

You can be an Overcomer! 06

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:12

On Guard? Or Asleep?

A long time ago, before any of us here were born, the Zulu Nation led by the fierce Shaka went on the war-path in the southern part of the continent of Africa. They boiled over the land to such an extent as to even cause the great British Empire to tremble. Shaka-Zulu, is even a name remembered today on par with cruel warriors like Attila the Hun and Genghis Khan.

Now suppose you and I lived back then in the very territory these fierce battles were taking place. The warning comes to us, “Shaka and his army are headed this way; if you are wise you will pack quickly and get out of here and head for a safer place to stay.” But what if we just shrug our shoulders and say something like, “Oh, I really don’t think there is anything to worry about. I suppose there might be such a thing as a Zulu-Warrior, but it doesn’t concern me; and as for Shaka, well it seems to me he is just something that someone made up out of their imagination.”

What do you think would be our chances of survival in wartime with that kind of an attitude? Well, we would be what people call ‘a sitting duck’—bound to end up in a sad situation. But friends; the Bible warns us of a fierce enemy that is even worse than those infamous men of old—in fact he actually inspired their actions in their days!

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:” 1 Peter 5:8.

And yet most people today don’t even think he or his angels even exist! Even many Christians seldom take him seriously and yet they claim to believe the Bible. How did this happen? It was no accident that people in our day think of the devil as a cartoon character, a joke, or an abstract term for evil; not as a personal being engaged in grim warfare on this planet. The expression, “The devil made me do it!” makes people laugh.

Satan has always been a serious student of prophecy. So when he could see that certain time prophecies in the Bible were soon to end, and that knowledge was going to be increased on the earth, he held counsel with his angels that it would serve their purposes best if they worked secretly to get people believing that no such beings really exist and it was all just the superstition of ignorant people of the past. Basically, he has been very successful in his project.

What the Bible says:

"For we wrestle **not against flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12

Satan’s Declaration of War:

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14

“Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, **I am a God, I sit in the seat of God**, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:” Ezekiel 28:2

Jesus’ Response:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Genesis 3:15

Overcoming: Lesson 06

"As his prophetic eye saw the results of his sacrifice, Christ exclaimed, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." In the place where Satan has his seat, there will I set my cross. I will stand at the head of humanity. Through my merits man shall stand on vantage ground. I will be the great center to draw all men to God. As under the rule of Satan evil influences **have conspired** for the ruin of man, so under my rule the influence of my servants shall form a power to restore. The legions of hell will combine with the prince of darkness to oppose the laws of the kingdom of Christ; but to every man I will give his work, and with his work I will give power to win souls to God. **Every human being who will receive and believe in me I will use** in winning back the world to God." *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, 06-05-00*

In all human wars, both sides basically use the same methods, force; cruelty; destruction; and deceit. But in this combat Christ's methods are totally opposite to Satan's. It is vital that we understand Christ's **methods and aims in the battle**--or we can be found doing **our own thing** for the devil, thinking it is for Jesus.

Satan's tools and plans through the ages:

His Great Lies: "Yea, Hath God said?" "Thou shalt not surely die!" "Your eyes shall be opened" "Ye shall be as gods". Genesis 3

"And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine." Luke 4:6, 7.

As one looks at the original lies that man fell for, it is clear nothing has really changed; he is still telling the exact same ones and people are still falling for them! There is not a fallacy or false religion in the world that does not echo them in some way. Thank God they did not fool Jesus!

What Kind of People does Satan work through?

"Satan is constantly presenting inducements to God's chosen people to attract their minds from the solemn work of preparation for the scenes just in the future. He is in every sense of the word a deceiver, a skillful charmer. He clothes his plans and snares with coverings of light borrowed from heaven. . . He is wide awake, busily engaged in leading the world captive, and through the agency of worldlings he keeps up a **continual pleasing excitement** to draw the unwary who profess to believe the truth to unite with worldlings. The lust of the eye, **the desire for excitement and pleasing entertainment**, is a temptation and snare to God's people. Satan has many finely woven, dangerous nets which are made to **appear innocent**, but with which he is skillfully preparing to infatuate God's people. There are pleasing shows, entertainments, phrenological lectures, and an endless variety of enterprises constantly arising calculated to lead the people of God to love the world and the things that are in the world. Through this union with the world, faith becomes weakened, and means which should be invested in the cause of present truth are transferred to the enemy's ranks. Through these different channels Satan is skillfully draining the purses of God's people and for it the displeasure of the Lord is upon them." 1 Testimonies, 550, 551.

Satan uses:

1. Those who want riches
2. Those who want power
3. Those who want excitement
4. Those who are unwary
5. Those who profess the truth
6. Those who seek entertainment
7. Those who want worldly knowledge
8. Those who love the world and what it loves
9. Those who use worldly weapons
10. You and I, if we are not kept constantly by the power of the indwelling Christ.

Overcoming: Lesson 06

God's tools and plans through the ages:

What kind of people can God use? While the devil uses all and any that are not 100% on the Lord's side; the Lord, can only use people to channel His saving power through who are 100% on the Lord's side! Now, God can work through any one and anything, He even had a donkey rebuke a prophet, but the fullness of His keeping and saving power can only rest on those who are entirely His.

His children are:

1. Trusting fully in Him
2. Living by every Word of God
3. Totally surrendered to Him
4. Living up to All the light they have
5. Serving Him through genuine Love for Him; no selfish motives
6. Forsaking all to follow Him
7. Not compromising with error in any way
8. Loving His law and obeying it in His strength
9. Being led by the Holy Spirit—not the 'arm of flesh'
10. Using only heavenly weapons

Which side are you on? It's one or the other; if you are not 100% for the Lord, you are not really for Him at all. But there is hope for you! "Those who are now controlled by human ambition, human passions, shall become workers for Me." 6T 236

Worldly weapons: It is essential that we understand the weapons of this war; all too often we use Satan's methods and ways and think that it is OK because we are doing it for Jesus. This is untrue, because the only work done for Jesus that He accepts, is done with His methods and weapons. Worldly weapons include:

1. Force and compulsion
2. Any kind of manipulation
3. Majority rule; 'Ganging up' to force compliance
4. Persecution
5. Man made laws and rules
6. Flattery and Sweet Talk
7. Ridicule and sarcasm
8. Conspiracy and secret councils
9. Lying and all dishonesty
10. Character assassination
11. Accusations and judging of motives
12. Criticism and Hypocrisy
13. Bribery and appealing to appetite and love of entertainment
14. Anything that is not pure and honest

Heavenly weapons: We must realize that as fallen mortals, it is not natural to us to use Heavenly Weapons. We must have the 'Mind of Christ' and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit before we can even understand them! Worldly weapons naturally seem best to us, but Heavenly weapons are omnipotent

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the **weapons of our warfare are not carnal**, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)" 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4

1. Truth and the Word of God
2. All Prayer in the Name of Jesus
3. Loving Compassion
4. Self-Sacrifice, loving not their lives unto the death

Overcoming: Lesson 06

5. Courtesy and kindness
6. The power of the Holy Spirit and the Angels
7. Humility and meekness
8. Faith and Perfect Trust in God
9. Holy Boldness
10. Patience and longsuffering
11. Christ Our Righteousness
12. Godly Wisdom and the Fear of the Lord
13. The Blood of the Lamb which sealed the doom of evil
14. The certainty of our triumph through Christ

Waking up and hiding under the bed?

Because we have largely had a religion of 'head knowledge' of facts and man-made rules and the 'forms of godliness denying the power thereof', many of us grew up with the kind of 'hope' expressed in the little chorus that says, "He died for me on Calvary and someday He's coming back" . . . but I guess in the meantime I'm on my own and I have to keep the law and stand through all the trials and persecution 'without a mediator'.

Because of a Pharisee-type religion of works and rules, the threat of persecution has loomed over many of us like a huge thundering mountain threatening to crush us. No wonder many just 'don't want to talk about it'; don't want anything to remind them of it; and love those who will stand before them and give that 'Peace, Peace!' call; "They have healed also the hurt *of the daughter* of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Jeremiah 6:14

Having learned only too well the futility of the outward works and keeping the law in our own strength; they have gathered to them teachers who will say, "It's all right! Don't worry, it is impossible to stop sinning and Jesus understands."

The Holy Spirit doesn't let them settle there though; He keeps up a nag, nag, nag to repent and flee to the shelter while there is still time. So Church busy-ness, entertainment, meetings, groups, ministries, socials, and celebration, help sooth a little, at least it drowns that nagging voice for a while. For some they find that out and out worldly entertainment drowns it even better; naturally it does, it is designed to put out the 'light that lighteth every man'.

So when the Faithful 'cry aloud and spare not' and sound that noisy trumpet, "**The end is not near--it is here!**" well, is it any wonder they feel angry and upset? They want the sweet soothing lullabies and to be rocked in carnal security. For many when something hits too close and the alarm bells of the Holy Spirit go off in their hearts, they rush to their leaders and are so grateful to be patted on the head and told, "It's only a bad dream, go back to sleep, don't let those mean fanatics scare you!"

Friends; hiding under the bed is not the answer; neither is allowing the 'wool to be pulled over your eyes'. The Bible has the answer, 'Abiding in the secret Place of the Most High'. Friends, God has all the answers; Satan can never surprise or out-wit Him; but to be on His side for real, you have to go all the way! Satan uses the halfhearted and double minded, but God only can keep safely those who have surrendered all the way to Him. And He will keep them! There's no doubt about that!

So how do we devil-proof our life and home?

Even though we can't totally prevent satanic hassle and temptations in this world; we can have our lives and our families so that when Satan comes knocking, we can send Jesus to answer the door! Jesus made an interesting statement in John 14:30; ". . . the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Satan had nothing in Jesus that he could use to his advantage. There were no worldly desires or uncontrolled appetites, addictions, or selfish ambitions in Jesus! The problem is when he comes to us and our families he finds plenty in us; usually he finds us asleep or partying with all our doors wide open!

Overcoming: Lesson 06

We find ourselves quarrelling and arguing in our families; frustrated with our children; rushing through our days and yet not achieving very much; plagued with cravings and desires for foods and entertainment that we know deep inside are not right for a Christian; angrily resenting it when anything reminds us that we are more of a hypocrite than a real Christian; and finding spiritual things to be too often sort of unreal to us here in our daily world. If this is how it is with you, it is all too common; but it will prove eternally fatal unless we repent and turn from it to the Living God!

First Things First:

What are your first thoughts when you return to consciousness after a night's sleep? If they are anything other than Godward; such as darting up a quick silent or audible prayer to God and dedicating yourself to Him, asking in the name of Jesus for guiding and keeping power and protection in your life today, then it is no wonder these other things are hitting you! Satan wants to get a head-start on you, but you can shut the door in his face when you turn your very first thoughts upward to God. It takes no time at all to do this and it can even be done as you are heading to the washroom or responding to the needs of a small child.

About Prayer: there are some important facts about prayer that we all need to take seriously. First we need to know that God does want us to communicate with Him; we know that we can only do so through Jesus' name but God says:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18

It is interesting that even various spiritualist eastern teachers that put so much emphasis on meditation and seeking for 'enlightenment', will tell you that you will be very unlikely to ever be able to commune with their god. I have said point blank to some of them that I speak with God regularly, and they have responded with only contemptuous denial. As far as they are concerned, you may try for a whole lifetime, and maybe receive some vague enlightenment at the end—maybe not. Their god is just a vague, impersonal, implacable force, not a personal loving heavenly Father. But what is God's promise to us?

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13 "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: **I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain:** I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." Isaiah 45:19

But God does warn us of some serious problems that could get in the way of our communication with Him. First off He warns that cherished sin will cut us off from Him.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:" Psalm 66:18

Now this does not mean that if I fall into sin or if I am struggling to overcome that I am left on my own; Never! This refers to when we excuse or rationalize and refuse to turn from things we know are wrong in the sight of God. Love of sin will break our connections.

Seeking after any form of the occult also blocks communication with heaven! There are so many subtle kinds of spiritualism these days and sad to say many Christians do not see any problem with them. Things like astrology—reading your daily horoscope. People believe that what 'sign' you are born under has an effect on your character. Getting someone to tell your fortune by any method, even 'just for fun' is the same as consulting a sorcerer. Have you ever seriously considered the fact that you may be praying and God is not listening?

Those who mix with these things alienate themselves from God, drive away the Holy Spirit, and put themselves where, 'though they make many prayers, **God will not hear them!**' This writer knows of those who found this to be all too true in their own experience. As soon as any eastern or pagan religious practices are brought into the life, though one may pray ever so earnestly, the heavens are as brass above them. The only prayer God wants to hear from such people is the prayer of repentance and surrender.

Overcoming: Lesson 06

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that **he will not hear.**" Isaiah 59:2

"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: **yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.** . . ." Isaiah 1:15

If you find yourself in any of these situations, break away from them; get rid of anything that may be connected to them; and fall on your knees in repentance and confession before God! He will forgive and cleanse you, and He will hear your prayers when you chose to put away these things from your life.

Your own Personal Devotions:

We spoke earlier of turning your thoughts to the Lord first thing on awakening; then you also need to have some private time for personal prayer and Bible reading—this is to fortify you with what you need for the day. Many folk find they have to get up early so as to get time for this, but all who do it testify that it makes all the difference in their walk with the Lord! Then those who have a family should also have a short but interesting family worship together with the children.

The Family Altar morning and evening: Do we need to offer sacrifices morning and evening today in our homes? Yes indeed; but it is not lambs and goats that the Lord wants from us; notice these quotes.

"Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. In the service of the Jewish priesthood we are continually reminded of the sacrifice and intercession of Christ. All who come to Christ today are to remember that His merit is the incense that mingles with the prayers of those who repent of their sins and receive pardon and mercy and grace. Our need of Christ's intercession is constant. Day by day, morning and evening, the humble heart needs to offer up prayers to which will be returned answers of grace and peace and joy. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifice God is well pleased" (MS 14, 1901). {6BC 1078.6}

"Like the patriarchs of old, those who profess to love God should erect an altar to the Lord wherever they pitch their tent. If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. Fathers and mothers should often lift up their hearts to God in humble supplication for themselves and their children. Let the father, as priest of the household, lay upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. In such a household Jesus will love to tarry.

"From every Christian home a holy light should shine forth. Love should be revealed in action. It should flow out in all home intercourse, showing itself in thoughtful kindness, in gentle, unselfish courtesy. There are homes where this principle is carried out--homes where God is worshiped and truest love reigns. From these homes morning and evening prayer ascends to God as sweet incense, and His mercies and blessings descend upon the suppliants like the morning dew. PP 144.

Pillar of cloud and fire:

When ancient Israel were camping in the wilderness, over the tabernacle in the center of the camp they could see a pillar of cloud by day and at night the pillar shone as if made of fire. They could actually see the symbol of the presence of God with them! We may not see this over our homes today with our physical eyes, but if we seek to serve the Lord and we spend that sacred time in personal and family devotions daily, we can have the privilege of asking for this same kind of protection over us and our families! There are many things we do not receive that heaven really wants us to have, only because we fail to ask for them!

Where is Jesus today?

By the way, do you actually know where Jesus is today and what He is doing in heaven? Well, in 1844, the early Advent believers suffered a great disappointment, because they thought that Jesus was coming back on

Overcoming: Lesson 06

October 22, 1844, so the Lord began to send some encouraging messages in visions to a young girl named Ellen Harmon.

As the ones who refused to give up their faith in God's Word, even though others were laughing at their distress, turned to more diligently study the Bible together; God also gave some guidance to a young believer named Hiram Edson, which clued him into what had actually taken place in the heavenly sanctuary! Jesus had transferred His work from the 1st apartment of that sanctuary, the Holy Place, to the 2nd, called the Most Holy Place. Soon after this the Lord confirmed this in a vision to Sister Ellen, and she saw the heavenly sanctuary and Jesus' work there. Here is a little of her description:

"I was shown what did take place in heaven at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844. As Jesus ended His ministration in the holy place and closed the door of that apartment, a great darkness settled upon those who had heard and rejected the message of His coming, and they lost sight of Him. Jesus then clothed Himself with precious garments. Around the bottom of His robe was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. A breastplate of curious work was suspended from His shoulders. As He moved, this glittered like diamonds, magnifying letters which looked like names written or engraved upon the breastplate. Upon His head was something which had the appearance of a crown. When fully attired, He was surrounded by angels, and in a flaming chariot He passed within the second veil.

"I was then bidden to take notice of the two apartments of the heavenly sanctuary. The curtain, or door, was opened, and I was permitted to enter. In the first apartment I saw the candlestick with seven lamps, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and the censer. All the furniture of this apartment looked like purest gold and reflected the image of the one who entered the place. The curtain which separated the two apartments was of different colors and material, with a beautiful border, in which were figures wrought of gold to represent angels. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the second apartment. I saw there an ark which had the appearance of being of the finest gold. As a border around the top of the ark, was most beautiful work representing crowns. In the ark were tables of stone containing the ten commandments.

"Two lovely cherubs, one on each end of the ark, stood with their wings outstretched above it, and touching each other above the head of Jesus as He stood before the mercy seat. Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward to the ark, representing all the angelic host looking with interest at the law of God. Between the cherubim was a golden censer, and as the prayers of the saints, offered in faith, came up to Jesus, and He presented them to His father, a cloud of fragrance arose from the incense, looking like smoke of most beautiful colors. Above the place where Jesus stood, before the ark, was exceedingly bright glory that I could not look upon; it appeared like the throne of God. As the incense ascended to the Father, the excellent glory came from the throne to Jesus, and from Him it was shed upon those whose prayers had come up like sweet incense. Light poured upon Jesus in rich abundance and overshadowed the mercy seat, and the train of glory filled the temple. I could not long look upon the surpassing brightness. No language can describe it. I was overwhelmed and turned from the majesty and glory of the scene." Early Writings 251, 252.

There is so much more to be said about this subject than we can cover here today, but we are told that we can by faith come into the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus stands before the Mercy Seat interceding for us, and we can present our requests, offer our thanksgiving and praise and Christ mingles with them the merits of His own life of perfect obedience. Our prayers are made fragrant by this incense. Christ has pledged Himself to intercede in our behalf, and the Father always hears the Son.

What are some of the privileges we have that we can ask for in the name of Jesus? Actually, anything we need! Jesus wanted us to know that so much He repeated it over and over again! We are told:

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. John 14:13, 14.

Overcoming: Lesson 06

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” John 15:16

“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:23, 24.

We can ask for protection for your home and shielding your children from harm and evil; we can ask for help and protection for ourselves and others; we can of course repent and ask for forgiveness of sin and power to overcome temptation.

As we read and study God’s Word and the Spirit of Prophecy writings, we can find more and more ways we can raise a standard against the evil attacks of the powers of evil against us and our families. We can ask that Satan’s forces be bound and cast out of our homes and that God will send the holy angels to encamp round about us. When we find ourselves in dangerous or trying circumstances we can dart up as prayer and ask Jesus for an extra angel to help us!

The important key in all this though, is that we cannot have Satan’s stuff in our homes, and lives, and be enjoying Satan’s music and his kind of entertainment, and be seeking after forbidden pleasures or spiritualism, and still receive God’s blessings! We have to be fully on the Lord’s side or we are not on His side at all!

Singing hymns of Praise: This is not just something to do at church; did you know that singing of hymns and spiritual songs has a powerful healing effect on us, both physically and spiritually. Also Satan’s angels do not like to hang around where Jesus is praised and His name is uplifted in song and prayer. Singing cheerful gospel hymns can also lighten our burdens and lift our hearts when we are burdened and weary. This is one of our best spiritual weapons that we don’t use near as much as we should!

But again, Satan has his counterfeits, any music with a loud beat or that causes you to want to clap and sway to the rhythm is not God’s kind of music but it is related to that used in devil worship. You can tell simply whose music it is by how it affects you; if it lifts your heart heavenward and brings sacred thoughts to your mind; that is a good sign. But if it affects you more physically, making it hard to sit still; causing you to have to sway and clap and dance—this is not God’s music!

Keep in mind that Satan specializes in working on our feelings; while God wants us to use our minds in worshipping Him. Satan can give us a thrill; cause us to have sensations and other physical impressions. He can cause us to feel so good about something we are doing that we are sure it must be blest of God. The only safe way is always let the Word of God be your guide, even when you ‘don’t feel like it’!

One of the most important rules of walking with the Lord is that while you may be able to walk side by side with other believers, you dare not be a follower of any man no matter how great he may seem to be!

What is the shortest chapter in the Bible? Answer: Psalm 117.

What is the longest chapter in the Bible? Answer: Psalm 119.

Which chapter is in the center of the Bible? Answer: Psalm 118.

Fact: There are 594 chapters before Psalm 118.

Fact: There are 594 chapters after Psalm 118.

Add these numbers up and you get 1188.

What is the center verse in the Bible? Answer: Psalm 118:8.

Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives?

Psalm 118:8 KJV. “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.”

Now isn't that odd how this worked out (or was God in the center of it)?

The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their lives and that they want to be in the center of His will, just send them to the center of His Word.