

Is There A Real Spirit World?

Part 6

How do we overcome the influence of Satan, in our community?

This is **not** something we can do in our own strength but it **is** part of our Christian life.

In the letters sent to the seven churches recorded by John in the book of Revelation one thing is common.

The rewards that these churches will receive depends on this one thing.

To the church in Ephesus:-

Revelation 2:7 [NIV] “... to him who overcomes...”

To the church in Smyrna:-

Revelation 2:11 [NIV] “... he who overcomes...”

To the church in Pergamum:-

Revelation 2:17 [NIV] “... to him who overcomes...”

To the church in Thyatira:-

Revelation 2:26 [NIV] “... to him who overcomes...”

To the church in Sardis:-

Revelation 3:5 [NIV] “He who overcomes...”

To the church in Philadelphia:-

Revelation 3:12 [NIV] “Him who overcomes...”

To the church in Laodicea:-

Revelation 3:21 [NIV] “To him who overcomes ...”

Revelation 1:3 [NIV] “*Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and **blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.***”

We must include this same message to “*overcome*” if we are to receive our future reward.

What are we to overcome?

Let the scriptures answer the question.

Revelation 12:9 [NIV] “*The great dragon was hurled down — **that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.***”

The context of this passage of scripture is Satan and his demons.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] “***They** [Christians] **overcame him** [Satan] *by the blood of the Lamb* [Jesus Christ] *and by the word of their testimony. They* [Christians] *did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*”*

When we meditate on what we have just read several very important things come to light.

Our reward in God’s Kingdom is directly linked to our overcoming the work of Satan.

This “overcoming” is also personal, our overcoming the penalty of our past sins and the temptations to continue to sin.

1 John 1:8-10 [NIV] *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”*

This is the first thing we do if we are to be “overcomers”.

Confess our sins and seek the cleansing power of Christ’s sacrificial blood.

Next ask for some of Christ’s righteousness to be credited to us, as a result of our trust in Christ’s sacrifice.

Isaiah 64:6 [NIV] *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”*

Our righteousness is **not** acceptable to God, only the perfect righteousness of His only Son Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:20-25 [NIV] *“Yet he [Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God ... this is why it was credited to him [Abraham] as righteousness. The words it was credited to him were not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for all who believe in Him [the Holy Spirit] who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He [Jesus Christ] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification [being made righteous].”*

This is the only way we can become righteous in the eyes of God, be acceptable to the Holy Spirit and become an instrument for Him to use to overcome Satan’s influence in this world.

1 John 1:5-7 [NIV] *“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

This is part of the message we are to bring to all who will listen.

Light represents all that is pure, true, holy and reliable.

Darkness represents what is sinful and evil.

God is the only one who can lead us out of the darkness of sin and deception.

John 14:6 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.”*

Light is also related to the truth and Jesus Christ is the truth personified.

John 8:12 [NIV] *“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

Jesus is also the light that has come into the world to reveal the truth, the way we are to live, the reason for life, and God the Father.

How do we walk in the light?

1 John 2:8-11 [NIV] *“Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. **Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.**”*

If we love other human beings we are walking in the light.

John 15:13 [NIV] *“Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*

We show this love by laying down our life, that is our time and substance, for other people to benefit.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your **bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.**”*

Our lives are to become a living sacrifice, just as Jesus Christ is a living sacrifice.

Daily we are to lay aside our own desires and seek God’s Will for our lives.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; **they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**”*

The Greek word translated “testimony” is “*marturia*” which comes from the root word “*martus*” meaning a martyr.

Such a life will be a witness in itself to the love that God has for all humanity.

But God’s Word, the Christian Bible, is also mentioned.

Ephesians 6:17 [NIV] *“... and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God”*

1 Corinthians 9:26-27 [NIV] *“Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave **so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.**”*

Paul knew that he needed to know how to use the Word of God.

1 Peter 3:15 [NIV] *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,**”*

Are we so well versed with God’s Word that we can do this?

Of our own selves this is **not** possible, we need the Holy Spirit in us to do this.

Romans 8:14 [NIV] *“because those who are **led by the Spirit of God** are sons of God.”*

We must be led by the Holy Spirit.

John 16:13 [NIV] *“But when he, **the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.**”*

Then the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.

John 14:26 [NIV] *“But the Counsellor, **the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

The Holy Spirit will remind us of the words of Jesus Christ.

John 7:37-39 [NIV] *“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, **“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”** By this he meant **the Spirit**, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

The Holy Spirit will flow out from us and influence the minds of all who hear what we say, read what we write, or see the way we live by His power at work in us.

What then should we do to ensure this work of the Holy Spirit will be accomplished in and through us?

1 Thessalonians 5:19 [NIV] *“Do not put out **the Spirit’s fire;**”*

Do not put out the enthusiasm that the Holy Spirit brings to our lives.

Ephesians 4:30 [NIV] *“And do not grieve **the Holy Spirit** of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

How do we grieve the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 4:31-32 [NIV] *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

Two different attitudes of mind that either build or destroy relationships.

Remember true Christianity is not a religion but a relationship, first with our Creator God and then other human beings.

Central to any relationship is love towards the other person and a willingness to sacrifice our own personal desires.

Such a lifestyle is the most powerful testimony that can ever be given and in the end will overcome any human hostility towards such a lifestyle.

This is how God the Father is drawing people to Him through the example of His Son Jesus Christ, and those who follow Christ’s example.

Every human being needs to hear this Good News and see it at work in our personal lives.

This is how we overcome the evil, selfish and proud influence of Satan.

The reward we receive at the end of our physical life will be judged on how well we do this.

There is a very real spirit world that will try to stop us being a living testimony of God’s way of life, the way of love.

1 John 4:4 [NIV] *“You, dear children [children of God, Christians] are from God and have overcome them [those still held by Satan in darkness and deception], because **the One who is in you** [the Holy Spirit] is greater than the one in the world [Satan].”*

Always remember this and ensure that the Holy Spirit is working in and through us daily.