The mystery of the Cross and of God's wrath.

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 says,

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

It is comforting to know that all of God's wrath was put on Jesus. But the demonic forces are destined to experience His wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 says,

“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In our chapter about Job, we see that God's wrath was kindled against Job's friends. However, He invited them to put His wrath on Jesus, or to make a burnt offering.

Job 42:7-8 says,

“And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.

Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job

shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.””

The story about Moses and the Exodus is an overcoming example of defeating evil and setting us free from bondages.

The Exodus through the Red Sea out of Egypt is a type of us coming out of the world to serve the Lord and have fellowship and worship Him. It is also a type of overcoming our bondage to Satan and the world through a supernatural overcoming process. I believe that this story also applies to our lives as a type of coming out of the bondages the “world” may have put us in, and/or put in us. It is interesting to note that the Israelites in Egypt were helpless slaves to the “world” system. God heard their cry, and because of His covenant and His love, He was compelled to bring them out. You can be assured that God is interested in freeing you from your bondages and in defeating the demonic forces that put you there.

My freedom.

One of my pastors recently preached a great sermon on the demon-possessed man at Gadarenes in Mark chapter 5. The pastor emphasized that this man did not even know his real name because there had been so many ungodly and worldly voices that had put him into demonic bondage. As I wrote this, I just realized that was also a picture of me prior to 1979 when God saved me. At that time, I immediately pursued God’s Word with a passion, and that Word drove demons out of my life for many months until I was finally free.

I would drive my car to pick up supplies for my grocery store and deli. As I drove I listened to audio messages from the Word of God. As I listened, I would have to pull over to the side of the

road and cry uncontrollably. Lots of “matter” would come out of my nose, so much that I would fill up bath towels that I had in my car. It was the remnant of the “world” coming out, and of me coming out of the “world” as did the children of Israel.

What I write about comes from hearing God speak to me, having that rhema verified by Scripture, and then seeing my deliverance and fruit in other people that resulted from the process of overcoming.

While we were in bondage to the world, Jesus set us free. It is His gift.

Galatians 4:3 says,

“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.”

Galatians 2:4 says,

“And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage).”

2 Peter 2:19 says,

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.”

Romans 6:16-18 says,

“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

The purpose of God was not simply to get His people out of Egypt, but also in defeating Pharaoh, a type of Satan.

First, Moses had to overcome his own flesh, his Adamic nature. He had been hasty in Egypt by committing a murder. Then, he served as a shepherd in the desert for 40 years. However, when he met God at the Burning Bush, he became a changed man.

Do you think that Moses gave up his vision to free the people of God during those 40 years? Moses had “seen God,” or had a personal experience with Him. I believe that God does not limit this type of experience for “special people,” but that He desires this type of intimacy with all of us. Moses had this enduring faith not because he was on a mission prompted by some principle, but because he had “seen” God.

Hebrews 11:27 (Amplified Bible) says,

“[Motivated] by faith he left Egypt behind him, being unawed and undismayed by the wrath of the king; for he never flinched but held staunchly to his purpose and endured steadfastly as one who gazed on Him Who is invisible.”

God’s ambush!

Just like Jesus ambushed Satan at the Cross, God also ambushed Pharaoh and his troops to chase the Israelites to the Red Sea. Go with me into the story.

Exodus 14:1-31 says,

“Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

'Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea.

For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.'

Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.' And they did so.

Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, 'Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?'

So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him.

Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them.

And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness.

So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.

And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt?"

Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.

The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.

But lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.

So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.

So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.

And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen."

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.”

The reason that Pharaoh and his troops were killed is because it became illegal for them to continue to hold the Israelites as slaves.

However, it did not become illegal until the children of Israel and Moses cooperated in various ways. It was illegal for Pharaoh to hold the children of Israel after the conditions for making Pharaoh's hold on them illegal. So it is with us.

What were the conditions that made their captivity illegal?

Revelation 12:11 says,

“And they overcame him [Satan, and in this case, Pharaoh] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

Notice what the word *overcame*, according to Strong's concordance, means: *when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, maintain one's cause; to carry off the victory, come off victorious over all his foes.*

Here are the same three items mentioned in Revelation 12:11 that overcome our foes as they applied to the children of Israel during their exodus from Egypt.

1. The Passover Blood.

This represented what is to us today God's unmerited favor for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus and His shedding of blood to make us righteous. The blood represents the blood covenant with Jesus that exchanged our sin nature with His righteous nature. It is more than just forgiving sins; it is an exchange of natures.

Exodus 12:3-14 says,

“Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.

And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire – its head with its legs and its entrails.

You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.

And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD'S Passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

So this day shall be for you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.'”

As long as the blood was left in the basin, it was of no effect; it was merely blood that had been shed. The blood had power to save only when it was lifted out of the basin and sprinkled!

Why couldn't the Israelites have simply laid the basin of blood at the threshold and said, “It doesn't matter what we do with it. After all, blood is blood”? Suppose they had put the basin on a linen-covered table or on a pedestal just inside the door, but then it would not have any effect. They needed to appropriate the blood just as we do.

2. Not loving their lives to the death.

In simple terminology this means to “take up our cross” as Jesus said. It means forsaking our Adamic nature. In Revelation 12:11 the word “lives” as “in loving our lives to the death”, means the soul, or our old un-renewed will, mind, and emotions. We have to continually let go of those, confess them as dead and replaced by the character of Jesus in us.

It also means being obedient to the Word of God, and repenting when we miss the mark. It means forsaking the sinful ways in our lives. By repentance, obedience, and total submission to God, Jesus and His love, that is resident on the inside of us through the Holy Spirit, will live out His life in us.

The unleavened bread that the children of Israel ate in obedience to God represented this issue. Leaven represented sin. Also, another important issue was their obedience to eat all of the Lamb that was slain for the Passover and move out of Goshen Egypt with haste.

Exodus 12:15 says,

“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.”

3. The word of their testimony.

As we are in the process of overcoming, we are to speak the anointed Word of God over our situation and directly to the demonic enemies. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. In Ephesians chapter 6 Paul talks about many defensive weapons of our wrestling against spiritual beings who are attempting to steal our victory and our promise. Then, in Ephesians 6:17, he says we are to use the only offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit,

which is speaking the Word of God. The only way to prevail is by the offense after we have put the defense in place. Remember, Jesus said that the gates of Hades could not prevail against the authority He would give to the Church (Matthew 16:18-19). This indicates our offensive force to complete the wrestling victory that faces us.

I asked the Lord, “I did not see the word of their testimony by the children of Israel at the Red Sea. Instead, I saw a very poor and fearful testimony from them. How did that work and why?”

Exodus 14:12 says,

“Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?’ For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.”

It seemed to me that Pharaoh had ever right to take a hold of their fear and kill them.

But look! Moses did the standing in their stead.

Exodus 14:13-14 says,

“And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.’”

The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.””

We have been in this situation, trying to get some people to “cross their Red Sea.” Some have been found with a fearful testimony, but God gave us the authority to be their “Moses.” Our testimony, like Moses’, got them across the Red Sea. His

testimony completed the legal requirement for overcoming. That made it illegal for Satan, Pharaoh, to hold them any longer, thus the Sea opened and Pharaoh and his army was wiped out. Jesus intercedes for us when we feel helpless. He is the One who breaks us out of our prisons. That is His mission. See Isaiah chapter 61.

Now look to see how this overcoming did indeed set others free, even those who were not in Egypt at the Red Sea.

The chiefs of Edom, the men of Moab, and the inhabitants of Canaan were all affected by this victory even though they were a long distance from the actual overcoming.

Exodus 15:11-19 says,

*“Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in
praises, doing wonders?*

*You stretched out Your right hand; the earth
swallowed them.*

*You in Your mercy have led forth the people
whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in
Your strength to Your holy habitation.*

*The people will hear and be afraid; sorrow will
take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia.*

*Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; the
mighty men of Moab, trembling will take hold of
them; all the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away.*

*Fear and dread will fall on them; by the
greatness of Your arm they will be as still as a stone,
till Your people pass over, O LORD, till the people
pass over whom You have purchased.*

*You will bring them in and plant them in the
mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O
LORD, which You have made for Your own*

dwelling, the sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established.

The LORD shall reign forever and ever.'

For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea."

Why were others affected?

Luke 11:21-22 says,

"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils."

Look at the list of spoils that the spiritual system of the world, Mystery Babylon, has in Revelation chapter 18. Spoils also include many tangible and valuable monetary items as well. Notice in the Exodus story that the children of Israel took with them many of Egypt's riches including silver and gold. Exodus 12:35-36 tells about how the Egyptians were plundered!

Of course the souls of men mentioned there is the most important. In addition to the children of Israel coming out of bondage, there followed with them a great "mixed multitude." I believe this represented many gentiles, or at least part gentile people.

Jesus wants to continue to set you and I free from worldly bondages. Cooperate with Him, and watch for the miracle!

Chapter 8 Paul's Sufferings

In writings about the Apostle Paul, I understand that his life was indeed a very radical life. He suffered much and at the same time he accomplished much in his lifetime. I believe that while we may not all be called to a similar life as Paul's, that there is still much to learn from it.

Paul's life is an example of one person going through types of "death" so that others may live. Paul was committed to this idea of "death" so that others may live. I believe that God gave him special revelation regarding this spiritual concept. Thus he continually could see the benefits of his sufferings.

I am not suggesting that we "seek suffering." However, I believe, and it is my testimony, that as we do suffer, our hope and endurance during the difficult times will escalate to the point of rejoicing. If we know the real truth about what is going on in the spiritual world, nothing can bring down our faith. We will be able to look back and see how God used our difficulties for His eternal purposes.

Paul knew about the blinders over people's eyes.

The Apostle Paul wrote about the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians. But in 2 Corinthians he emphasized a different ministry, which was, "death works in me so that life is given to you." Read the Scriptures below in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4, and see how Paul connects his suffering with the light shining in those whose minds have been blinded by Satan.

People have blinders over their eyes so that they cannot see Truth (2 Corinthians 3). They view this life as a totally natural experience, or in other words, they define life by what they can see

and experience through their five senses. But the truth is that we live in a very spiritual world. Just try going up to someone and attempting to convince them of this fact, and then try to tell them about the good news, the Gospel. Most of the time it is in vain, unless *something* has happened to that person before you approached him/her. That *something* is that their blinders must first be removed. How does that happen? I believe that it is by someone setting them free as a vicarious intercessor, or by someone overcoming on their behalf. I also believe that truth is what the Apostle Paul had discovered and wrote about. While he did his share of sharing the Gospel, he also was called to do his share of suffering so that the blind eyes would be opened. We always need to be aware, that there is an intense and very real spiritual war going on constantly, and we are called to participate.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 3-4 Paul writes about how the blinders come off.

2 Corinthians 3:15-16 (Amplified Bible) says,

“Yes, down to this [very] day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies upon their minds and hearts.

But whenever a person turns [in repentance] to the Lord, the veil is stripped off and taken away.”

2 Corinthians 4:1 (Amplified Bible) says,

“Therefore, since we do hold and engage in this ministry by the mercy of God [granting us favor, benefits, opportunities, and especially salvation], we do not get discouraged (spiritless and despondent with fear) or become faint with weariness and exhaustion.”

2 Corinthians 4:3-18 (Amplified Bible) says,

“But even if our Gospel (the glad tidings) also be hidden (obscured and covered up with a veil that hinders the knowledge of God), it is hidden [only] to those who are perishing and obscured [only] to those who are spiritually dying and veiled [only] to those who are lost.

For the god of this world has blinded the unbelievers’ minds [that they should not discern the truth], preventing them from seeing the illuminating light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ (the Messiah), Who is the Image and Likeness of God.

For what we preach is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves [merely] as your servants (slaves) for Jesus’ sake.

For God Who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts so as [to beam forth] the Light for the illumination of the knowledge of the majesty and glory of God [as it is manifest in the Person and is revealed] in the face of Jesus Christ (the Messiah).

However, we possess this precious treasure [the divine Light of the Gospel] in [frail, human] vessels of earth, that the grandeur and exceeding greatness of the power may be shown to be from God and not from ourselves.

We are hedged in (pressed) on every side [troubled and oppressed in every way], but not cramped or crushed; we suffer embarrassments and are perplexed and unable to find a way out, but not driven to despair;

We are pursued (persecuted and hard driven), but not deserted [to stand alone]; we are struck down to the ground, but never struck out and destroyed;

Always carrying about in the body the liability and exposure to the same putting to death that the Lord Jesus suffered, so that the [resurrection] life of Jesus also may be shown forth by and in our bodies.

For we who live are constantly [experiencing] being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, that the [resurrection] life of Jesus also may be evidenced through our flesh which is liable to death.

Thus death is actively at work in us, but [it is in order that our] life [may be actively at work] in you.

Yet we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken. We too believe, and therefore we speak,

Assured that He Who raised up the Lord Jesus will raise us up also with Jesus and bring us [along] with you into His presence.

For all [these] things are [taking place] for your sake, so that the more grace (divine favor and spiritual blessing) extends to more and more people and multiplies through the many, the more thanksgiving may increase [and redound] to the glory of God.

Therefore we do not become discouraged (utterly spiritless, exhausted, and wearied out through fear). Though our outer man is [progressively] decaying and wasting away, yet our

inner self is being [progressively] renewed day after day.

For our light, momentary affliction (this slight distress of the passing hour) is ever more and more abundantly preparing and producing and achieving for us an everlasting weight of glory [beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease!],

Since we consider and look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are visible are temporal (brief and fleeting), but the things that are invisible are deathless and everlasting.”

Paul continually wrote about our “death” leading to life for others.

Following are several Scriptures with this theme.

Romans 8:18 says,

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Romans 8:37 says,

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

2 Timothy 2:8-13 says,

“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,

for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.

Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”

Colossians 1:20 says,

“and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Colossians 1:24 (Amplified Bible) says,

“[Even] now I rejoice in the midst of my sufferings on your behalf. And in my own person I am making up whatever is still lacking and remains to be completed [on our part] of Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.”

Colossians 1:25-27 says,

“of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,

the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

I believe that when Paul wrote Colossians 1:24 above about the afflictions of Christ that are lacking, that he was only referring to the distribution of those afflictions, and the resulting overcoming. I do believe for sure that Christ’s sufferings were all sufficient for the defeat of evil, but our task is now to allow God to distribute that defeat on satanic forces through us.

Philippians 3:10-11 (Amplified Bible) says,

“[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope]

That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body].”

Paul’s thorn.

For years I did not agree with many of the common theories about Paul’s thorn in the flesh. One day suddenly the simplicity of the definition came to me. The word *thorn* in Scripture commonly refers to curse. What I write here is my opinion, and even if you

disagree that should not take away from the main theme and idea of this chapter.

Genesis 3:17-18 says,

“Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.”

Paul commonly uses the word *flesh* as referring to our Adamic nature. Therefore I surmised that his thorn in the flesh was a curse that was chasing him, caused either by his own sin and/or by the sin of his forefathers. Paul had enough self-righteous religious activity in his life before meeting Jesus to bring that sin back on him.

Also God told Moses that the law of iniquity would be that iniquity is passed down our generation line to the third and fourth generation. Jesus broke that curse, but we often have to experience some of its effects in order to really overcome.

Exodus 34:7 says,

“keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

Let’s examine why Paul became so comfortable with his thorn in the flesh.

First, I would like to review what Paul said in 2 Corinthians chapter 11 which I believe continues into chapter 12 wherein he talks about his thorn in the flesh. I believe that the sufferings he described in chapter 11 referred to his thorn.

When Paul was a Pharisee he sowed a lot of very bad seed by persecuting and even killing Jesus' followers. I believe that this caused a curse to attempt to come on him. It is also possible that Paul had ancestors from whom he inherited curses. However, Paul knew that he had been crucified with Christ, and that these curses had been borne by Jesus on the Cross for him. Therefore he determined to allow these attacks to work for the good of others through him. Paul discovered that the curses that were attempting to come upon him took him into the Heavenly Courtroom as a warrior where he could overcome and remove other people's blinders as a result. That, in my opinion, is why he did not despise them. Paul inherited this mindset from Jesus. In Gethsemane Jesus accepted the curse of all men, which led Him into the Heavenly Courtroom where He defeated Satan. Jesus wore a crown of thorns on the Cross, absorbing our curses.

2 Corinthians 11:24-33 says,

"From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness –

besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;

but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.”

2 Corinthians 12:1-10 says,

“It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows –

how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.

For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Notice that the Lord did not tell Paul that His grace was insufficient, but that it was sufficient. God's grace, in my opinion, is Christ in you, performing and living out those things that no mere man can live out. I can tell you, that while I am overcoming generational curses in my own flesh, that I need to meditate on the benefits as spelled out by Paul in order to keep on going. Sometimes discouragement attacks like an arrow; bitterness and resentment swirl around my brain in an effort for me to welcome them. But in the end, no matter how I may feel, even while writing this now, I say with Paul, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,

in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

However, in order for one to have this "Paul type of faith," he must constantly be in touch with God, hearing His voice, His rhema, on a regular basis. Faith comes by hearing God speak (Romans 10:17).

Christ Tiegreen wrote in one of his devotions.⁴

"Many of us have been trained to admire the independent and to strive for self-sufficiency. We've been led to believe that taking care of ourselves is desirable. But have we learned that from the Word of God? No. God tells a military leader like Gideon to reduce his army so that the power from above might be demonstrated more clearly. God inspires little shepherd boys to venture into deep valleys to take on imposing giants. God's chosen people are pressed into a hopeless situation at the edge of the sea and given military victory by marching in circles. His chosen leaders are raised up from floating baskets in the river and humble mangers in the stable. He delights in the humility of mankind and the impossibility of its circumstances.

Humility and impossibility set the stage for His power. Weakness demonstrates His strength. Human futility is a platform for His capability. When we look to His strength, He enjoys displaying it."

⁴ Chris Tiegreen. *Worship The King*. Tyndale House Publishers. Carol Stream, IL. 2008 page June 18

In my experience, and by evidence of Scripture, as I go through the overcoming process, fighting the good fight of faith, not backing away from the wrestling match, God always brings good in the end. I have always seen many others blessed by what I went through and what I overcame. Jesus set this law in order from creation. Crucify a righteous man, and the perpetrator will be defeated. In the same way, try to perpetrate a curse, which may have been valid in the past, on a righteous follower of Jesus, and that perpetrator will also be defeated. And more than that, all of his other property or spoils will also be released. The Scripture says the following regarding setting others free through your overcoming.

Luke 11:20-22 says,

“But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.”

When we know for sure that all the enemies that attempt to torment us are already defeated, we can shout with joy as we see, in our mind’s eye, the triumphant parade led by King Jesus with His enemies chained behind him as a public spectacle.

Colossians 2:13-15 says,

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

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having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

If you study the Book of Acts, you will notice that most of the time Paul was fruitful in his ministry right after he had suffered persecution and even physical beatings.

C. H. Spurgeon wrote,

We must go to glory by the way of the weeping cross; and as we were never promised that we should ride to heaven in a feather bed, we must not be disappointed when we see the road to be rough, as our fathers found it before us.

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Chapter 9 Parable of the Minas⁵

What should our mindset be when we are faced with difficult and even hostile circumstances in life?

The Parable of the Minas in Luke chapter 19 reflects the mindset of many as they are going through some types of difficult circumstances.

Many people have a mindset that now, when Jesus has saved them, their goal is just to pursue comfort until Jesus returns. Some people even dedicate their lives to mission work and preaching but still hang on to an imagined entitlement of comfort and ease. God did not keep us here after He saved us just to see how much comfort we could extract from our relationship with God.

Perhaps we feel that some of the random circumstances that have invaded our lives, or even difficult circumstances caused by our own decisions, are beyond God's sovereignty and His redemption. To be honest, I am tempted with this idea from time to time and have to get my mind in the right "gear."

Jesus' love towards others and us is expressed in laying down His life for us. Now that He lives in us, that is still His priority. However, He now lays down His life for others by doing it through us. This does not bring comfort, but eternal blessing for us, for others, and for God. However, He will always work our discomfort and leverage it into eternal blessings for us and for others if we believe.

Jesus did not seek His own comfort.

Matthew 27:34 says,

⁵ This chapter has been adapted from the book *Junk to Jewels* by Larry Chkoreff. <http://www.isob-bible.org/book-store>. Free restricted download: http://www.isob-bible.org/aaa/English/Junk_to_Jewels/Junk_to_Jewels-prohibit.pdf

“they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.”

Jesus asks us not to seek our own comfort.

John 15:13 says,

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

1 John 3:16 says,

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Jesus intentionally rejected any idea of comfort when faced with laying His life down for us.

The following is a quote from My Utmost For His Highest (June 25th) by Oswald Chambers.⁶

Sorrow removes a great deal of a person’s shallowness, but it does not always make that person better. Suffering either gives me to myself or it destroys me. You cannot find or receive yourself through success, because you lose your head over pride. And you cannot receive yourself through the monotony of your daily life, because you give in to complaining. The only way to find yourself is in the fires of sorrow. Why it should be this way is immaterial. The fact is that it is true in the Scriptures and in human experience. You can always recognize who has been through the fires of sorrow

⁶ <http://utmost.org/>

and received himself, and you know that you can go to him in your moment of trouble and find that he has plenty of time for you. But if a person has not been through the fires of sorrow, he is apt to be contemptuous, having no respect or time for you, only turning you away. If you will receive yourself in the fires of sorrow, God will make you nourishment for other people.

We have been given His ministry of reconciliation. That is one important way that we lay down our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:18 says,

“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.”

This ministry is not just about teaching and preaching about Jesus and presenting the Gospel to people.

That is a very important component to be sure. However, reconciliation comes to people by others laying down their lives. *All things, not just people, have been reconciled.* Paul expressed this well in the following Scripture.

Colossians 1:20 says,

“and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Colossians 1:24 says,

“I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.”

I believe that when Paul spoke about the afflictions that are lacking that he referred to the afflictions that we endure in the distribution of Christ's victory through His completed afflictions. Paul made this clear, as I wrote in a previous chapter, in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4 that blinders come off the eyes of unbelievers when we overcome.

We need to know that whatever evil comes, it is reconciled by His blood.

All evil has the potential of becoming our friend through the Cross and blood of Jesus.

'Reconcile' is a powerful word.

Strong's Concordance calls it "to bring back a former state of harmony." It is defined as "to repair, to put back into working order, making peace between two opposing views or groups." Vine's Bible Dictionary⁷ defines it as "to change from enmity to friendship." The Cross of Jesus Christ takes all of our "enemies," whether it's people, demons, circumstances, sickness, poverty, or anything else, and changes them into a blessing.

This is our ministry here on earth, to take all the enemies of our lives, dip them into the blood and Cross of Jesus Christ, and turn them into friends. I can tell you by the Word of God and by my own experience, that this is true. It works, if you are passionate and radical!

How can it be that all things still need to be reconciled?

Jesus absorbed all the evil into Himself. Nothing was left out! Satan's best blow was leveled against the Adamic race when he crucified Jesus. However, Jesus' Father was not of the Adamic

⁷ Vine, W.E. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. Atlanta, GA: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996.

race. Also, Jesus did not sin while He was on earth. Therefore Satan killed him illegally. That is why death could not hold Jesus. Death was actually destroyed, death died! Evil was absorbed into good.

Satan is the embodiment of all evil. He hates Jesus and wants to take all people into Hell just because they are made in God's image. However, all of Satan's evil pierced Jesus, nothing was left out! Therefore we have no evil due us, unless we do not believe. If Satan is destroyed, evil is destroyed.

Romans 6:8-9 says,

“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.”

God “destroyed” the devil at the Cross.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says,

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

These verses say that Satan was “destroyed.” What does that actually mean? He seems to be running around doing a job of destroying others. ‘Destroyed’ does not mean ‘to be annihilated’. Satan is still operating, he has not been annihilated.

The word *destroy* is defined in Strong's Concordance as:

1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative;

- 1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency;*
1b) to deprive of force, influence, power.

When Jesus, and you and I, were raised from the dead, we were born again as a new race that is no longer subject to Satan. He has no more dominion over us. We have dominion over him. Satan used his ultimate power on Jesus at the Cross, and Jesus was resurrected after that. Satan has no more power to exert. He is out of tools and weapons except to deceive with lies and hostile circumstances.

He can still destroy an unbeliever, and he can deceive a believer, but if we know the truth, he cannot harm us any longer. As far as we are concerned, he is destroyed. If we stand on the truth, all Satan can do is lie to us. Satan has no power over the new creation; that includes you and me! However, we often still experience evil and hostile circumstances in spite of the truth that Satan has been defeated. Why? Because Jesus left us with the authority, power and task to reconcile all things in our realm of influence here on earth. The power of God working in us and through us will turn every evil circumstance into a blessing if we live as overcomers.

Colossians 1:13 says,

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

Let us keep in mind that our spiritual enemies were defeated because of their own actions of attack against the righteous Son of God, Jesus. Had they known the result of that attack; the Bible tells us that they would have never done it (1 Corinthians 2:8). It is the same with us. They attack us through curses, through sin,

through many other avenues, but they are gambling that we either do not understand that their attack will ultimately destroy them, or that the pain they put on us will be so intense that we will give up, lose our patience, and let them have their way.

There is a process that God has in transferring His reconciliation to earth. It is not automatic, nor is it all about us.

Knowing this process is called wisdom. It is the process of overcoming. ‘*Overcoming*’ is a word that infers a legal process, and often that takes more time than we like. It takes time to convert our problems into blessings, and it takes our patience to hang on after all hope seems to be gone. Overcoming is the way that we can **leverage** our sorrows, pain and suffering into eternal victory and blessings for others and ourselves.

In Luke 19:11-27 the disciples thought that the Kingdom of God was coming to earth then and that all their problems would be solved the next day. Jesus taught His disciples a lesson for you and me.

He told a parable about a nobleman going into a distant country to obtain a kingdom and to return soon. The nobleman called his servants and gave them each an amount of currency equal to about 4 months of salary (a “mina”). He told them to “do business,” or **occupy**, until he came back.

Luke 19:11-13 says,

“Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.

Therefore He said: “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business [occupy] till I come.'"

Many of them detested his authority.

Luke 19:14-20 says,

"But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'

And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'

And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.'

Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief.'"

⁸ Cities in Strong's Concordance infers several things including one's native city, heavenly Jerusalem, and to war, battle, dispute and fight.

Some of the servants did not understand what the character of their Lord was, and they could not believe that He gave them something good.

Luke 19:21-27 says,

“‘For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’

And he said to him, ‘Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.

Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’

And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.’

(But they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas.’)

For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.’”

There were four classes of people presented in this parable.

1. ***His citizens.*** The group that detested the nobleman’s authority and did not want anyone to reign over them. They were banished from his presence and killed. There is a “law of authority.” When we submit to God and our God-given authorities, then God will grant us His authority in difficult

circumstances. If we do not, then we experience what this Parable describes as “slay them.” In other words, our enemies will prevail. Authority is subject to the law of sowing and reaping.

2-3. ***His servants.*** Those who occupied, or did business, and traded with the currency. According to their success, they earned more currency and were rewarded with kingdom authority over many cities.

4. ***His servants.*** Some did not occupy because they thought that the nobleman was a mean person whose motive was to punish them. Not only did they not get any rewards but also their currency was taken away.

Fear was their motivating force. Fear always neutralizes faith.

Use it or lose it! The last group of servants did not despise the authority, but they were terribly misinformed! Apparently, the gift, or the mina, that was given to them did not look good on the surface. As I suggest, I believe that the mina was wrapped up in difficult circumstances and could not be seen except by faith.

Notice, the nobleman said that they would be judged by their own words! They had misunderstood the character of the nobleman and the value of the gift!

What does it mean ‘to occupy’?

The word *occupy* means ‘to do business, to trade for profit.’ *Business*, by definition, is to take a raw material or service, add value to it and make it more profitable so it can be useful or sold. It means to exchange or to even change something to make it more profitable. It is used in the Bible to describe people who had businesses, cattle farms, and other businesses both good and bad. In our context, it is the same thing as overcoming.

What “currency” did God leave with you?

What is His property?

I believe that it is useful to apply this principle to the talents and assets that God gives to us, but I do not believe that it is limited only to that, nor is it the essence of this parable. Notice that the nobleman left his servants his property, not their property, with which to do business. In a similar parable told in Matthew 25:14, it actually says “his goods.”

What was the property that belonged to Jesus when He ascended back to Heaven after His resurrection? Matthew 28:18 says that all power in heaven and on earth was what He possessed. Jesus acquired all authority over every earthly kingdom when He was raised from the dead. Remember in Luke 4:5 Satan tempted Jesus with all the kingdoms of the habitable world. Jesus was tempted because this was one of His purposes, to acquire these kingdoms that were taken from Adam and Eve.

His property that you find yourself with is His authority to turn every earthly affliction into a Kingdom jewel.

While Jesus did indeed acquire dominion over all earthly things legally, He had not yet acquired them experientially.

Hebrews 12:26-29 says that God is shaking all things on earth now so that only what is of His Kingdom will remain. I submit therefore that we are the agents who are responsible to change what is in our realm of responsibility from earthly to heavenly.

Did Jesus take all of your infirmities? Do you still experience them? Then you are to change those to something of eternal value. Did Jesus take your poverty? Do you still experience a form of poverty? Then you are to change that circumstance to something of eternal value. Have you been left with some “junk” in your life? Then “occupy” with that junk, or do business with it, and turn it into “jewels” for His Kingdom, something of eternal value. This does not mean that we are to avoid resisting the devil. We should do that with all of our strength. At the same time, while we are

resisting, we also can do business with our infirmities and turn them into blessings.

I believe that the minas were hidden inside horrible looking containers. They did not see the hidden mina embedded within the “package.”

I have often wondered how this parable can reconcile the idea that God did not leave us with sufferings and curses, but He is the God that blesses us. He does not leave us with cancer, He does not leave us with rebellious children, broken families, poverty, etc. Yet we find ourselves with curses that overwhelm us, some of which are passed down to us and some of which we perhaps brought on ourselves, or maybe even a combination of both.

I believe that those things that we find ourselves with to overcome are simply containers, or packages and wrappings, for the “minas” that Jesus has for us. Minas are good. Jesus gave us minas, good rewards, but they are embedded inside of our challenges, sufferings, and generational curses. The mina embedded within the hostile circumstance is His authority that He left for us as the parable states.

Not everybody recognizes the package that they receive.

They are not familiar with the resurrection power of Jesus; therefore they feel that their challenges in life are something to be avoided. They are discouraged because they do not see God removing their trials. Or worse, they believe that God has given them bad things to teach them a lesson or to punish them. However, if they are wise, they will discern the “mina” inside of the horrible looking package and they can be change agents for the Kingdom of God and for their own lives and those in their realm of influence.

I believe those people in the parable who thought that the master was a mean person, simply could not see beyond the

wrapping of the package. They could not see that Jesus was actually giving them a mina.

Those people who did not want the master to rule over them are those who have not placed themselves under the authority of Jesus and in particular, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and their God-given authorities.

I believe that this parable shows another type of ambush of God's enemies.

This is the real spiritual warfare. It is not a defensive action; it is God's aggression to put the final defeat on the demonic forces in this world. Some would argue that the Cross was not aggressive warfare, but it certainly was. Jesus took our curse and laid His life down at Gethsemane. Satan was then ambushed into crucifying Him. It's the same with us. When we offer God our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2) that is our Gethsemane. Then the ambush comes in the form of hostile looking packages. However, if we know that there is a "mina," or His authority, in each hostile package, then we are allowing God to be aggressive in His final destroying of the evil here on earth.

There is still some very important, strategic and eternal warfare that Jesus left for us to accomplish, of course, through Him living in us.

The following Scriptures in Hebrews make it clear that Jesus left us with a "clean up job" here on earth. I do want to emphasize that the power of Jesus' death and resurrection is what accomplishes this victory in warfare. Notice in the following Scriptures about the enemies being made His footstool, that could only be accomplished after the Cross, resurrection, and ascension to the Father's right hand. Scripture makes it clear that the earth is His footstool (Isaiah 66:1). Jesus defeated Satan, then He left His

power with us to be His instruments to overcome those satanic influences and beings in our own realm of influence.

Hebrews 10:12-13 says,

*“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,
from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.”*

Hebrews 1:13 says,

“But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’?”

Ephesians chapter 6 is clear that as believers we are in a wrestling match with real spiritual beings.

It is not just about cleaning up our flesh nature, there is more to it. Notice the description of these spiritual beings in this Scripture.

Ephesians 6:12 says,

“For we do not wrestle⁹ against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Revelation 12:11 makes it clear that we do indeed have a task to overcome Satan. I believe that the writer meant satanic beings

⁹ to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls. Wrestling (a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to hold his opponent down with his hand upon his neck) the term is transferred to the Christian's struggle with the power of evil.

as in Ephesians 6:12. Remember, the word *overcome* infers a courtroom and legal battle, with the winner prevailing and the loser being put out of commission.

Revelation 12:11 says,

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

The interesting aspect of this spiritual warfare is that as we overcome issues in our own lives, it also sets others free from the same demonic force that we put out of commission.

Luke 11:20-22 says.

“But if I cast out demons with the finger of God [The Holy Spirit], surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.”

My wife and I have numerous examples in our lives that testify to this principle.

Going back to the mid-1990s, we were amazed how our writings were thrust into Haiti and then West Africa as a result of our overcoming a related circumstance in our lives here in the USA. From West Africa we watched with amazement on how the Lord Jesus thrust our writings into so many more African nations. So many of these testimonies are very personal, however, we watched as the Lord opened the doors into the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, all having to do with overcoming personal issues. Not only did we witness these miracles, but also the Lord

Himself spoke very clearly to us on how our overcoming affected people around the world.

History books are filled with these types of stories from very early church times. Believers who were consumed by lions or burned at the stake knew from other testimonies that their death would result in approximately 300 people saved for Jesus.

I have often wondered if perhaps the martyrdom of Stephen had something to do with the blinders being taken off of Saul's eyes?

What happens to these demonic beings, strongholds and curses when we overcome them?

Recall in a former paragraph I presented the fact that Jesus destroyed Satan (Hebrews 2:14-15), and that the word *destroy* means, as defined in Strong's Concordance

1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative;

1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency;

1b) to deprive of force, influence, power.

I am not sure of every detail of their defeat, but the word *destroy* as described above is enough to render them impotent on earth any longer.

One more thing.

The mina, or purpose for your life, and what it looks like during and after the overcoming process is God's business and not yours. Often we make mistakes attempting to interpret what God has in mind for us.

What is our responsibility during the waiting period?

The overcoming lifestyle is our responsibility. We are to focus on what the blood of Jesus did for us, continually take up our cross and not love our life, and speak the Word of God as our testimony against the devil.

The overcoming lifestyle is outlined in Revelation 12:11 which says,

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

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Chapter 10 The Heavenly Courtroom

Since I believe that the Scriptures indicate a legal process in overcoming our challenges and our spiritual enemies, then let us see what we can find out about the courtroom when all of this legal battle takes place.

Life is a courtroom.

I have been emphasizing the Scriptures and my personal experiences that indicate that there is a legal process in overcoming. In fact, the word *overcome*¹⁰ infers a legal process. That being the case, I believe, like any good lawyer or participant in a legal matter, we should discover what this Heavenly Courtroom is really like in order to give us an advantage to win.

I submit that if we could pull back the curtain of this material world, we would see behind this “veil” not only the spiritual world, but also the “Heavenly courtroom.” I believe that one would see frantic activity; perhaps even more intense than one would see in a U.S. District court.

The judicial system in America is one of the best in the world, but it is not based upon justice; it is based upon who can win the case, even if the guilty one is set free, or the not guilty one is jailed. Both sides are not vying for justice; they are competing to win at any cost. This is the way Satan works. As a matter of fact, our judicial systems are systems of the world, and Satan is the Prince of the World. However, God judges righteously.

I am convinced that the Scriptures show us that overcoming difficulties in life is a series of courtroom experiences for all of us.

¹⁰ overcome, when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, conquer, prevail, get the victory, to carry off the victory, come off victorious, of Christ, victorious over all His foes, of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death, against the power of their foes, and temptations and, persecutions.

I believe that understanding these courtrooms is essential when it comes to overcoming, especially overcoming curses in our lives. Actually, there is so much in the Bible about this subject that there is not enough room in this chapter to cover it all. I have provided a multitude of Scriptures regarding overcoming in Appendix A of this book.

Jesus spoke parables in Luke chapter 18 in response to the questions from the Pharisees (Luke 17:20) asking when the Kingdom of God would come.

In the previous chapter we discussed the parable of the minas, that Jesus told His disciples as He sensed that they thought that the Kingdom of God would come immediately (Luke 19). He answered them with a message of hope and grace through that parable. Now in Luke 18 Jesus answered a question from the Pharisees about when the Kingdom of God would come. He spoke to the Pharisees in a very different way than He did to His disciples. He was saying to both groups, “I am going to leave you a gift for you to utilize for turning evil into blessings, and when I return I will see what you did with it.”

First, He explained to the Pharisees that there would be a courtroom experience but that they may not prevail in the courtroom due to the fact that their self-righteousness does not carry weight in the Heavenly Courtroom.

Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, not His followers, in the following Scriptures.

Luke 17:20 says,

“Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation.”

Luke 18:1-8 says,

“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’

And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man,

yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”

Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said.

And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?””

Jesus is using the unjust judge here as a contrast. If the unjust judge will avenge the widow, then how much more will God, the just Judge, speedily avenge His children? Also notice that the example here is the widow, which represents our helpless position. The last statement has to do with Jesus wanting to find us justified by faith and not by works as the Pharisees did. Notice, it says “Faith on the earth.”

In the next parable Jesus addresses the Pharisees about the issue of our justification in this end-times courtroom.

Jesus was not condemning the Pharisees when He spoke these two parables to them; He just emphasized that they would need to be justified by faith, which was not something that they understood. Notice in Luke 18:8 Jesus said, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” He was saying that to prevail in this courtroom you must be as helpless as a widow and must be justified by faith.

Luke 18:9-14 says,

“Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.’

I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’

And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Jesus always stressed that behavior modification is worthless unless it comes from the heart. In order to have a heart change, we

must “see” Jesus, and that takes the pouring out of our heart to Him. Two examples in these parables are the widow and the tax collector. When we do this, our “have to” is changed to a “want to.” We are no longer legalistic; we are instead obedient because we love Him.

If life is a courtroom and God’s judgment is pending, then justification is the greatest gift we can receive.

I believe that so many believers have failed to overcome afflictions because they do not understand this Biblical principle.

I submit that Job was in this courtroom, and that he was finally justified (in a very different way than he anticipated) and became a classic overcomer. While he was spending time justifying himself, God was just waiting. Going through this “trial” was Job’s door into the very presence of God in a way he could have not experienced without his suffering.

First, we must be judged so that we may prevail in this courtroom.

Our judgment is based on the finished work of Jesus and our obedience to His Word. When we find ourselves not obeying, missing the mark in some way, we can quickly come back to being perfect before God because of His finished work.

Justification is a major aspect of the Cross.

Romans 4:25 says,

“[He] who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

Romans 5:1 says,

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Justify is a word that is used in courts of law. It means “the establishment of a person as just by acquittal from guilt.” If you knew you were guilty of a crime, and then, for some strange reason, the judge acquitted you, you would be very happy. Being acquitted is better than a pardon. A pardon means you are set free even though you are guilty, but to be acquitted means that you are not guilty. It is just like you never sinned, because Jesus bore it all.

One of Satan’s greatest weapons is to falsely accuse us.

Nobody likes to be falsely accused. It is one of life’s most painful experiences. During your time in the Heavenly courtroom, you will be falsely accused. However, Jesus bore this for you as well. He was falsely accused during His trials, and His response was remarkable.

Mark 14:60-61a says,

“And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’”

But He kept silent and answered nothing...”

If you respond by defending yourself, you cannot accept being justified by faith!

It is painful but powerful to remain silent when you are falsely accused. This is an exercise in taking up your cross, and it will crucify your flesh. Our redemption was based upon Jesus being falsely accused; perhaps someone else’s redemption is a fruit of us following Jesus into this crucible. You might save someone’s life!

What is the purpose of this courtroom?

From God's point of view, which should be ours as well, our goal is to apply the victory of the Cross to specific issues and satanic beings in our lives.

Satan is attempting to perpetuate curses in our lives and in the lives of those in our realm of influence. He is attempting to perpetuate our junk to remain junk and suffering, while God wants to transform our junk into jewels. It is illegal for satanic forces to continue to perpetuate curses in our lives because Jesus bore all of our curses. However, if we cooperate with the satanic forces, they are quite willing and legally able to continue to perpetuate our curses. If we cooperate with God, then they will be judged guilty in the Heavenly courtroom, and will be "destroyed," or rendered inoperative, and unemployed.

So many people do not pay attention to the idea of God's judgment.

Some people misunderstand the idea of God's judgment thinking it is only an event that will take place after they die. Yes, this world and the people in it are constantly experiencing judgment. Judgment from God is a two-sided coin as described in Psalm 1. For the believer who has been following the Lord to the best of his/her ability, judgment brings reward. However, for others it brings condemnation and penalties. The same judgment can work both reward and condemnation at the same time.

We must face the truth while we are in our court trials. We are most likely guilty of something. We have not been perfect with our children, our businesses, our spouses, or in just living life.

This is where justification by faith comes in. Because Jesus took our guilt, sin, and judgment, we are set free, not by what we

have done or by how we have performed, but by faith in what He gave us as a free gift.

Here is the cast of characters in this courtroom:

Satan is the accuser.

We, or those we are standing for, are the accused.

Our Heavenly Father is the judge, The Ancient of Days.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit are our advocates, or lawyers.

We play another role in this courtroom; we are also witnesses.

What is a witness?

Acts 1:8 says,

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Too many believers just look at their “trials” in life as a difficult time that they are going through. They ARE going through a difficult time. Court trials are not fun. Most often the circumstances will look impossible. Worry will attempt to set in. Sleep will be difficult to come by. It is painful. We must always remember that we are “witnesses” to the power of and truth of Jesus and what He did, and that something much bigger than us is happening.

Jesus quoted what is written in Acts 1:8 to His disciples when they asked Him about coming back to set up His Kingdom. He made it clear – the job of His disciples was and is to be witnesses, and in being witnesses, His Kingdom would come. He also emphasized that we need the power of the Holy Spirit to do this job.

I believe that Jesus was referring to the type of witness we are talking about.

The word *witness* in Greek is defined as *Martur*, meaning “one who bears witness by his death, in a legal sense, one who is a spectator of anything, e.g. of a contest.” I do not think that this is limited to our traditional definition of martyr. Jesus said that we must, in a spiritual sense, take up our cross. We die daily when we live for Jesus. We are killed continually when we testify to the truth. We need to be prepared to give up our physical life if needed, but often it is more difficult to stay alive than it is to die. This is called a *living sacrifice*. We are tempted to crawl off of the altar.

What are we to witness to?

We should only witness to the truth of God’s Word. Actually, we are not the real witnesses. We are only mouthpieces or vessels for the real and true witness, the Holy Spirit. He is the only one who was an eyewitness to the resurrection of Jesus. He is the only One who can prove that Jesus was raised from the dead and that we are justified. The Holy Spirit empowers us to speak the truth of the Word of God, and we become the witnesses. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can help you obtain a not guilty verdict. When going through a trial, it is vitally important to press into God’s presence until such time as you hear Him speak a Word directly to you. It is called a *rhema*, or revelation knowledge, described as a personal voice from the lips of Jesus to you.

Then it is up to you to prove that you really believe. You are called upon to believe. How?

1. By speaking the Word that God has given to you about your situation as a witness. This is usually difficult and takes discipline. Our greatest example is Jesus, when on His Cross, He spoke Psalm 22, which begins with “My God, My God, why have You forsaken

Me,” and ends with, “It is finished” in the original Hebrew and Amplified Bible.

2. Our walk with the Lord also has to be obedient and repentant.

While it is true that our justification is from God, we must cooperate and continue to be obedient and to confess our sins as our flesh attempts to prevail with ungodly behavior.

Usually the trial you are experiencing will be difficult on your emotions. Circumstances may not line up with God’s promise. You will be tempted to say the wrong thing. You will be tempted to give up and feel that God does not care. Here is where you can prove what you really believe. Stand on the Word!

The word of our testimony as used in Revelation 12:11, I believe, represents testifying what the Word says that the blood of Jesus did for us. It is testifying to Satan’s defeat and the finished work of the Cross. It is speaking God’s promises and reading your Bible aloud!

A very powerful way to pray as a witness is to pray in tongues for long periods of time. If you do not pray this way, ask God to give you this gift and to baptize you into the Holy Spirit. I can testify that many strong deliverances have come into my life by praying in tongues.

Order out of chaos.

In Genesis chapter 1 the Holy Spirit is seen brooding and hovering over the earth, which was “without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.” Then God spoke and the Holy Spirit coupled with the Word brought order out of chaos. That same Spirit is in us now, and that same power can be breathed through our breath and lips to bring order out of chaos.

Only humans are authorized to be witnesses.

God cannot employ witnesses who are not human. We are the only people authorized to speak words of testimony on this earth. In Genesis 1:26 and Psalm 8, the Word says that God gave dominion over this earth to man.

Satan attempts to get us to speak as his witness. We are tempted to say, “My children are rebellious. I am poor. I wish I could just die. This old car of mine will never make it another mile.” Or others may become witnesses for us like Job’s friends did. They may tell us how bad we look. They may tell us that so and so was trusting God but their house was foreclosed. They may tell us, “You never know what God will do, sometimes He helps and sometimes He does not.”

While it is true that we do not know how God will orchestrate our trial, and while we do not deny the facts of difficult circumstances, but no matter what is going on, we must exalt His Word as the witness, establishing the truth, standing on the truth until such time as God judges the case in His timing and in His wisdom. God is a fair Judge inasmuch as He allows both sides to make their case. Often that takes time.

Matthew 12:36-37 says,

“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Notice in the above Scripture the words *justified* and *condemned* are both courtroom statements.

You must speak the word of your testimony, the Word of God, out of your mouth consistently. You must speak the Word against Satan and his demons until you overcome. Meditate on

and repeatedly speak the Word that God has given you to stand on. Angels hearken to the Word; demons flee at the Word. The Word applies the blood of Jesus over your “doorpost.”

The Holy Spirit is the power for overcoming.

The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strength, Standby (John 14:26, Amplified Bible). The word *comforter* in Greek is translated *paraklesis*. It means, “advocate (in a courtroom sense), combining encouragement with alleviation of grief. It suggests the capacity of giving aid. It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, a counselor, and advocate, one who pleads the case of another.” When looking up the definition of advocate, one is referred back to comforter. An advocate is a courtroom lawyer. Jesus is our Advocate, however, He did say that the Comforter would come and take His place. So our witness is the combination of the Word and the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 2:23-24 (New Living Translation) says,

“... He (Christ) left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.

He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.”

Chapter 11 Daniel's Vision of the Heavenly Courtroom

God revealed to Daniel very specific visions about the Heavenly Courtroom in end times.

Beginning at Daniel 7 Daniel saw, in the form of various beasts, the historic and spiritual kingdoms, which had ruled and would rule the earth. First, he saw the Babylonian Empire as the lion, which was toppled by the Medo-Persian Empire represented as the bear. Then, he saw the Grecian Empire, Alexander the Great, represented by a leopard. These were all actual historic empires, however, they also had invisible spiritual foundations.

The fourth beast was very powerful and was *quite different*. It had iron teeth and devoured ruthlessly. In my opinion, this represented two kingdoms, the actual Roman Empire and the spiritual empire of Satan in the last days since the resurrection of Jesus.

Look at Daniel chapter 7 below and notice how the fourth beast is overcome in a courtroom situation. I suggest that you pause and notice that the Ancient of Days, God the Judge, not only judged for Jesus to receive the Kingdom, but then for the Saints. There seemed to be verdicts first in the heavenlies, then also on earth.

Daniel 7:1-7 says,

“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.

Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.

And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."

There is a more complete explanation of this fourth kingdom in Daniel 2:42-45 which says,

"And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other

people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold – the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

The clay feet of this final empire shows its vulnerability to the Rock that destroys it.

Continue with Daniel chapter 7.

Daniel 7:8-14 says,

“I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire;

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.”

I believe that this first courtroom described above in verses 9-14 is the one that judged Satan at the Cross as guilty and Jesus as innocent. I believe that the Scripture shows that when Jesus ascended back to the Father, that He received the Kingdom.

Daniel 7:15-22 says,

“I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.

But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’

Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its

nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet;

and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.”

I believe that verses 21-22 describe the warfare and finally the second courtroom, the one that we go through.

Daniel 7:23-25 says,

“Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.’

The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.

He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”

Notice in verse 21 above, in the New King James Version, it says that the enemy was prevailing against the saints. Other versions say prevailed. That really got my attention. In either translation, the case was not closed. Just as Satan was prevailing against Jesus, so it appeared at the Cross, it was really only an ambush. But the saints, you and I, feel like we have been prevailed by the enemy. We don't think we can go on any more, but for His glory we must. It's not about us, but about His glory. We dare not give up or give in.

Jesus reminds me that Hebrews chapter 6 states that if I give up on the promise that He gave to me, that I am crucifying Him afresh.

The Lord spoke to me during one of the darkest courtroom times in my life. I asked Him: "How long will this courtroom be?" He asked me: "How long was I in the grave?"

Then He let me know that His courtroom was not decided until He died. He let me know that I had to "die" during this trial, then the victory verdict would take place.

The following are the lyrics from the song "The Hurt and The Healer", by "Mercy Me".

*So here I am,
what's left of me,
when glory meets my suffering.
I'm alive
even though a part of me has died.
You take my heart and breathe it back to life.
I fall into Your arms open wide,
When the hurt and the healer collide.*

The key word is in verse 26 below, “but”.

Daniel 7:26-27 says,

“But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.

Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

I believe that verses 25-27 again describe the second courtroom and our warfare, and the Kingdom of God being ushered to earth by our overcoming.

Daniel 7:28 says,

“This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.”

Keep this in mind on a personal level; when our circumstances look like the iron toes, something we cannot handle, an enemy that is too strong for us, just remember the spiritual foundation of that kingdom is made from clay. The Cross of Jesus and His resurrection took care of this. If we stand, we will prevail and the enemy with clay feet will fall! Notice above in Daniel 2:45, that the Stone, or Rock, is what broke this final fourth kingdom in pieces. The Rock is Jesus; the Rock is the Word! Speak the Word!

Things always look bad at first.

The prosecutor, Satan, accuses you. The evidence comes in. It does not look good. He begins to wear you out. You check out his record and discover that he has worn out many others before he focused on you. You feel fear!

You hear the verdict in the lower court, “guilty.” Perhaps you did not handle things just right and you do have some guilt. When we are under intense pressure in suffering, often we do not respond to temptations in godliness. The flesh can cause us to act in fear, where we try to control circumstances and outcomes. These temporary failures can make you feel discouraged and hopeless. But God is quick to forgive when we repent, He is quick to justify us, to have mercy on us, if our heart is set on pleasing Him. Your motives during this time are what God is really examining.

Maybe you were without guilt but the prosecutor is simply very skilled. Maybe the doctor’s report acts like a conviction against you. Job has been in this courtroom and we have a first-hand report on how it worked out for him. He appealed to the Supreme Court. You decide to try one more appeal, hoping maybe, just maybe you can overcome the impending sentences and doom.

You walk into the Supreme Court and you glance over and see Satan at the prosecutor’s bench. He is staring at you with evil so thick that you can feel it in your bones. You see his intelligence and his stacks of papers of evidence. He is smiling at you. You try not to look at him, but you catch him smirking at you with one eyebrow raised in wicked self-confidence.

Daniel’s prophetic dreams tell us that overcoming is painful and sometimes takes a long time to prevail against the workers of darkness. They tell us that overcoming takes place in a Heavenly Courtroom. The final chapters of Daniel confirm this. The Book of Revelation is a parallel prophetic vision.

Then the participants in the courtroom all gasp at what they see.

This is the courtroom I described in the previous chapter. You and I are the accused. A *being* enters the Courtroom! Just before you are ready to cave in, just before you feel that you cannot stand any longer, just when you have given up all hope in your fleshly resources for making a defense, you decide to enter into praise. You are praising the Lord for His character, His reputation, His reliability, and His faithfulness (this is called “The New Song”). Just then the Father, the Supreme Court Judge, steps into the courtroom!

Suddenly a voice sweeps the room and says, “All rise for the Judge.”

Imagine with me standing in that courtroom. The Holy Spirit comes over to you, puts His arm around your shoulders, and says, “My friend, leave this one to Me. I have been here before, and I know the Judge personally.”

The Holy Spirit presents Himself before the Ancient of Days. He asks Him to look out the window. The Ancient of Days commands the curtain and the window to be thrown open. He has a bittersweet look as His head turns to gaze outside the City. He sees Golgotha. Behold, He sees a Lamb slain on a Cross. He turns to you and to me and He says, “You are not guilty, you are acquitted and justified!” He says to the demon, “You are destroyed, rendered unemployed, and inoperative!”

Remember, we are justified by faith, and have the same standing in the Courtroom as Jesus has. The One who was raised from the dead lives inside of you!

Unlike a worldly court process, in the Heavenly Courtroom the Supreme court decided the case even before the lower court

had a chance to try it. The Cross of Jesus Christ decided the outcome in advance.

What is the end result?

Next time you find yourself in a *trial*, a suffering, understand that *it is* a trial, but the Judge is God the Father, your Advocate is Jesus and your accuser is Satan himself. Look behind the circumstances. They always lie. Look instead to the Word.

The curse is broken and vengeance is taken. Jesus' mission statement in Isaiah 61, forecasts that the things that Jesus wishes to do for us come after the "Day of vengeance." I believe you will see a multitude of results after overcoming. Read all of Isaiah chapter 61 and meditate upon it.

As bad as the trial has been, you will experience gladness for having participated and persevered (in a bittersweet way). Next, you have broken the curse(s) from your life and your family line. Also, because the curse is broken, the demon(s) who had attached themselves to the curse are heading for an early retirement, and as I wrote in the previous chapter, are destroyed, or unemployed.

In addition, you have entered new realms of operating in the Kingdom of God here on earth. Your life has been purified and you have a much more intimate fellowship experience with the Lord. Finally, you are now the minister of comfort, an advocate for others who are going through similar circumstances. You are one of the saints riding with Jesus on white horses in Revelation chapter 19 coming to the aid of others.

How long do you need to stand on the Word and speak the word of your testimony? Until you win!

2 Corinthians 4:13 says,

"And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believed and

therefore I spoke,' we also believe and therefore speak."

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Chapter 12 The Courtroom in Revelation

Part 1

The purpose of the next two chapters, 12 and 13, is connected to the Book of Revelation, and it is to show God's purpose and pathway in the courtroom experience, and to help define our role in the overcoming process.

It is also meant to encourage you with fresh vision and hope as you are going through very difficult circumstances. I believe that the Apostle John gained fresh vision and hope during the most difficult circumstances in his life.

It could take an entire book to describe how the Book of Revelation applies to the courtroom experiences I have been writing about. However, my purpose for this chapter is just to utilize a quick outline from which we can obtain wisdom from the Lord, the Word, on what our role in overcoming actually is.

The Book of Revelation

Eschatology, or the study of end-time events, is great because it can cause us to long for His appearance and also serve as an incentive to prepare our souls for His appearance. It also gave me an absolute confidence in the prophetic accuracy and the anointing of the Word without question. I was saved and born again while reading through the Book of Revelation accompanied by a book written by a great author, Hal Lindsey, who described it as the eyeglass into how this world is going to end, and how the Kingdom of God would eventually be established on earth.

I needed that dose of truth! It not only answered my question of where do I go when I die, but Jesus revealed Himself to me as the perfect Word of God, the God of love, and the God of all power, the winner in all final battles.

Some years later when my family was going through some very dark times, the Lord spoke and told me to begin to read Revelation with an Eastern mindset instead of a Western mindset. He gave me that gift, and from that time I began to see myself as walking through the Book in my present circumstances. I saw the idea of overcoming, of the courtroom judgment, and the things I have been writing about in previous chapters. After I saw this idea in Scripture, then I could stand during the dark times of my life. It is the same with you. If you appreciate this idea of going through an overcoming process in a courtroom setting, you will be able to stand during very difficult times.

Dr. Mark Rutland has described the Eastern mindset as looking into the Book of Revelation as a room full of whirling pictures, and the Western mindset as having to categorize each chapter into a logical and time-based series of events.

I submit that these two views are not contrary to one another. Does the Book of Revelation give us some clues on how the end of this world will come? Yes. Does the Book of Revelation also show us the new dispensation that God ordained for the “last days,” beginning on the Day of Pentecost? Yes.

I believe that Jesus was telling John (and you, and me), “Here is the pattern for the rest of your life. After that, you will come to be with Me.”

Take some time and try to appreciate what John the Apostle was experiencing at the time of this revelation.

John really needed some answers for the suffering he was experiencing, and as a result, Jesus appeared to him and gave him a picture of the new dispensation that had to do with judgment in a Heavenly Courtroom. John must have been somewhat surprised after he had seen the resurrection of Jesus, His ascension, and then the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost. What had he thought when

all of the sudden he saw the churches that were planted experiencing the horrible hostility of the violent Roman Empire? The Romans were burning churches, killing the congregations, and more. Then John was arrested and put on Patmos to experience food that was not fit to eat, living conditions where he probably had to sleep in his own discharges. During the day most likely he hauled large boulders up steep hills all day long.

Most likely, John was shocked at this sudden turn of events, and perhaps asked a lot of “Why Lord” questions.

Then, I believe, Jesus answered him and said, “John, I am glad you asked. I will show you something that will help you to not only make sense of what is going on, but to see a real God-given purpose for you and the others who read your writings. I am giving you a revelation of this new dispensation of history, and a revelation of Who I really am at the present time and what my purposes are until I return for the final time. If suffering people know that I am at work in a powerful way, no matter how dark their lives may be or how hostile their circumstances are, they will have My comfort and perseverance. If they hold on, My purposes for My Kingdom will be manifested.”

Please understand, dear reader, the above quote is something that I believe that Jesus said to me, and therefore could have possibly given the same impression to the Apostle John.

The scenes that John saw:

1. He saw Jesus as Judge.
2. Jesus addressed the Churches to repent or persevere for future overcoming battles.
3. John was taken up to view the Throne of God.
4. Jesus revealed the Scroll, and its two sides.
5. Jesus revealed the various horses as evil power sources.

6. He revealed in Revelation chapters 6-16 the plagues, which is righteous judgment for us and punishing judgment for Satan, and his army of demons and fallen angels.

7. The believers are stamped for protection from the plagues, Revelation 7.

Items covered in next chapter:

8. Overcoming Satan, and our role in this process. Revelation 12.

9. Revelation chapters 17-19 show the defeat of world system.

10. Revelation 20 shows the blinders coming off the eyes of unbelievers as in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4.

11. Revelation chapters 21-22 show anointed ministry that takes place after the courtroom judgment.

12. The New Song, Revelation 14.

I believe that John saw two overcoming times, two courtroom victories. He saw that Jesus had overcome already. Then Jesus showed him that he, and we also need to overcome. That matches the previous chapter about Daniel's dream revealing the two courtroom victories.

1. The Judge.

Revelation 1:10-18 says,

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to

Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”

Notice the description of Jesus, which depicts Him as the Judge.

Notice how the description of Jesus as Judge in the book of Revelation is very similar, almost identical, to His description in Daniel’s dreams that we discussed in the previous chapter. First, Jesus showed Himself to John as the Judge who would preside over his and our overcoming processes. Then, He showed John that all of us, represented by the seven churches, would be the first to be judged in order to prepare us for spiritual warfare. He

wanted them and us to know that we are righteous and that we need to learn how to repent to keep the righteous lifestyle. He wants us in the position of being justified by faith.

John heard Jesus telling him that He was Alpha and Omega, and that He was taking John into a new dispensation, that of a heavenly courtroom. He told John that he was going into this courtroom to become an overcomer so that the evil that was still operating here on earth would be destroyed. He revealed Himself as the Judge in this courtroom.

2. *The seven churches.*

When Jesus reviewed each of the seven churches in Asia during John's vision as recorded in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, the only two churches that did not need rebuke were Philadelphia and Smyrna (Philadelphia representing the living overcomers/martyrs, and Smyrna representing the overcomers who were martyrs unto death). I believe that these seven churches represent the seven types, or conditions, of believers who live at any given time.

Speaking to the churches in Philadelphia and Smyrna, He used the word "try" or "tried." The word in Greek is *peirazo*. This word has several implications. One meaning implies "assayed" which means "qualitative or quantitative analysis of a substance, especially of an ore or drug, to determine its components." Another meaning is "to prove, or to be refined by fire." Yet another definition means to "try" as in a court trial. A judge determines a person's guilt or innocence in a court trial. The truth of that person must be made manifest. Sometimes the truth is brought out by "fire." Gold when refined by fire manifests its true quality. People when refined by the fire of a court trial are shown to be not only who they are, but also what they believe.

Both the Smyrna and Philadelphia churches were promised crowns, crowns of life. Crowns represent authority. I believe that Jesus is saying here as you persevere and overcome the trial in the case of Philadelphia, and hang on even to death in the case of Smyrna, that people will get saved because of your overcoming. The Smyrna church represents those believers in persecuted nations that will either die or be greatly tortured for their faith.

I have personally met believers in persecuted nations that have been severely tortured, and as a result, others have been saved through their “crown of life.” I know of Philadelphia-type believers that undergo severe sufferings that are not physical in nature that also bear much fruit by their overcoming.

The lesson here is that God has done wonderful things for us; however, often we must stand trial and live the overcoming lifestyle in order to receive those things He wants us to have. Jesus told both of these churches, or types of believers, that they would overcome after they were “tried.”

Often trials take a long time as Satan tries to wear us out. Many believers never finish this courtroom process because Satan wears them out. One is worn out by taking small punishments over a long period of time. I have read accounts of prisoners of war experiencing this. When we don't see our trials ending quickly, we begin to testify for Satan. That is just what he wants! Actually, we should be wearing him out. “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

In Revelation chapters 2-3 Jesus is speaking to the church, both then and now, as if a general was speaking to his troops getting them ready for battle. A major conflict was about to occur, and the seven churches would be destroyed if not prepared. Jesus addressed each church according to its own shortcomings. He encouraged them to get in right standing with God.

Holiness is what will protect our overcoming process. When we miss it we repent and He is gracious and sure to wipe away all unrighteousness and keep us justified in the Courtroom (1 John 1:9). Notice the promise to each type of believer, each church, is that they may overcome. During this time of overcoming, and while we are attempting to maintain our godly character and our holiness, we need to remember that our holiness is not by works, but by God's power and grace. How does that work?

Our job is to stay close to Jesus so that we absorb His character. The closer we are to Jesus, the more we will know to repent for ungodly character. So it is a matter of subtraction, not addition. As we repent, the flesh nature is subtracted. There is nothing to add because Jesus did it all and His Holy Spirit already resides in us in fullness. It's all about His grace, His passionate love towards us.

3. Come up here to the Throne.

Revelation 4:1-3 says,

"After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.

And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald."

Revelation 4:5 says,

“And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

In Revelation 4, Jesus invites John, and you and me, to come up into the heavenlies to see the events from His vantage point. We need to see events in life from God’s perspective. We can get so earthly minded, and our sight can be so horizontal in looking at our circumstances that we miss seeing things from God’s point of view. We are sitting in the heavenlies with Christ; therefore, the Holy Spirit can give us that view. When we see our circumstances from God’s vantage point, they do not seem as bad.

I heard a story about a man whose lifetime vocation was a garbage collector. One day he found a diamond ring in the garbage that was worth \$250,000. He said that he had always trained his eyes to ignore the garbage but to look only for some surprise valuable item. When he found the diamond, he said that it was not a miracle that he saw it because he had trained himself for that, but the miracle was that someone had lost it.

John saw the glory of God, the awesomeness of God, and the Throne of God. When we see a throne, we see authority. In this case it was not just authority, it was the ultimate authority, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. No matter what we are going through, when we see this scene, we know that all is well!

Our walk with the Lord is designed to be experiential, not doctrinal. Of course we need good doctrine, obedience, and understanding of the Word, but all of that is to enhance our real-time experience with Him. Read these Scriptures and put yourself in John’s place, see what John saw, and experience Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you this experience. By reading the Word, especially out loud, we are experiencing the Word, which is Jesus.

This will eventually renew your mind and fight off those temptations from your emotions that tell you to “give up, as there is no help for you with God.”

What I mean by “experience” is not just having a very special “goose bump” touchy feeling emotional experience. Nothing wrong with that, but that is not the type of experience I am proposing. When we are in a dark place, we most likely are fighting lies that are in our mind or tempting us. As we fellowship with Jesus in the Word, even reading it out loud, we can remember that Jesus is the Word. The Word will renew our mind and give us peace even when devils are trying to drive us crazy with lies. Do as Jesus did when He was tempted. He said, “Satan, it is written---.”

4. The Scroll – the battles begin.

Revelation 5:1-9 says,

“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.”

Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”

And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

*But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has **prevailed [a courtroom word]** to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”*

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the

midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

At the throne, John saw the Lamb who was the only one worthy to take the Scroll, which Zechariah describes as the curse (Zechariah 5:3). Then the Scroll unrolls and explosions take place (the catastrophes in the Book of Revelation). We feel the shadow of our curses, the explosions, and they feel like the real thing. But the Lamb is holding the Scroll and the explosions hit Him. When we shine the light into the *shadow*, we see the Lamb bleeding for our curse and saying to us, "Will you accept the shadow of this as the key to unlock the prisons for those who are bound? I promise it will not hurt you. Will you do this for Me?"

In Revelation 5 and 6, God is the one who originates the battles. When the General says "Go," we go into the battlefield. Satan does not originate battles in our lives. Jesus originated the unrolling of the Scroll and the removal of seals. Notice, no one was worthy to unroll the scroll and take off the seals except for

Jesus, as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and, at the same time, the Lamb of God. Jesus is the Lion, or the victor, and most powerful force. Jesus is the Lamb, the one who takes upon Himself what we have coming. We could not stand in the difficult circumstances of life except that Jesus, as the Lamb, takes what we have coming!

We need to keep this in mind when trouble comes. It may be an evil attack, but it is Jesus who has put a hook in the nose of our enemies to come at us so that we may destroy them in His name! It's an ambush as was the Cross. Blessed be the Name of the Lord forever!!! Hallelujah!

In Joshua chapter 5 the Lord showed up as "Commander of the army of the LORD." When Joshua asked Him if He was for the enemy or for us, the Lord simply answered "No," meaning that he is in charge. He told Joshua to take off his shoes because he was on holy ground. That meant that Joshua was like a slave to the Lord.

When God was freeing the Israelites from Pharaoh, God originated the plagues that freed His people and judged the enemy.

The similarity is interesting. At the time the Israelites were subject to the curse of being in slavery, perhaps because of the act of Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery. Now we are subject to many kinds of curses going all the way back to Adam, and more recently curses coming down from just four to ten generations. Jesus bore all of these, and the "plagues aimed at our enemies" will "destroy" them and set us free.

I love the writing of Hal Lindsey who very accurately describes the mystery of the Scroll.

The following is a quote from There's a New World Coming by Hal Lindsey.

“Sealing a scroll was a common and important practice in Biblical times. The wills of both Emperor Vespasian and Caesar Augustus were secured with seven seals.

For such a document, a scribe would procure a long roll of parchment and begin writing. After a period of writing he would stop, roll the parchment enough to cover his words and seal the scroll at that point with wax. Then he would resume writing, stop again, roll the scroll, and add another seal. By the time he was finished, he would have sealed the scroll seven times. The scrolls would be read a section at a time, after each seal was opened.

Why was this process used? Evidently it was to prevent unauthorized persons from tampering with the scroll or reading and revealing its contents. Only a “worthy” person – that is, someone with proper authority – could have legal access to the scroll's message.

When a Jewish family was required to forfeit its land and possessions through some distress ¹¹, the property could not be permanently taken from them. Their losses were listed in a scroll and sealed seven times, then the conditions necessary to purchase back the land and possessions were written on the outside of the scroll. When a qualified redeemer could be found to meet the requirements of reclamation, the one to whom the property had been

¹¹ This idea property being taken is like foreclosure today. Years ago the State of California actually used this Biblical idea and would not allow the final foreclosure to take place until the debtor had a great amount of time to redeem the property. I think it was a year. I understand that now that has been changed.

forfeited was obligated to return the possessions to the original owner.”

(Rev 6:1) “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.”

Inside the Scroll were written our curses, our sin. On the outside was written the conditions for the right of redemption, the taking away of the curse and sin. Look back at Revelation 5:1 where it says that there was writing on the inside and on the back.

Yes, the Scroll contains our curses, however, Jesus is the Qualified Redeemer Who is found to meet the requirements of reclamation for us. He bore our curse. That is why John cried when he did not at first recognize anyone who could open the Scroll.

5. The horses – the power bases of the world system.

The four horses in Revelation chapter 6, in my opinion, represent the four primary power bases in the world system that is in conflict with God and us, His people. While I do not know exactly what these four horses represent, I have heard that perhaps they could be:

White Horse – Catholicism

Red Horse – Communism

Black Horse – Capitalism

Pale (meaning green) Horse – Islam

While these descriptions are interesting, I really have no particular revelation from the Lord on their accuracy.

6. Great war, plagues, and conflict.

In Revelation 6-16, there are great wars, conflict, judgment, and persecution as the scroll is unfurled. Things are going crazy, and events go from bad to worse to almost intolerable. But in this, God is looking for those who will overcome and stand. The plagues are similar to the plagues described in the book of Exodus. They set His people free but judged Pharaoh's army. But His people needed the Passover lamb, obedience, and the word of their testimony, just like in the Exodus.

7. Stamped.

Revelation 7:3 shows that those believers who are faithful in this overcoming process are stamped by God for safekeeping. Things are going to get worse! It is similar to God protecting Israel in Goshen just before the Exodus.

Revelation 7:3 says,

“saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.””

Revelation chapter 11.

A parenthetical statement is made in Revelation 11 showing the victory of the Cross and showing that the dominion of the world's system has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. I believe it also shows how God's true witnesses, as I have been describing them, will indeed endure “death and resurrection.”

Revelation 11:15 says,

“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!””

Continued in next chapter.

Chapter 13 Our Role – Revelation Part 2

As I have been writing about the Heavenly Courtroom in previous chapters, most of the responsibility and power for overcoming is attributed to God, as it should be. In this chapter I would like to talk about our role in this process of overcoming in the Courtroom. While God is in charge, and the power is His, nevertheless we have an important part to play in the process.

Why do we have an important role?

As I mentioned in earlier chapters, God gave man dominion on the earth. He has limited Himself to work through us here. We are His body here on earth.

Psalm 8:5-6 says,

“For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor.

You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”

Genesis 1:26 says,

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”

John 15:5 says,

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

We as branches certainly need Jesus, the Vine, in order to bear fruit. However, vines cannot bear fruit without braches.

Overcomers have always been a minority.

The Levites were the minority that stepped into the river of “death,” the Jordan, on the way to the promise land. They led the Israelities across the river, carrying the Ark, as the waters parted supernaturally. The Levites were the ones in 2 Chronicles chapter 20 who went before the rest of Israel and sang as a choir in the face of a huge enemy. Their faith and risk defeated the enemy. They were again a minority. There are many more stories and examples in the Bible showing that overcomers have always been a minority. Why?

As you read the following paragraphs about our responsibility you will see that it takes a total renewal of the mind to know the truth, to live the truth, and to stand against the lie. It takes a faith that can only rest on the continuous intake of the living Word of God. It takes not caring about your own life as much as you care about pleasing God and taking part in bringing His Kingdom to earth.

However, don't be discouraged if you fail. Failure is often part of your growth. Don't stop at failure, but get up, dust yourself off, and go again. Fail forward. Remember, Revelation 21:5 says that He makes all things new. Colossians 1:20 says that all things are reconciled by the blood of His Cross. We have an amazing God!

This chapter continues the outline from the previous chapter.

Here are the remaining scenes that John saw in Revelation.

8. Overcoming Satan, and our role in this process. Revelation 12.

9. Revelation chapters 17-19 show the defeat of world system.

10. Revelation 20 shows the blinders coming off the eyes of unbelievers as in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4.

11. Revelation chapters 21-22 show anointed ministry that takes place after the courtroom judgment.

12. The New Song, Revelation 14.

8. Our role for overcoming.

Revelation 12:11 shows us that if we stand during this time of great trouble that we will overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of God being testified by our mouths, provided that we do not love our own lives more than we love God and His purposes.

We have the choice. What do I mean by that?

Notice the three requirements in the passage below.

Revelation 12:10-11 says,

*“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven,
“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of
our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for
the accuser of our brethren, who accused them
before our God day and night, has been cast down.*

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony, and they did not
love their lives to the death.”*

The word ‘accuse’ has a courtroom meaning.

To accuse: before a judge: to make an accusation, of an extra-judicial accusation.

I like the following idea as a reminder for the theme of this book.

1. God created everything to exist by laws. For example, there is the law of gravity; there is the law of lift for airplanes that supersedes gravity. Spiritually, there is the law of sin and death. There is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Romans 8:2, which supersedes the law of sin and death. There are laws that keep the atoms in our cells rotating.

2. Laws by their nature require a judge. Without a judge there can be no law enforcement.

3. A judge by nature requires a courtroom where innocence or guilt prevail.

4. As believers we are justified in the Heavenly Courtroom by faith, therefore Satan's accusations, his curses coming upon our lives, are rendered illegal.

5. When this verdict is issued we overcome through the power of God at work inside of us. This brings the Kingdom of God to earth.

These are the three main ingredients for overcoming that make up our role.

The blood of the Lamb. This represents Jesus' finished work of the Cross. He overcame by shedding His blood for our sin and curse, and then He gave us His very nature to live inside of us. We hear about this so often in Christian circles, that sometimes I feel that we forget the powerful truth. Jesus shed His blood, or in other words, gave His life, in exchange for our life, our blood. We can only overcome if His life in us is doing the work. That is why the idea of the Blood of the Lamb is so vital.

All judgment, in a legal sense, was put on Jesus as the guilty one. God allowed Jesus to be the victim of all sin, all curses, and all the effects of sin on mankind. He allowed Jesus to be punished as the perpetrator of all sin. Nothing was left out. This includes sins that we perpetrate and sins that have been perpetrated against us.

However, we need to know that truth and appropriate it to ourselves. It is about identity. We need to know who we are in Christ. He did the work by His blood to make us righteous, justified people of a new race. The truth of this awesome fact can only be applied to our lives by the renewing of our minds through the Word of God. This renewing is a daily, often an hourly issue.

The word of their testimony. This means speaking the Word of God that applies to our overcoming situation. When God gives us a promise in the face of our trials, we are to speak that Word until the overcoming is accomplished. We are also to speak other Scriptures that may be more generic to overcoming. My wife and I speak Psalm 91 several times a day, along with other Scriptures from Psalms and both Old and New Testaments that talk about warfare and who we are in Christ.

We are to testify to the Word of God that He gave us as a promise, and/or for the overcoming process. This is our courtroom testimony that will cause the Judge to rule over our situation righteously.

This is where so many people fail and give up too soon. Negative circumstances invade their thinking, which manifests in negative speaking and testimony. We need to have our mind renewed so completely that, no matter how negative the circumstances are, we could see God as sovereign and as the Judge who will settle the matter for His glory. Remember that all things are made “friends” through His blood.

Colossians 1:20 (KJV) says,

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.”

The Word of our testimony also applies to intercession for others.

The trial or suffering you are going through may very well involve another person, perhaps a family member or a child, or someone else whom the Lord has put in your “way.” The promise you have may be a promise for the deliverance, or even salvation, for this other person. During your trial, your task is to get into deep intercession for this other person or persons.

I gave a great example of this in chapter 7 where I talked about Moses at the Red Sea crossing. The Israelites were speaking negative words, but Moses intervened with overcoming words on their behalf.

Part of this intercession will be your confession of the promise in the Word that God has given to you on a regular basis. In addition, you need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit on how to intercede. I like to use what Jesus said in Matthew 16.

Matthew 16:18-19 (Amplified Bible) says

“And I tell you, you are Peter [Greek, Petros — a large piece of rock], and on this rock [Greek, petra — a huge rock like Gibraltar] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it [or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it].

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind (declare to be improper and unlawful) on earth must be what is already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose

(declare lawful) on earth must be what is already loosed in heaven.”

First, we pray for God’s will to be done in the life of the one for whom we are praying, even if we are not absolutely sure what the details are. Then, we pray to declare unlawful and bind what is already bound in Heaven for this person. Anything that is against God’s will for this person, you may declare unlawful here on earth. And we also pray to loose, or declare lawful, whatever has already been loosed by God in Heaven. This is powerful because we are simply agreeing with God’s will. Why then do we need to pray it? Because, as I have said in previous chapters, we, as humans, are the only ones whose words have any authority here on earth.

Not loving our lives (souls is the actual word) to the death.

That means to walk out a godly lifestyle by forsaking the dictates of our old flesh nature. As we walk it out, we will find ourselves slipping into the sins of the flesh, but as we do, we immediately repent and confess them. When we do, it is as we had never sinned (1 John 1:9).

It is to allow the character of Jesus, through the Holy Spirit who is already in us, to prevail in our character. Repentance is the key tool we have to stay clean.

I believe that not only are we to forsake ungodly character, but we are also to be more concerned with God’s agenda than our own. That is where many people miss the target, and it can be very subtle and sneaky in our lives.

It is to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice.

Jesus told the Father to please take the “cup” from Him, unless it was the Father’s will.

Romans 12:1-2 says,

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

The following is a quote by J.R. Miller, who writes:

We have but truly to lay the living sacrifice on the altar, then God will send the fire.

In my previous writings I have described the idea of these three main ingredients: the Blood of the Lamb, the word of our testimony, and loving not our lives to the death, in various ways.

First, I have described the process as Sit, Walk, and Stand as in Ephesians 2, 4 and 6.

Ephesians 2:6 says that we are (past tense) seated with Him in the heavenly places. Ephesians 4:1 states that now, as we know who we are in Christ, we are to walk, or live a life, like who we are, a holy life. In other words, by grace we are to allow Jesus to live His life in and through us. Ephesians 6:13 states that we are to stand against the enemy. It states that the Word of God is our weapon for that.

Sitting is accomplished by renewing our mind to truth through the Word of God. We are indeed sitting with Christ in the heavenly places now, and when we allow minds to soak in this truth, SIT will be a reality for us.

Walking out a holy life can be easily misconstrued and be twisting into performance and legalism. Rather it is knowing that Christ in us is the only One who can live a holy life and has the power to do so. We continually repent when we sin or operate in the flesh, and stay hungry for God to live His life through us. Usually during long courtroom experiences, we are tempted to behave according to our old nature, the flesh. Our holiness, our godly character can only be developed by staying very close to Jesus in a real-time way. Our closeness to Him is what changes us.

In the story of the Prodigal son (Luke 15), the father did not simply forgive the rebellious son and send him out to the field to work. No, the father's goal, evidenced by him seeing the son from far away, running to him, falling on him and kissing him.

It was also evidenced by the father giving the son the robe, the ring, and the sandals. This was to put a hunger in the son to be close to him. The father desired close fellowship with the prodigal son. It is the same with our Father.

Standing is hanging on to our promise through difficult circumstances with patience and perseverance. It is speaking the Word as the Sword of the Spirit continually.

Second, I have described the process as silver, gold, and precious jewels as in 1 Corinthians 3:11-13.

Silver is redemption, similar to Sit in Ephesians 2. Gold is a godly character, similar to Walk in Ephesians 4. Jewels, which infer suffering and pressure, is to Stand as in Ephesians 6.

If we apply all three of these as a lifestyle, then the attacks against us are illegal and we overcome the demonic forces and put them out of operation and take their spoils. That includes the souls of men as in Revelation 18 and Luke 11.

This is how the blinders are taken off of the eyes of unbelievers. It took Jesus' victory, now it takes our overcoming to distribute His victory.

The Fruit of the Spirit in the Courtroom.

When we live by these three main ingredients, then the Fruit of the Spirit will prevail in our character.

Galatians 5:22-23 says,

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

The Fruit of the Spirit is the outworking of the Holy Spirit in us. However, we must submit to those attributes, repent when we miss it, and then we will see the Fruit prevail. Notice in Galatians 5:23 it states, “Against such there is no law.” That is a courtroom advantage. While we are in our pressurized courtroom experience, the accuser will find no law against us if we continually allow the Holy Spirit to prevail through obedience and repentance.

The simplicity is that we just need to make our heart a home for Him. Remember that His name is the Word of God! Our role, the Fruit of the Spirit, is not accomplished by our “performance.” Rather it is accomplished by our passion to stay very close to God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. When we do that, He accomplishes what we cannot.

We will be tempted with worry, fear, and to live our lives in the flesh.

Luke 12:25 says,

“And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?”

Worry is common to human nature, but it is not common to the new nature we have been given in Christ, Christ in us. Do we

trust Him with the outcomes in our lives? Do we surrender to the paths He has chosen for us?

In my experience, and from what I have read, eliminating worry is a process, which often includes deep, deep trials and temptations to worry. During our dark times, during our times of temptation to worry, God is gracious to show up and reveal Himself to us in new ways. He may not give us immediate relief from the issues that cause worry, but He will give us Himself to overcome the worry. Worry can be destructive, not only in our inner being, but also on the outcomes that God desires for us.

We need to avoid taking things into our own hands when the circumstances look impossible, much like Abraham and Sarah did when Ishmael was conceived. When we find ourselves doing that, we simply need to repent.

9. The defeat of the world system, the whore, controlled by Satan.

Getting to this point in the process requires us to always choose life. What do I mean by that?

Romans 8:6 says,

“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

You don't have to consciously choose “death,” all you have to do to experience failure is to be carnally minded. Failure is the default outcome. However, if you choose to follow the overcoming lifestyle I described above, the default outcome will be life and peace. Your enemies will be defeated and victory, whatever that means in your life, will come.

Revelation 17 is the revelation of the “world” system and its corruption. It shows the cooperation between the spiritual and the political.

Revelation 18 is another warning to God's people to come out of the "world" system because it is about to be destroyed and it is unreliable. The destruction of this system is demonstrated. Mystery Babylon, or the central system of Satan that controls the world system, is defeated, not only in the final end of this world, but currently in our lives now.

Notice in the following Scripture, as the world system falls, it does not only give up its material prosperity but also its most precious of all possession, the souls of men.

Revelation 18:2 (KJV) says,

"And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

Revelation 18:11-13 says,

"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:

merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble;

and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men."

The White Horse.

In Revelation 19 there is victory and the Lord returns on His white horse to fulfill His promise and to bring His rewards. This also applies to our current life when the Lord comes to deliver us in our courtroom trials.

Revelation 19:11-16 says,

“Now I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

10. Blinders are taken off the eyes of unbelievers.

In Revelation 20, Satan is bound; judgment takes place. Remember in the first few chapters of this book I stated that the Kingdom of God comes progressively as the blinders are removed from the eyes of unbelievers. Also recall that Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4 that this takes place as others pour out the glory of God through crushing.

Revelation 20:1-3 says,

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

*and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he **should deceive the nations (the Gentiles or those who do not know Jesus) no more** till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”*

11. The Kingdom of God increases more (Revelation 21) and ministry takes place (Revelation 22).

Revelation 21 shows the Kingdom of God becoming more real, the New Jerusalem. It shows a deeper intimacy with Jesus as a result of all we have been through. As I mentioned in previous chapters, I believe that as the “nations” or Gentiles, unbelievers, are being saved, the Kingdom of God will increase, as inferred in chapter 21. Then finally, when the Father determines that all nations have had their opportunity, the Kingdom will come in its complete and final form.

Revelation 21:1-8 says,

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

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

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

*He who **overcomes** shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.*

But ~~the~~ cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Anointing for ministry, chapter 22.

Revelation 22 shows ministry for those people who have stood and overcome to the end. Here is a picture of the Flowing River, mentioned in Ezekiel 47, with fruit on both sides for the healing of the nations, meaning the gentiles, or the people who do not know God. In my experience, real ministry comes after much tribulation and overcoming. We take dominion over demons through the battles.

Revelation 22:1-5 says,

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”

Revelation 22 is also a word of encouragement. “I am coming quickly, hang on, and you will be blessed. Hang on, and you will turn all this tribulation and trouble in your life into a blessing.”

Revelation 22:12-14 says,

“‘And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.’

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.”

I do not pretend to understand all of the Book of Revelation, nor do I claim to present a complete teaching on it here. Neither

am I saying that it does not apply to future world prophecy and events. All I am saying is that it is *more* than that. It is an important application for our lives today.

I also know that on August 26, 1979, while reading the Book of Revelation, Jesus miraculously saved me and filled me with the Holy Spirit. He revealed Himself to me and I have never been the same! Thirty-three years later, the Lord is dealing with me through the Book of Revelation for the trials that I am experiencing now. We need to know who Jesus is NOW!

John then understood.

There is more to life than just making it to Heaven and living a good life here. We are called to be in a war, and Jesus is alive and powerful to make sure we get the victory! This is a picture for us to understand when things are not going well. We need to place ourselves somewhere in this process and know that it is ordained by God. Then we can stand!

The promises, when believed, make the attack illegal.

The promise, calling those things that be not as they are, also keep the attack illegal, because as far as God is concerned, the promise is what is real, not the present circumstance.

12. Now is the time to sing the New Song!

Revelation 14:3 says,

*“They sang as it were a **new song** before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.”*

The New Song as described in both Old and New Testaments, in my opinion, is singing a song of praise when we are in dark and

suffering places. It is a song that only the overcomers could learn. The word *new* in the Strong's Concordance is described as:

“recently made, fresh, recent, unused, unworn, as respects substance of a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of.”

Some New Song Scriptures.

Psalm 33:3 “Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.”

Psalm 40:3 “He has put a new song in my mouth – Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD.”

Psalm 96:1 “Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD, all the earth.”

Psalm 98:1 “Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.”

Psalm 144:9 “I will sing a new song to You, O God; On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You.”

Psalm 149:1 “Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints.”

Isaiah 42:10 “Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!”

Revelation 5:9 “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.’”

Revelation 14:3 “They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.”

2 Chronicles 20:21-22 “And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: ‘Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever.’ Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.”

What about Paul and Silas in Acts 16:19-31?

Paul and Silas travelled from town to town preaching the Gospel. When they were in Philippi, one of the Roman colonies, they met a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. Paul delivered her from the evil spirit. But the slave girl owners were upset about it because she earned them a lot of money by fortune-telling.

Acts 16:19-31 (NIV) says,

“When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews and are throwing our city into an uproar

by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten.

After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening to them.

Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.

The jailer woke up and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.

But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household."

Maybe something like this happened.

"Paul, are you ok?" "Sure, Silas, I'm rubbing my sore back up against this moist jail wall trying to get some relief." "Paul, do you think they will kill us?" "I don't know, Silas, I can't think

about that right now...there is something coming up in my chest that is overtaking me.” “What is it, Paul?” “I’m not sure, Silas, it feels like music though.” “Silas, I feel a song coming up and I can’t keep it down.” “Yeah, Paul, I feel it, too.”

“Here it comes...let’s let it rip!”



And the notes rose up and flew out of the cell bars into the next cells.

Then they went out of the jail and hit the atmosphere. The notes kept rising in the Ionosphere, the Stratosphere, and all the other spheres, until the Father bent His neck and said to an angel, “What is that I hear, angel?” “Ah, Sir, it sounds like music, but that’s pretty common up here.” “No, angel, this is different, this sounds new, like a New Song.”

The Father could not restrain Himself any longer. He loved the sounds so much, that He started tapping His foot. Since the Earth is the Lord’s footstool, the Earth reacted pretty violently when it felt the tap of the Father. “Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed” (Acts 16:26).

How do we overcome? We have the choice!

We have to make sure that we keep the attacks we experience in an illegal status. While Jesus did the work needed, we also now have to cooperate. Take a moment to look back at this chapter and notice how the tremendous power of God affects the best attempts of the enemy to overthrow the Kingdom of God and God's people. While this has everything to do with who God is and His power, there is still a role that we need to play in order to see His power in our lives. It is contained in Revelation 12:11. I could describe it as total surrender on our part.

When Moses stood on Holy Ground in Exodus 3:5, God told him to remove his shoes. That is a sign that a slave no longer has rights, but must simply surrender. God's power to deliver Israel needed Moses to be a surrendered "slave" who no longer had any rights of his own.

Revelation 12:11 says,

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."

SIT, WALK, and STAND. Silver, gold, and precious jewels; or wood, hay, and stubble. It is your choice!

Chapter 14 Fruit Glorifies God

The primary goal for overcoming that I have written about in this book is “destroying” demonic forces that have attached themselves to our curses and sins. However, a major by-product and goal of overcoming is that we will bear fruit.

John 15:8 says,

“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

Quite often in Christian circles the idea of fruit is misunderstood, at least in part. Many define fruit as the product of evangelism. While that is true, it certainly is far from the full idea and definition of fruit as described in the Bible.

The idea of fruit is huge! It is vitally important to followers of Jesus.

Bearing fruit is God’s design for us to live in this “alien” world, which consists of various forms of government, economic and cultural systems, that the Bible confirms are **all** controlled ultimately by the World’s system. Satan is the prince of this World. The Kingdom of God is our alternative and it operates on the principle of seedtime and harvest. It supersedes all world governments and economic systems. We are meant to survive and even prosper in the Kingdom of God, no matter where we live in the world. While we live in Satan’s kingdom, we have no real authority over our destiny and well-being. Once we begin to live in God’s Kingdom here on earth, we have absolute authority in Jesus’ name to overcome the failure that Satan is determined to put on our lives.

As I describe in a later paragraph, God's fruit is designed to provide everything we need for life and godliness to live on this earth as ambassadors for His Kingdom (2 Peter 1:3).

This is worth meditating upon for a while as it could represent a radical change in your way of living, as Jesus intended it to do.

Genesis 8:22 says,

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.”

Notice in the Scriptures below Jesus was telling us that we did not need to live according to the world's economy and system as the Gentiles do. Gentiles, in the general context, mean those who do not have a blood covenant with God. Jesus was speaking mostly to Jewish people in a culture that was poor. Perhaps many of the Gentiles at that time were Roman soldiers, who were not poor, as well as Greeks and others.

Matthew 6:19-23 (Amplified Bible) says,

“Do not gather and heap up and store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust and worm consume and destroy, and where thieves break through and steal.

But gather and heap up and store for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust nor worm consume and destroy, and where thieves do not break through and steal;

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is sound, your entire body will be full of light.

But if your eye is unsound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the very light in you [your

conscience] is darkened, how dense is that darkness!”

Jesus is warning here that if your eye is looking to sources other than God for your provisions, then your conscience will be seared. When your conscience is seared, you can no longer accurately hear God speak. Your eye can only look in one direction at a time, and that will determine who you will serve, and who will take care of you.

Matthew 6:24-34 says,

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the

oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

If you continually, or even occasionally, focus your "eye" on the culture, the political systems and economic systems around you with the hope that you can, in some way, be helped by them, you are settling for much less than God has intended. The direction of your eye shapes your self-perception or identity, which, in turn, shapes your destiny. If you keep your eye on the Word, Jesus, then your destiny, or future, will be shaped by Him with the awesome plans He has for you. Your future will be filled by His fruit, which will represent His highest and best for you.

The fruit bearing process in the natural realm is one of violence. The growth underground, the straining to break the ground from below, involves violence.

Matthew 11:12 says,

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."

The fruit bearing process extracts waste from the ground, even dung, along with certain chemicals that are amazingly calculated beyond computer science, and turns them into fruit. Fruit is the only product that has eternal value. This conversion of waste into fruit in our lives is enabled by the Cross. The violence done to Jesus at the Cross is what gave you and I the Kingdom of God!

Jesus came to return us to normal.

Adam went from fruit to thorns and sweat. He ended up like the fig tree in Mark chapter 11 that Jesus dried up. Jesus was looking for early fruit, which was supposed to be on the tree along with the leaves. We, just like Adam, have a choice to make, between fruit and thorns. If you choose thorns and sweat, you will end up like Adam did, looking great and prideful in your fig leaf, but having no fruit whatsoever.

Adam had the mandate to tend the garden, to be fruitful. God had provided the capital of a garden, not only in the natural, but also in Adam's heart. God promised that if Adam would come to the Tree of Life, the Word of God daily, that God would speak to him through an intimate relationship. Then the spiritual seeds would be planted in Adam's heart, and his life would be abundant though fruit bearing, both in the physical farm and in the spiritual realm.

However, Adam and Eve decided that because of their own intelligence, intellect and strength they were capable of making their life work for them without depending 100% on the Word of God. That decision of theirs is what the Bible calls eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That was and is the essence of sin.

The curse of thorns.

God had given Adam the blessing of perfect business capital, a garden that would bring forth perfect fruit. However, as we

know, Adam wished to be independent. God had no other choice but to advise Adam that he, Adam, had chosen a curse and would have to now provide for himself among thorns and with sweat.

Genesis 2:15 says,

“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.”

Genesis 3:17 says,

“Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.”

Note in verse 17 it says that they will eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil all the days of their lives. They were confined to make life work with only their own intellect, reasoning and natural abilities. It would be, and still is toil, thorns!

Genesis 3:18-19 says,

“Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

Jesus bore our curse.

Mark 15:17 says,

“And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head.”

Galatians 3:13 says,

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”).”

Because Jesus bore our curse, now we have the great godly privilege to go back to “normal,” and bear fruit without the curse and the thorns!

This is not for theologians or religious people; this is for simple people, humble people, honest people, and even uneducated people. It is spiritual agriculture. However, we must be desperate and honest enough to hear God.

Jesus was telling His disciples and us that the simple Parable of the Sower contains the mystery of the Kingdom of God. Jesus was revealing the secret of the Kingdom of God not just for when we get to Heaven, but for living in it here, while we are alive on earth. Everything we need for our lives here on earth is meant to be provided to us by God through the fruit-bearing process. This, in no way, means that we are to sit around and wait for “grapes to fall down from Heaven.” No, we are called to work, but even that should be in and through the fruit-bearing process.

The process is simple, but mysterious to many.

Mark 4:11 says,

*“And He said to them, ‘To you it has been given to know the **mystery** of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.’”*

Mark 4:14-20 says,

“The sower sows the word.

And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word,

and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty and some a hundred."

Types of fruit from the Word of God.

I believe that the items that are contained in the Ark of the Covenant represent the three major categories of fruit. The Ark was within the Tabernacle and the Temple of God. Because we are now the Temple of God, these three major categories of fruit are in us as potential fruit. Think about that!

They are:

1. The Law represents the Fruit of the Spirit, which manifests itself in godly character.

2. Manna represents our needs here on earth, not just financial, but everything we require here on earth, including proper relationships.

3. Aaron's Rod represents our ministry, or outreach, to others (Numbers 17:1-13).

There are many types and manifestations of fruit you could experience through the overcoming process within these basic categories. You may have been struggling with a personal issue that is finally resolved by the Fruit of the Spirit. Or perhaps you were struggling with financial or relationship issues that are resolved by Manna. Perhaps you were overcoming a curse coming down your generations that has affected your child. That would come through the fruit of Aaron's Rod.

I believe that one thing may be in common for all overcoming, and that is that blinders will be removed from the eyes of unbelievers. You may recall in a previous chapter I wrote about 2 Corinthians 3 and 4 which states that the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, but that the solution lies in the glory of God in us that is poured out through our sufferings. Also Luke 11:21-22 states that, as we overcome, we also set others free.

Luke 11:21-22 says,

"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace."

But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils."

One of my first fruit testimonies.

When the Lord saved me, I had already attempted to succeed in the world's system with everything that I had. I was 39 years old, it was 1979, and although on the surface things looked okay, inside I knew that I was not making life work. The Lord made some changes in my life, both in my relationships and in business,

in order to put me on His path for my life. I had no idea at that time that these changes were fruit.

I cried out desperately to Him for help with finances, relationships, and ministry. I knew He had a calling on my life, but had no idea what that meant. I knew that God wanted me to have the “abundant life,” and all I could do was to believe and invite Him to take over 100%. I loved the Word of God and spent hours every day consuming it. It began to change my life in many ways.

I will never forget watching a minister on television teach on Mark chapter 4 and how the Word of God planted in a human heart would bear fruit for everything we need, for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). I grabbed that idea and lived by it. Little by little I could see God producing His fruit in my life, and that it would produce things and situations that I would not have had the power to do on my own. I knew this was Truth.

I also saw how this fruit did not grow quickly. Satan would war against the production of fruit in powerful ways. There was much suffering, but my wife Carol and I would not give in or give up because we knew that God meant what He said. Actually, the suffering for the Word’s sake was part of entering into the Kingdom of God. We continue to live our lives in this manner. The more challenges, the more fruit.

Acts 14:22 says,

“strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’”

Eventually, little by little, things got better and God showed up in marvelous ways. Now, as I write this in 2012, I can testify not only by the Word of God, but also by my own experience, that

living life by bearing fruit is indeed the mystery of the Kingdom of God. Now, as I look back, I see that I was actually in the overcoming process but did not realize it.

Best of all, during these past years, by focusing on hearing God speak and keeping my relationship with Him fresh and vital, my personal intimacy with Jesus has become very deep and satisfying. Even if I had nothing else in this world, just knowing Him at this deep and intimate level is more than enough!

Types of fruit from seeds that you sow.

Galatians 6:7-9 (Amplified Bible) says,

*“Do not be deceived and deluded and misled; God will not allow Himself to be sneered at (scorned, disdained, or mocked by mere pretensions or professions, or by His precepts being set aside.) [He inevitably deludes himself who attempts to delude God.] For whatever a man sows, **that and that only is what he will reap.***

For he who sows to his own flesh (lower nature, sensuality) will from the flesh reap decay and ruin and destruction, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint in acting nobly and doing right, for in due time and at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint.”

It is clear that we are also sowers of seed, and as the Scripture says, we reap only what we sow. For instance, we can sow mercy or condemnation. We can sow our money when we tithe or give to those in need. We can sow forgiveness, which is one of the most important issues. There are so many others.

Here are the steps to fruit bearing from the seeds of God's Word.

1. We fellowship with Jesus in His Word and through the Holy Spirit. His Word plants seeds in our hearts. Our hearts are the ground. We must stay connected to Him through the Word and the Holy Spirit. Then we can rest.

Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 define the New Testament Sabbath as resting in His promise and on His Word because His works were finished before the foundation of the world.

2. Satan comes to steal the Word/seed. This is true and intense warfare. This is the time for overcoming. Satan is able to steal the seed from those hearts that are not good ground. Read Mark 4:14-20 above in a prayerful way and ask the Lord to inspect your ground. You have absolute authority over Satan if you live by the SIT, WALK, and STAND overcoming process.

3. When we SIT, WALK, and STAND in the overcoming process (as I defined in the previous chapter), finally fruit comes into our lives in the ways I have described in this chapter.

SIT is knowing the truth that the resurrected Christ lives in you through the Holy Spirit. WALK is allowing the Holy Spirit to live His life in you, and when you miss it, repent and be cleansed. STAND is to hang on to His Word and promises until you experience the victory in the situation and fruit comes.

However, we must be aware that fruit normally comes after "death and resurrection." That means that you will most likely go through breakings, failures, and other powerful events in warfare. Jesus always warned that we do not obtain Kingdom fruit without a cost to ourselves.

Fruit bearing and overcoming are meant to take place in the same process. As you overcome, not only do you destroy a spiritual force, but fruit is also produced.

John 15:13-16 says,

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

The word ‘appointed’ in verse 16 is defined by Strong’s Concordance as:

“to place (in the widest application, literally and figuratively, properly, in a passive or horizontal posture, and thus different from 2476, which properly denotes an upright and active position, while 2749 is properly reflexive and utterly prostrate): — +advise, appoint, bow, commit, conceive, give, kneel down, lay (aside, down, up), make, ordain, purpose, put, set (forth), settle, sink down.”

Peter thought that because Jesus was the Son of God that He should then rule and reign right now. But Jesus warned him that He would first have to go to the Cross (Mark 8:27-38).

James and John wanted high positions in the Kingdom of God as recorded in Mark 10:35-45, but Jesus warned them that one

must first take up the attitude of a servant and go through the cross of death and resurrection as He would.

The cross and servanthood, coupled with the Word planted in your heart, is the road to fruit.

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Chapter 15 Who Qualifies?

Who qualifies to be an overcomer?

Somebody who knows that he or she has something to overcome is the primary qualification. After that, and as I have written, it takes an intimate relationship with Jesus, a desire to please Him, to put His purposes first, and finally, it takes perseverance.

As I have written, overcoming and bearing fruit are the goals.

They go hand in hand. An overcomer will be a fruit bearer, and one cannot be a consistent fruit bearer without being an overcomer. Taken together, they really are a description of what it means to operate in and live in the Kingdom of God while here on earth.

The rich young ruler and the one-hour man.

Self-sufficient people do not bear fruit, nor are they overcomers. The desperate and broken can become fruit bearers and overcomers. In Matthew 19 the Rich Young Ruler confronts Jesus. Jesus knew that the young man had much to trust in: riches, fame, position, religion, etc. He advised him to give it away if he really wanted life. You know what happened; the young man refused and Jesus was grieved because He loved him. Read the story.

Matthew 19:16-30 says,

“Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, ““You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit

adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'

'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'”

The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?”

So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or

lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

What was the problem of the Rich Young Ruler?

He had what appeared on the surface to be a worthy lifestyle. He was very religious, he was quite wealthy, and perhaps he held some position of authority either in government or in the Temple. However, the young man knew that he was missing something because he was asking how to obtain eternal life. His problem was that he was self-sufficient. He kept the law, which, he thought, took care of moral and religious responsibilities, and he somehow had become quite wealthy by his own efforts, or perhaps by earthly inheritance. But those things kept him from inheriting the most important wealth of all, eternal life.

Had this young man obeyed Jesus' suggestion of giving away his money, his wealth would have been greatly multiplied by blessing the poor and by the law of sowing and reaping, and he would have inherited eternal life in this world and the next. Perhaps later in life he made the proper decisions and is now in Heaven.

The disciples' response.

Then the disciples got anxious about how could anybody enter the Kingdom. Jesus told them a parable to answer their concerns in Matthew chapter 20.

El Hombre una sola hora. The one-hour man.

Jesus answered the disciples in Matthew chapter 20 by telling them a parable about a man who owned a vineyard and went to the market place to hire workers for the harvest.

Matthew 20:8-16 says,

“So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.’

And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.

But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.

And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner,

saying, ‘These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.’

But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?’

Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.

Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?’

So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.””

He hired the first man for one denarius a day. This was for a full day’s work. I submit that he hired the strongest and most able of the five men. This was Man # 5.

At the third hour he returned to hire more help and asked Man #4 to work a partial day and he would pay him fairly.

At the sixth hour he did likewise. Man # 3.

At the ninth hour he did likewise. Man # 2.

At the eleventh hour he returned again. Man # 1.

He asked Man # 1 why he was still there. The man answered, “Because no one would hire us.” He went out and worked for one hour.

These men were not lazy or they would not have been sitting in the employment agency all day. Most likely, this one-hour man was the least able of all. Perhaps he had a physical or mental handicap. I submit that he was the weakest of all. Remember, this parable is about the Kingdom of God and how and when people receive it.

When pay time came, the master called the one-hour man first, Man # 1, and the all day man, Man # 5, last saying, “So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.”

The one-hour man received the Kingdom of God in the here and now and brought the Kingdom to earth, as in the Lord’s Prayer. Perhaps Man # 5 went to Heaven when he died and received the Kingdom at that time. But the one who had nothing else to trust in received it now.

What was the manifestation of receiving it now? If you are a one-hour man, you will trust only in hearing the Word of God while fellowshiping with Jesus to supply everything you need for life and godliness (see 2 Peter 1:2-11). As we shared this message in Cuba in 2005, the group of leaders really got it. They came up with a theme and carried signs reading, “El Hombre una sola hora.” The one-hour man! “We are one-hour people,” they shouted. Are you desperate enough to call yourself a “one-hour person” and shout hallelujah?

Many people in this world are desperate, but not all desperate people are broken.

I submit that the one-hour man was both desperate and broken. Broken means that one has come to the place that he/she knows that there is no help available from any human being or agency,

not even from one's own abilities. Notice that the one-hour man remained in the employment agency. He was not out begging, or trying to manipulate people to support him. Applying this to your Christian walk, it means that unless your Lord does something, you are done for, you are lost!

The Rich Young Ruler demonstrated the epitome of self-sufficiency, and the one-hour man demonstrated the epitome of desperate dependency on God. The one-hour man consequently was able to operate in the Kingdom of God while still alive on this earth, as well as go to Heaven when he died.

History repeats itself.

The system of the "world" is governed by Satan. No matter how good the government or its leaders, the world system will always create Rich Young Rulers and one-hour people. During Queen Victoria's time, in the mid 1800s, there was an industrial revolution. Many people became very wealthy but many became very poor. Even though there was a middle class established, the culture suffered from the greed of the worldly form of capitalism (I believe there is a godly form). Then some tried communism and socialism, but none of the "isms" worked.

One thing is consistent; there will always be Rich Young Rulers and one-hour people. God gives both of them the opportunity to get out of their cursed condition like He did in Matthew 19 – 20. One can live in any nation, and no matter how poor or what the condition of the government may be, if that person lives in the Kingdom of God, he/she will be taken care of.

Jesus gives us the opportunity to live in the Kingdom of God now, on this earth, and be treated like an ambassador to a foreign nation. Ambassadors do not depend on the nation in which they reside for their economic well-being. Their home country sends them their paychecks. It is the same with us. We are ambassadors

of Christ and God will pay us if we seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness.

Matthew 6:33 says,

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

What is the mystery of the Kingdom?

In Mark 4:11 Jesus said that the mystery of the Kingdom of God is contained in the Parable of the Sower. He spoke about the Word of God being seed that will bear fruit for everything we need in life. Jesus also said that not all would be able to live this way. He showed us that the condition of our hearts is the deciding factor. Notice only one out of four people in the Parable of the Sower bore fruit. Not all make it.

Who gets the Kingdom first?

The desperate and broken people who depend on the Word, or in other words, Jesus, for everything in life.

Wait for the fruit of Isaac instead of producing an Ishmael.

Chapter 16 Take Up Your Cross

Mark 8:29-38 (Amplified Bible) says,

“And He asked them, But who do you yourselves say that I am? Peter replied to Him, You are the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

And He charged them sharply to tell no one about Him.

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must of necessity suffer many things and be tested and disapproved and rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be put to death, and after three days rise again [from death].

And He said this freely (frankly, plainly, and explicitly, making it unmistakable). And Peter took Him by the hand and led Him aside and then [facing Him] began to rebuke Him.

But turning around [His back to Peter] and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get behind Me, Satan! For you do not have a mind intent on promoting what God wills, but what pleases men [you are not on Gods side, but that of men].

And Jesus called [to Him] the throng with His disciples and said to them, If anyone intends to come after Me, let him deny himself [forget, ignore, disown, and lose sight of himself and his own interests] and take up his cross, and [joining Me as a disciple and siding with My party] follow with Me [continually, cleaving steadfastly to Me].

For whoever wants to save his [higher, spiritual, eternal] life, will lose it [the lower, natural, temporal life which is lived only on earth]; and whoever gives up his life [which is lived only on earth] for My sake and the Gospels will save it [his higher, spiritual life in the eternal kingdom of God].

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life [in the eternal kingdom of God]?

For what can a man give as an exchange (a compensation, a ransom, in return) for his [blessed] life [in the eternal kingdom of God]?

For whoever is ashamed [here and now] of Me and My words in this adulterous (unfaithful) and [preeminently] sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory (splendor and majesty) of His Father with the holy angels.”

I believe that the Amplified Bible answers a lot of questions about what it really means to take up our cross.

When Jesus took up His cross, He made the choice to exchange His divine nature for our fallen and sinful nature. In doing that He took all of our curses. However, He did not live any part of His life according to our sinful nature.

When we take up our cross, we make the decision to exchange our sinful nature for His divine nature. At first glance that sounds like a no-brainer, but why do so many have problems with that?

Our cross in our challenges?

Every time something occurs in your life that is uncomfortable, challenging or even involves suffering, we have the challenge to take up our cross. How? By reacting to the

circumstances not like our flesh nature prefers, but as the Holy Spirit prefers. That means we are to see those challenges as an opportunity to view them as a seed for fruit. The Cross of Jesus was indeed the greatest seed for fruit ever. Now He lives in us and will create fruit from those evil things that attack us. Remember Colossians 1:20 states that the Cross and Jesus' blood reconcile all things!

The flesh nature, as the above Scripture states, is bent on self-survival and self-comfort. While there is nothing wrong with wanting our needs to be met and with desiring comfort, we need to change our thinking from supplying those things for ourselves, and allowing Jesus to give us His provisions and comfort according to His terms. Jesus always puts others as a priority: do we? Jesus always puts being a servant as a priority: do we?

Notice in the above Scripture that Jesus described discipleship as partaking in the law of the cross, which included both suffering and rejection. It was a very astonishing statement, and still is, that Jesus carefully gave His disciples an important choice. He said, "If anyone intends to come after Me...."

Rejection. Because the rejected One lives in us.

Suffering. Perhaps because some of us feel the effects of the curse from our generational lineage. Some of us feel more than others. However, even in this we know that Jesus bore our curse, and its attempt to put us in bondage is illegal. So how do we deal with that? It is up to God. There are times that God just dismisses the effects upon us. There are other times when He allows us to go through the overcoming process and declare the guilt of the demonic forces behind the curse and see their destruction. It is totally up to Him and His wisdom. Either way requires our faith in Him and His Word, His love, and comfort, and His highest best for our lives will prevail.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a martyr during the Nazi regime, said,¹²

“To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ.”

“If our Christianity has ceased to be serious about discipleship, if we have watered down the gospel into emotional uplift which makes no costly demands and which fails to distinguish between natural and Christian existence, then we cannot help regarding the cross as an ordinary everyday calamity, as one of the trials and tribulations of life. We have then forgotten that the cross means rejection and shame as well as suffering.”

“Discipleship is not limited to what you can comprehend – it must transcend all comprehension. ‘Plunge into the deep waters beyond your own comprehension, and I will help you to comprehend even as I do.’” *“Thus Abraham went forth from his father and not knowing whither he went.”*

This is our purpose in life.

Going back to the first chapter of this book, we showed that our primary purpose in this life here on earth is to be overcomers. It is to allow Jesus in us, through His Holy Spirit, to destroy demons and curses for eternity, which is a major step in the Kingdom of God finally being established here on earth. I submit that most, if not all, of the time this involves what we have described as spiritual ambush. Spiritual ambush results in overcoming which results in bearing fruit for ourselves and for the Kingdom of God. Ambush means that we will have to temporarily feel the attack of the enemy much as Jesus did at the Cross. Why is this? Because

¹² Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Cost of Discipleship. SCM Press. London NI ONX: 2006

Jesus did not have the authority to “destroy” demons and curses here on earth, except through you and me. When Jesus was crucified, He ambushed Satan. The very fact that His death was illegal due to Him having no sin in His life, is what destroyed Satan for eternity. However, now Jesus wants to destroy the satanic forces and curses that are connected to your life by ambush. He does not have the authority to do this except through you. This will not be comfortable, and will manifest in many different ways to different people. Some of us have more past “baggage” to deal with than others.

Footstool.

As I wrote in chapter 1 of this book, I have heard people disagree with the idea that we as humans on this earth can really have any eternal effect on the evil spiritual forces at work on this earth. They rightfully say that Jesus completed the work against evil at the Cross and resurrection. However, as I expressed in this book, Jesus and the Father God do not have authority to operate here on earth except through us, and the Holy Spirit in us. The amazing Scriptures that so clearly confirm this have to do with God’s footstool.

Psalm 110:1-7 says,

“The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.

The LORD has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.

He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries.

He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; therefore He shall lift up the head."

Hebrews 10:12-13 (Amplified Bible) says,

"Whereas this One [Christ], after He had offered a single sacrifice for our sins [that shall avail] for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

Then to wait until His enemies should be made a stool beneath His feet."

Notice the above Scriptures say very clearly that after Jesus rose from the dead, He was seated at the right hand of God and waited until someone destroyed His enemies. The word *footstool* in the Old Testament means 'to put a foot on a vanquished foe'. In the New Testament it means 'to stand upon and crush'.

I asked the Lord that if the Father is seated in Heaven and if Jesus is seated at His right hand, then who is here on earth doing the judging. He quickly gave me an understanding in John 16 that I had always had a difficult time understanding.

John 16:7-11 says,

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

Notice in this Scripture above, that the Holy Spirit inside of us is the one who finishes the judgment process on satanic beings.

Let us take a look back at some of the characters I wrote about in previous chapters. Chapter numbers indicated.

Abraham Destroyed Evil, chapter 3.

Abraham raised his knife to kill not only his beloved son as an obedient act for God, but also to kill the very promise that God has spoken to him – Genesis 22. I have found that in order to see God’s promises come to pass, that usually the promise has to go through death and resurrection. So often the flesh nature in us attempts to engineer the outcome that we feel the promise is leading to. That is called walking in the flesh. Our promises come from God through death and resurrection.

Daniel’s Overcoming Example, chapter 5.

Daniel 6 says that the high officials in Babylon convinced King Darius to make a law forbidding prayer to any god, but that Daniel paid no attention to the decree and prayed anyway. As a result, he was thrown into the Lions’ Den, but survived miraculously because he was “innocent.” The entire known earth heard about this event and about the wonderful and awesome living God. Daniel took up his cross.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, chapter 5.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego ignored King Nebuchadnezzar's order to worship him and him alone and they were thrown into the fiery furnace. But the Fourth Man showed up. Once again the entire known earth at that time heard about the real living God. They took up their cross'.

Job, chapter 6.

Satan attacked Job unmercifully. Job overcame when he finally poured out his heart and told everyone including God that something just was not working in his life. Finally, God revealed Himself to Job personally, and the satanic forces in his life were destroyed. Others were saved.

Gideon's ambush, chapter 7.

During Gideon's days Israel was suffering greatly. God made Himself real to Gideon and personally disciplined him. The enemy was supernaturally wiped out. Gideon took up his cross.

Pharaoh was ambushed, chapter 8.

Moses and the Israelites took up their cross' as they risked being killed by Pharaoh and fled Egypt. This was not a comfortable thing to do.

The Apostle Paul, chapter 9.

Paul's life is an example of one person going through types of "death" so that others may live. Paul was committed to this idea of "death" so that others may live. I believe that God gave him special revelation regarding this spiritual concept. Thus, he continually could see the benefits of his sufferings.

The Apostle Paul continually took up his cross in order to see the Gospel preached. In 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 Paul said that he had received a revelation from God that his curses, his thorn in the flesh, were actually opportunities to destroy satanic influences in the lives of others.

The Apostle John in the Book of Revelation, chapter 13.

Apparently, God knew that the Apostle John could handle the suffering of the churches being persecuted, believers killed, and he himself being made a slave and a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos.

John really needed some answers for the suffering he was experiencing, and as a result, Jesus appeared to him, giving him a picture of the new dispensation that had to do with judgment in a Heavenly Courtroom. John must have been somewhat surprised after he had seen the resurrection, the ascension, and then the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost. What must have he thought, when, all of the sudden, he saw the churches that were planted experiencing the horrible hostility of the violent Roman Empire. They were burning churches, killing the congregations, and more. Then John was arrested and sent into exile to Patmos to experience food that was not fit to eat, living conditions where he probably had to sleep in his own discharges. During the day, most likely, he hauled large boulders up steep hills all day long.

Most likely, John was shocked at this sudden turn of events, and perhaps asked a lot of “Why, Lord?” questions.

So many are discouraged because they don't see God coming through for them.

We need the confidence that God is in control, no matter how bad things get, whether it be an attack on us, or even if it's caused by our own failure.

Colossians 1:20 says,

“and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Reconcile means ‘to change from enemy to friend’. The Cross of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice have the potential of converting everything to be a blessing.

Leave the outcome to God and Him alone. Enter into His rest.

How? By waiting. I have discovered, and am still discovering, that sometimes it is not easy to discern when my flesh is trying to work out an issue, and when to take my hands off and allow God to do His supernatural work. For me, it is a continual learning process in His school! There have been times when I have been in error by not waiting long enough. However, many people refuse any action and fall into procrastination beyond God’s waiting schedule. So, how do we know? By hearing God’s voice and by entering into His rest with the faith you have received by hearing Him speak in the many ways He may choose to speak. I have also discovered to my amazement that God takes even my mistakes and uses them for good.

Hebrews 4:1-13 says,

“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall

not enter My rest,'” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”;

and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.”

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,

again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

We progress to spiritual rest not by attaining some abstract standard or pressing through to some far-off goal. It is wholly a question of seeing God's standard. Spiritual progress comes by finding out what you really are, not by trying to be what you are not.

It is when you see that you are dead, and when you see that you have risen. It is when you see that you become holy, and when you see yourself in Christ that you receive what He has already received.

It is when you see that His works are finished before the foundation of the world (Hebrews 4:3); then you can really rest.

The following is a quote from a great man of God, Oswald Chambers, from his book, My Utmost For His Highest.

"... fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ." (1 Thessalonians 3:2).

After sanctification, it is difficult to state what your purpose in life is, because God has moved you into His purpose through the Holy Spirit. He is using you now for His purposes throughout the world as He used His Son for the purpose of our salvation. If you seek great things for yourself, thinking, "God has called me for this and for that," you barricade God from using you. As long as you maintain your own personal interests and ambitions, you cannot be completely aligned or identified with God's interests. This can only be accomplished by giving up all of your personal plans once and for all, and by allowing God to take you directly into His purpose for the world. Your understanding of your ways must also be surrendered, because they are now the ways of the Lord.

I must learn that the purpose of my life belongs to God, not me. God is using me from His great personal perspective, and all He asks of me is that I trust Him. I should never say, “Lord, this causes me such heartache.” To talk that way makes me a stumbling block. When I stop telling God what I want, He can freely work His will in me without any hindrance. He can crush me, exalt me, or do anything else He chooses. He simply asks me to have absolute faith in Him and His goodness. Self-pity is of the devil, and if I wallow in it I cannot be used by God for His purpose in the world. Doing this creates for me my own cozy “world within the world,” and God will not be allowed to move me from it because of my fear of being “frost-bitten.”

Yes, we are called to take up our cross. But remember that the cross is also the path to resurrection and fulfillment. As one song says, “Then came the morning, night turned into day: the stone was rolled away, hope rose with the dawn! Morning has come.” “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (Isaiah 60:1, KJV).

He is risen. The Lord is alive, the grave is empty, Satan is destroyed. Now the disciples, who had been in utter despair, see the light. The result was more than they could have imagined! The outcome of you living an unselfish life, taking up your cross, will far outweigh any idea or hope that you can imagine!