

He who **OVERCOMES**

Jacob was left alone—his wives, maidservants and children had crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He sat rubbing his fingers deep into the tight muscles forming the ridges on his forehead. The night was especially cold and damp. Lights still burned in the horizon where four hundred men and his angry brother lay sleeping that distance away. From behind and now in front of him, conflict stood like a force too great to overcome.

Out of the shadows stood a man; his prayers were answered. “Bless me!” Jacob cried.



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“Are you in trouble?” the man asked, standing with his back to Jacob staring into the starry horizon.

“Yes!” Jacob pressed against his knees hobbling into a stand. “I know that you are from God. You know that I serve Him. Bless *me!*”

“At conflict with your brother—even in the womb.”

“On old battle—by-gone days. So much suffering.”

“Suffering—yes, suffering follows sin.”

The man picked up a stick—a good length—strolling away he periodically rested against it.

“Stop!” Jacob grappled him to the ground. “I’m not finished. He sold his birthright to me for a bowl of soup. You *must* know that he never valued it.”

“I know.” The man pushed him off his chest. Jacob rolled onto his back and they lay staring into the night sky.

The man rolled onto his side and lifted himself enough to rest his chin in his hand. “How great is your God?”

“My God?” Jacob looked over at the man in disbelief. “How can I answer what you already know—better than I?”

“I ask only what *you* know, Jacob?”

“My God, the God of Abraham and my father, Isaac is the Almighty God—the Creator, God of all gods.” Jacob grabbed the man pressing his fingers deep into the flesh of his upper arms. With the lights on the horizon dimming, he pleaded, “Now, bless *me!*”

“A man in trouble crying out—” The man hurled Jacob onto his back, like he was a boy and with a steel grip he locked onto his wrists. “How will you be when you are *not* in need—blessed in riches?”

Jacob fell limp. “Messenger of God—” he said, hesitating as the man loosened his grip. He felt that instant to break the man’s lock and he quickly pushed up, toppling his opponent’s balance. They rolled and he slipped free. They fell into a race pushed by the ruthless terrain that kept them tumbling against the early morning light. Jacob grunted and groaned as he was thrust over and under his opponent. As they moved, Jacob waited until the man was within a solid reach, then he gripped him thrusting his whole body up against him and rolled to take overtake him. A blunt punch to his back brought them to a breathless stop. His face reddened, his eyes fixed staring down at the man, he held his position fastening him to the ground.

“I served Laban for twenty years. God blessed me generously, more than what I deserved. In that blessing, I suffered.” The man pushed back and Jacob’s arms shook and his voice cracked, while the man threw Jacob to his side, effortlessly. Out-of-breath, Jacob pleaded, “Please stay—and listen.”

The man stood looking down on him. Tears flowing from Jacob’s eyes, he caught the softening long glance of compassion filling the man.

He pointed his hand towards the rock that broke their fall. “Please sit. Stay—listen,” Jacob repeated.

Together, they sat.

“I took nothing from Laban. I took **every** loss: the stolen, animals torn by wild beasts. I suffered the heat by day and cold at night. For twenty years, my sleep was robbed, my wages were reduced and yet, if it weren’t for the blessings from God, I would have been sent away empty-handed. I stand this night with my brother, Esau in front of me. I am asking for reconciliation, what will I get? I am afraid that it will be death.”

“How great is your God?” he asked. The man stood up staring again into the horizon. “The lights are almost gone. I must go.”

“No!” Jacob shouted. “**We both** know that it is **only** God, **the God of Abraham** who can save me from this trouble.” He threw the man to the ground standing over him, he noticed his long

shadow cast by the rising sun. He crouched down pinning him to the ground and pleaded, “Bless **me!**”

The man heaved Jacob onto his back freeing one arm, but Jacob intensified his grip on the other and watched his hand turn blue. “Let me go,” the man said, “for it is daybreak.”

The man shook Jacob off. He grabbed the man’s ankle as he began to walk away. The man leaning with his head pushed ahead tottered, dragging Jacob behind.

“I will not let you go—” Jacob gasped and biting his lips, he tightened his whole body into a rod of steel, squeezing through his pursed lips he said, “unless *you* bless *me*.”

The rays of sun hit their faces. Jacob’s face and body hardened like stone, he remained fastened to the man.

“It is time,” the man whispered. He bent down and touched Jacob’s hip.

Jacob released a jarring cry. He reached out and grabbed the man’s leg. Tears again filled his eyes, his breathing rapid, he appealed, “I’m not worthy of the kindness and mercy of God. I am His servant, but I return home as He said—with mothers and children. In peace, I return home to take nothing deceptively but to give and live righteously. ***Please bless me; I am sincere—eternally sincere.***”

The man stopped abruptly. Jacob held his breath, as he stood leaning to one side.

“What is your name?” the man asked.

“Jacob,” he whimpered.

Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and **have overcome.**”

Jacob’s face paled as he asked, “What is *your* name?”

The man said, “Why do you ask my name?”

Jacob bowed his head.

The man stood over him and said, “I will bless you.”

The great men and women in the kingdom to come are servants of God who understand and value the great generosity and mercy of the Almighty God. Like the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel [those who overcome], no lie is found in their mouths; they are blameless for **they follow**

the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as first-fruits to God and the Lamb (Revelation 14:4-5).

“My Sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ‘My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one’” (John 10:27-30).

Blessed will be those who overcome. **“To the one who overcomes,** I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne” (Revelation 3:21).

“He who overcomes, and **he who keeps My deeds until the end,** to him I will give authority over the nations” (Revelation 2:26).

“He who overcomes, I will **make him a pillar in the temple of My God,** and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name” (Revelation 3:12).

Christ, our Saviour warned the seven churches and exposed their deadly faults. He who overcomes, only they will be blessed upon His return.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tn1dv2aZlKA>

To the **Church in Ephesus—the falling church:**

From **he** who holds the 7 stars (angels of the 7 churches) among the 7 lampstands, I know:

- Your deeds
- Your hard work
- Perseverance
- Don't tolerate wicked men
- You have tested them who claim to be apostles and are false
- Endured hardships for my name and not grown weary
- You have in your favor, you hate the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Repent:

- You have **forsaken your first love**
- Remember the height from which you have fallen!
- If you do not repent, I will remove your lampstand from its place.

To **him who overcomes**, I will give the **right to eat** from the **tree of life**, which is in the paradise of God.



Livingword-of-god.blogspot.com

Review of history: The word "Nicolaitan" comes from two words in Greek, 'niko' and 'laos'. The word 'niko' means to conquer or subdue, while 'laos' means people. These two words together mean **'to subdue the people.'** Nicolaitans enforced a hierarchical system that takes the shape of a pyramid. Jesus said to the disciples, **"Don't let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters... Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant"** (Matthew 23:8, 10-11).

These people were not a structured, layered group where the leaders lord it over the people. Their structure was flat, a humble membership where everyone is treated equally; brothers and sisters teaching each other the word of God. They recognized only Christ as their teacher, discarding the teachings of the gods and goddesses and anyone who did not claim Christ as the Word of God. Like the Bereans, these Christians at Ephesus, tested the teachings of those who came proclaiming the gospel and held fast to the pure, untainted truth.

They began with a feverish passion for God and Christ, humbly grateful for grace and a burning desire for God's word, but as time passed, they began to fall back into old pagan practices. They desperately needed to recognize this deterioration and rekindle the beautiful flame they had at the beginning of their journey with God through Christ.

To the **Church of Smyrna—the persecuted church:**

From **him** who is the **First and the Last**, who died and came to life again. I know:

- Your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich!

- The slander of those who say they are Jews but are not but are a synagogue of Satan.
- You will suffer persecution for 10 days, some of you will be imprisoned to test you, some will die

To him who overcomes, you will not be hurt at all by the second death and will receive the crown of life.

These people are poor only in their resources to take the gospel to the world. They may not be the educated in the community or hold positions of influence, but truly Christ says that they are rich—in the word of God. They feel vulnerable. The ‘Jews who are not’ are likely people claiming to know the law of God, but they do not keep it themselves. They will persecute this church and mock their active obedience in keeping God’s way. Christ recognizes the faith of these people and their rich understanding of God’s word. He urges them to hold fast onto what they have and they will receive a crown—a position of rulership at the first resurrection.

To the Church of Pergamum—the compromised church:

From **him** who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know:

- Where you live—where Satan has his throne
- You remain true to my name
- You did not denounce your faith in me, even in days of Antipas (my faithful witness who was put to death in your city)

Repent:

- You have people who hold to the teaching of Balaam (who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality)
- You have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
- Repent! I will soon come to fight against them with the sword of my mouth.



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To him who overcomes, I will give the hidden manna and a white stone with a new name written on it known only to him who receives it.

Review of history: Richard Doctor from BeautiesoftheTruth.org identifies and explains some of the weaknesses of the Pergamos church in his article, *“Pergamos, a ‘Mixed Marriage.’”* “By nature, Pergamos was fitted to be a royal city. It was planted at the foot of a magnificent, fortified rocky hill one thousand feet high, dominating the broad Valley of the Caicus River. A

very impressive site with a strange name since Pergamos means “mixed marriage.” This name is fitting because there was a “mixed marriage” confronting the third church.

“**Where Satan’s seat is,**” seems to be a reference to Rome and the office of Pontiff... Ahab and Jezebel are a mixed marriage that brought in the worship of Baal (1 Kings 16:31)... The doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before Israel is found in Numbers 22-25. This was when the men of Israel committed fornication, sacrificing and eating the offerings to the idols of their Moabite consorts. In antitype this is involvement in politics **seeking approval from those not in covenant relationship with God.**

<http://www.beautiesofthetruth.org/Archive/Library/Doctrine/Mags/Bot/90s/2013C.pdf>

Christ comes to these people with a sharp, double-edge sword because they had entered into a mixed or compromised theology. “Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing” (1 Kings 18:21). These people compromise the word of God, minimizing God’s Law, His Holy Days and Sabbath as an option not a command. In addition, they knowingly allow inconsistencies in their theology, without testing to ensure truth.

This body of Christ incorporated a multi-layered structure within their community. They elevated positions over others with piety and superiority. This is the practice of the Nicolaitans. Christ urged them to repent and he will give them spiritual food—pure truth directly from God (hidden manna). God fed the Israelites manna—His theology in the wilderness.

The woman of Revelation in the future will flee into the wilderness and will be fed this food, truths that will refine her with fire and remove the spots, wrinkles, and blemishes. Living by pure truth will earn the saints a white stone with a new name that will reflect their refined character.



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To the **Church of Thyatira—the pagan-influenced church:**

From the **Son of God**, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze; I know:

- Your deeds, love and faith, perseverance, you are now doing more than you did at first

Repent:

- You tolerate that woman, Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent for her immorality but she is unwilling. She will be cast into a bed

of suffering and will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead.

- All churches will know that I search hearts and minds and I will repay each according to their deeds.
- Now, to those who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, hold onto what you have until I come; I won't impose any other burden.

To him who overcomes: I will give authority over the nations to rule with a rod of iron and dash the wicked to pieces. I will also give him the morning star.

Christ knows the heart of these people as they grow deeper, and deeper into an intimate relationship with God. Unfortunately, some in this group are caught into the web of religiosity, paganism, and the false practices of Jezebel. They celebrate Christianized pagan holidays, while claiming to worship the Hebrew God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "Repent and get out of her," Christ urges. Those who hold fast will rule with Christ (the morning star Revelation 22:16) and rule with a rod of iron because they will have learned from their own experience, the power of deception and the treachery false religion brought upon them and all of mankind.

To the Church of Sardis—the dying church:

From him who holds the seven stars. I know:

- Your deeds, you have reputation of being alive but you are DEAD. Wake up!
- Strengthen what remains and is about to die
- Your deeds are not complete in the sight of my God
- A few of you have not soiled your clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white. I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

Repent:

- Remember what you have received and heard and obey it
- If you do not repent, I will be like a thief and you will not know at what time I will come to you.



Mudpreacher.org

These people have a reputation of being alive, but Christ said that they are dead. Many churches are doing "good deeds." They may have established charities, but those charities give more to the employees and the organization leaving a drop in the bucket for those in need; they may conduct workshops, but they charge a high price when the service could be offered for free; they establish camps and activities that take up so much time that the word of God is replaced with socializing. Christ urged these people to remember what they heard and **obey it**.

“But don't just listen to God's word. **You must do what it says.** Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves” (James 1:22).

Many people in this church are no longer watching for Christ's return nor do they obey God's commandments. Many teach that the commandments were nailed to the cross, but Christ warned them, “I have not found **your deeds complete in the sight of my God.** Remember therefore, what you have received and heard; **obey it,** and repent” (Revelation 3:2b-3a). What little they have left is coming to an end. Only a small few in this group obey God's commandments; they will receive eternal life and Christ will acknowledge them before his Father and the angels. To the rest, Christ urged them to repent.

To the **Church of Philadelphia—the loved church:**

From him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens, no one can shut; and what he shuts, no one can open. I know:

- Your deeds
- Before you, is an open door that no one can shut
- You have little strength
- You have kept my word
- Not denied my name
- You have kept my command to endure patiently
- I will keep from you the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole earth



I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—**will fall down to your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.**

Rappgenius.com

Hold onto what you have that no one take your crown. You that overcome will be pillars in the temple of my God. I will write on him the name of my God and name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will write on him my new name.

Review of history: “The word synagogue comes from a Greek word meaning "assembly of men" or "congregation," and it was used much like the English word "church." The "synagogue of Satan," then, is an assembly or congregation—a church—made up of the individuals who "say they are Jews, and are not." The term "Jew" is used here in a spiritual sense.

Notice, the apostle Paul's definition of a spiritual Jew in Romans 2:29: "He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God." In this case, it is not one's physical race that counts, but his

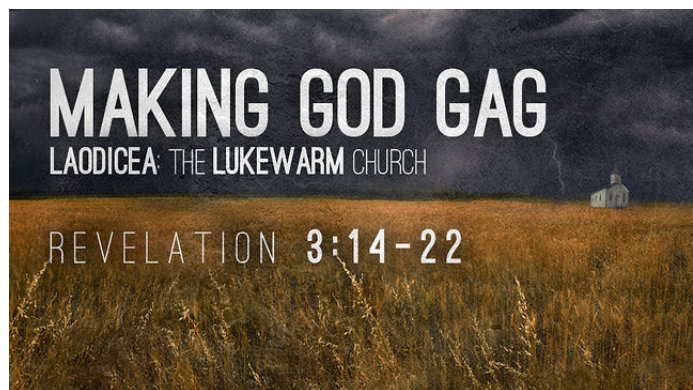
spiritual condition (Galatians 3:27-29; Romans 4:16). True Christians are spiritual Jews because they keep the commandments of God.

While the Smyrna church is thought to be poor, these people have little strength. They are likely a scattered group. Truly, their feeling of weakness keeps them calling on God for help. They are putting their trust in God and beseeching Him for guidance and protection. Christ is well pleased with these people who are given authority, while on earth. These people will suffer the persecution of the abusive members of the synagogue of Satan who claim to be Law abiding, but they are not. This church will be kept from the hour of trial that tests the whole world because they are already tested and tried and found true. These people from the past to present, like the Apostles, will be leaders in the kingdom of God—the New Jerusalem, Christ's bride.

To the Church in Laodicea—the unrighteous church:

From the words of the Amen (Jesus Christ), the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know:

- Your deeds are neither cold or hot. I wish they were one or the other!
- You are luke-warm and I will be spit out of my mouth
- You say:
 - You are rich
 - Acquired wealth
 - Need of nothing
- But, you are:
 - Wretched
 - Pitiful
 - Poor
 - Blind
 - Naked



backgroundchecksforchurches.com

Repent:

- Buy gold refined in the fire so that you may become rich
- Buy white clothes to wear to cover your shameful nakedness
- Buy salve to put on your eyes so that you can see

Those who I love, I rebuke and discipline. Be earnest and repent.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him that overcomes, I will give him the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

This group of people are totally, through and through unrighteous. They are rich in knowledge, but what they have is worldly knowledge: science, technology, medicine, and all of the theologies of man. Their hope for eternal and quality of life is through human effort and

ingenuity, which will in the future, become visibly worthless and shameful. They are unaware of the hidden forces that shape their ideas and trick them into believing that they can escape the limitations of mortality and the science that works within it. God is spiritual and the science in His realm is totally different and cannot be accessed by any physical means.

The people in this group who overcome, will rule with Christ in the Millennium because when they come to feel the emptiness of their ideals and witness the fragility of mortality, even having maximized science and technology, they will drop to their knees from the magnitude of their spiritual enemy on earth and the power of their Creator who will hear their cry and rescue them.

Overcoming is the commission of every believer. Holding fast and never letting go is critical to our salvation.

Christ said, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12).

Every good thing we have comes from God. God doesn't owe us anything. He created us and all that exists is His. We owe Him—our loyalty, our gratitude and our love.

Follow Christ and lean on Him always. He is the Way. Keep God's Law and love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength.

The end-times lights are burning on the near horizon; the race will soon become very difficult. Keep your eyes fixed on serving the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob faithfully and you will be blessed.



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All illustrations are used to enhance learning, for educational purposes and the associated websites for your reference.