

Message #10 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Have You Overcome The World, or Has The World Overcome You?"

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Hello! Glad you could be with us. Today I'd like to ask you the question, "Have You Overcome The World, or Has The World Overcome You?" In Revelation 12:10-11, it refers to Satan as the accuser of the Brethren, and that he was cast down. It refers to Satan's ability to go before God in heaven and make accusations against the people of earth. The accusations he makes are that they have sinned and broken the law. Satan knows that if you break the law of God, you are guilty, and deserving of death. This automatically determines your eternal fate. The determination that man is guilty of death can only be decided if there is a law. The law of commandments was given in order that man might come to an understanding of wickedness in the eyes of God.

The Bible says that sin took occasion by the law, and by it man was destroyed. When Jesus Christ lived on this earth he brought to an end the Law of Commandments, written and engraved in stone. By his death and resurrection, Satan, as the accuser, was no longer able to go before God and accuse men of sin because Jesus had fulfilled the law, bringing it to its completed end. It says in 2 Corinthians 3:7-11, that the ministration of death, written and engraved in stone, was done away with. Without the Law of Commandments, Satan has no power to condemn people. Where there is no law, there is no condemnation. What we have here is just a short explanation of the basic concept of salvation because of the death and resurrection of Christ

This brings us to Revelation 12:11, which gives the method by which the people of God are finally able to overcome the world and attain eternal life with God. The method actually encompasses three parts. The first is, that the overcoming is by the blood of the lamb. The second, is by the word of their testimony. The third, is that they did not love their lives, unto death. By these three requirements, man completes the overcoming process. But notice, that only one or two parts of this process are insufficient to overcome. Man must not only recognize

and except the blood of Jesus, rather than the Law of Commandments, as that which blots out sin, but must also confess with the mouth, that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. But even though these two portions are observed, the third part is still a requirement to overcoming. Man must not love their own lives, which must be to the point of death.

In Luke 14:26, Jesus explains that in comparison with love for him, men must hate anything and anyone which is in opposition to their love for Christ, and explicitly states that man must also hate any part of his own life that gets in the way. It says that if you do not hate your own life, you cannot be his disciple. The question we must ask, is, "What does it mean to hate your own life?" To hate your own life is to despise the sinfulness of it, to detest that human nature, that beast nature, within you. But everything in this world is in competition with the spiritual nature of God. Everything in this world is in opposition to the spiritual nature of God, for the world is a physical place created for flesh and blood. Heaven is a spiritual place and intended as a place for born-again spiritual man to live forever. It says in 1 Corinthians 15:50, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. We were born flesh and blood, made subject to the world, but we must overcome the world. We must overcome the world, because the friendship of the world is enmity with Christ. And that word, enmity, is an important word. Enmity means, "deep seated mutual hatred." Therefore, if you get friendly with the things of the world, you create enmity between you and Jesus Christ. If you get friendly with the world, you create a deep seated mutual hatred between you and Jesus. The reason for this is that the world was created for physical man, and can only stimulate the physical flesh. The beast nature of man responds well to the physical stimulation that the world offers.

But when we respond to the stimulations of this world, when we get friendly with the things of this world, when we begin to love that which the world offers, we are embracing that which is in opposition to the love of Jesus Christ. Man's purpose is to overcome the world. John 16:33, says that Jesus overcame the world. He overcame the world because he was able to perfectly accomplish the will of God, not doing his own works, nor speaking his own words. He said that he came to earth to do the will of the Father. He perfectly accomplished that task. We, are unable to perfectly shun our humanness, for the beast nature within us is too strong. We cannot overcome the world in our own strength, therefore, our overcoming must be through Jesus Christ.

Overcoming the flesh and blood nature begins with excepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, then continues in its progression by your confession of your belief with your mouth. It will be fulfilled when you reach the end of your life and have come to hate your life. But you must hate your life to the extent that you desire to also crucify your fleshly man. It is this third part of the salvation process which destroys so many, and the reason for this is that many understand the first two principles of excepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and confessing him with their mouths, but do not understand that they must come to love Christ to the point that they begin to hate being tainted by the world. Actually, most people in the church today fall far short of this. Why? Why do people still find such enjoyment in the things of this world? The reason is simply that Satan has chosen to tempt man with things that will stimulate his animal nature, his flesh nature.

Satan can no longer accuse man of sin if there is no law against sin. Yet he can draw men away from the love of Christ by tempting them with things of the world which stimulate the flesh.

Satan knows that he cannot destroy men any longer through the law, but that he can destroy men by causing them to love the world. He knows that by making them friends with the world, enmity with God will be established. Remember that friendship with the world is enmity with God. Friendship with the world creates deep-seated mutual hatred. God hates it when we get friendly with the world, for when we get friendly with the world, when we begin to love the world, when we begin to embrace the things of this world, our love for God wanes.

It is true that when we except Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and confess him with our mouth, we will be saved. Once this is established, Satan must try to destroy that confession before we die. He knows that he cannot pluck Christians out of the hand of Jesus, who accept, confess, and love him. Therefore, in order to be successful, Satan must draw men away from Jesus, and this must be by man's own choice. Man must choose the friendship of the world, thereby creating a wall of enmity between them and Christ.

We know that Christians are tempted by many things of this world. But the mistake that Christians make is that they think they must only shun certain sins. And this is true to a certain extent, but the sin that they overlook is that they must not become friends with the world, but must hate it, and come to love the things of God. Christians, in large part, have been deceived into thinking that all the things of this world have been created for them to enjoy. Certainly, there are things in this world which we can enjoy, yet there are certain things which we should not enjoy. The question then, is how we can determine what things of this world have value pertaining to our life in Jesus Christ, and what things of this world do not stimulate our spirit man, but stimulate our carnal man, our flesh and blood nature. Unless we contemplate God's word, and learn what things stimulate our spirit and what things stimulate our flesh, we can be easily tempted into becoming friendly with the worldly things, because we will not understand that they will cause a division between us and Christ.

All the doctrine that Satan's lies produce are intended to deceive man into thinking that they can partake in things of this world as long as they don't lie, cheat, steal, kill, etc. Yet, he knows that in order to kill the spirit nature within man, all he has to do is make the carnal nature strong. He knows that if he can get man to be stimulated enough with the carnal nature of the world, the love for the spiritual things of God will dwindle until such time as confessing Jesus Christ is no longer the strong point of the Christians life.

It is the Christian who is responsible for losing that promise of salvation, not God. God promises that we cannot be taken from him against our will. But we can choose to turn away from God. If we turn to the things of this world, thereby turning away from the spiritual things of God, we will bring our own damnation upon ourselves. This is symbolized in the Bible with the story of Lot's wife. Although she had excepted the offer of deliverance, and had actually begun the journey away from the wickedness, she turned back, for the things she had left behind meant too much for her. Just as Satan overcame Lot's wife with the wicked things of Sodom, he will overcome you with the wicked things of this world if he can. Your defense is not only to accept and confess Jesus Christ, but to also come to hate the friendship with the world, just as God does, and your hate of that which strengthens your beast nature must continue until your death is accomplished. This not only implies your physical end of life, but your daily crucifixion of your beast nature, the putting to death of your carnal man. Remember, flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of heaven, but you must be born again of the spirit.

Many Christians immerse themselves in the things of this world, never stopping to think that the responsibility of Christians is to not only shun certain sins, but must shun that which stimulates the carnal nature, the beast nature. There are many things that Christians are involved with in this world which only stimulate the flesh. Satan tries to get us to be occupied with things of the beast nature, so that our spirit nature will not be strengthened. His greatest tool is the image of the beast. I'm referring to that image of the beast spoken of in Revelation 13. Let me give a short explanation.

God is a Spirit. But man was only created a little higher than the animals. Yet man's nature is still that beast nature, that animal nature which is in opposition to the Spirit of God. Animals are brute beasts, and unable to make choices through the power of reasoning. When man rises above the beast nature, and chooses to be born again as a spirit being, he puts the beast nature down. He crucifies that man of flesh, which is symbolized in baptism. At the time of Satan's fall, he determined to shun that which was spiritual, to shun the spiritual things of God, and to embrace that base animal instinct which is without reason. He chose the path of a brute beast. The term, brute beast, means, without reason. An animal has no ability to use reason, but only reacts instinctively. And this is what Satan wants us to do also, to react instinctively, rather than to apply reason. For if we use reason, we will see the spiritual, heavenly, things of God.

The image of the beast is designed to be the greatest deception imaginable. It is Satan's greatest tool, and has come to us in these last days in an attempt to utterly destroy the concepts of a spiritual God. He only wants man to trust in physical things, and to doubt the power of the Holy Spirit. The people of Earth have finally been led to create the image of the beast. The major question here is, "what is the image of the beast?"

First, what is an image? An image is not the real thing, but only something which resembles the real thing. It's like a picture. The picture is only an image. Anything that is a likeness of something or someone, is an image. Anything graphical is just a picture, just a representation, of the real thing. The image of the beast is a representation of the beast nature which was first developed in Satan, and later redeveloped in man. Any picture which graphically describes the beast nature, the carnal nature, is a picture, an image, of that nature. It is not the beast nature in itself, but only an image. The animal nature exists in more ways than can be described, but the three general terms of, lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, and pride of life, adequately describe attributes of the beast nature.

One additional attribute of the image of the beast, referred to in Revelation 13, is that the image of the beast also speaks. There are various forms of graphical imagery which have been invented in the latter times that not only portray man's carnal nature, their animal nature, but also have the ability to speak words. The most easily recognized forms are television, movies, and most recently, computer imagery. When you watch these forms, you not only see the images, but you also hear them speak. Using science and technology, the people of Earth have created an image that speaks. What you see on the screen is not the real thing, but only an image. When you see someone killed, you're not seeing the actual event, but a representation of the actual event. If you see the graphical image of nudity, you are not seeing nudity, but only the image of it. It is still wickedness, but wickedness which is only representative and not actual. And this is where the tool of Satan becomes his greatest weapon.

All the people of the Earth, whether rich or poor, free or enslaved, those who are rulers, or those who are ruled, are killed spiritually. And what kills them is the stimulation of that beast nature within themselves. The reason that this satanic weapon is so effective, is that the people succumb to the lie that says, “you are not sinning these sins, but you are only seeing them take place.” Even Christians believe this lie. They sit in their chairs watching the sins portrayed on the screen. They watch a person being struck with the fist, they watch women making suggestive actions, they watch murder, child abuse, lying, cheating, stealing, hatred. In essence, they are able to watch any number of make-believe acts which fall under the three general categories of that which is the beast nature of man; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. What they believe is that they are not partakers of the evil things, but are only watching. Yet, they allow the very same spirits to come into their minds through their eyes and ears.

This is not a conscious decision on their part to partake of the evil nature, but they are deceived into thinking that they are not being touched by the wickedness they see. Even those who try to watch wholesome entertainment find themselves watching commercials, which in some instances are more wicked than the programs.

By getting people to watch sinfulness, Satan accomplishes his purpose of causing the people of Earth to worship that first beast of Revelation, which is the beast nature of Satan himself. If you listen with discerning ears, you can hear fellow workers, friends, even fellow Christians, exalting the many programs and the people who act them out. They rave about the actors and actresses who portray violence, immoral sexuality, greed, hate, and also about the writers and producers of the technology. If you listen closely you can hear them say that which equates to, “who is like the beast?” They are saying that what man has been able to create is awesome. They are dedicated to the movie idols, and they worship them by their words and actions.

The beast that is described in Revelation 13, is the nature, the human nature, of man. And man has created an image of it. Instead of being occupied with serving God, the people of Earth, including Christians, are being occupied with the very beast nature that we were put here to overcome. The promises of God are to those who overcome the world. Satan does not want you to overcome the world, because if you do, he has lost the battle.

When God removed the hindrance, as referred to in 2 Thessalonians, chapter two, the way was opened to Satan to make great headway in deceiving the whole world. But notice that the deception only affects those who are deceived because they did not love the truth. It is the truth which sets us free. The problem facing the church in these latter times, is that, rather than loving the truth that comes as living water down from heaven, Christians love to be entertained. They love to play. They may resist actual deeds of sin, but succumb to watching it. Either way, the flesh is stimulated, and the spirit is killed.

If you think that I am unaware of what most of you are thinking right now, you are mistaken. I know very well how Christians respond when they hear someone tell them that they are being deceived. Your first response is to defend yourselves. That’s human nature. But for those few who hear this message and have taken a moment to contemplate it rather than to outrightly reject it, I say to you, that God has chosen this time to bring back to remembrance the deep hidden things of God. He has chosen this time to warn his children of the destruction that lies ahead for those who either cannot, or will not, see. This is only the beginning of the end. We know that in

the end times the Lord of Heaven will rise with healing in his wings. We know that the double edged sword will proceed out of his mouth. We know that this sword is the sword of the Spirit, and we know that the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. It is the word of God which will set the captive free. It is the truth that sets us free. It is time for those who call themselves Christians to be tested, in order that they might be judged.

So, . . . What kind of a Christian are you? Have you overcome the world, or has the world overcome you?