

Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren:

The thing we, as the remnant body at this end time, most need to know is what Christ laid down for His Church to do in order to enter into the Kingdom of God.

As we draw close to the Second Coming of Christ and we see each day come with different things, we need to know what to do and how to go about them.

The truth is, our world is in rebellion against God. Man always thinks he is going to solve his problems, but he never has. It seems success is always just beyond his reach. Why? The Holy Scripture is full of reasons.

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jeremiah 10:23).

Why? Because carnal man has always rebelled against God—even from the very beginning. Human reasoning and satanic deception have caused every so-called minister of God and all common people to rebel against Him. As the Bible says, he—Satan—deceived the whole world. In almost 6,000 years since Adam, Jesus Christ is the one exception—the only human being who was never overcome by His own carnal nature, and was never deceived by Satan the Devil. Through His perfect obedience Christ overcame, where Adam and all other human beings failed.

Matthew 4:1–11 shows that Christ successfully overcame every temptation Satan threw at Him, and He set the example for us to follow—that we have to overcome.

Let us begin looking for evidence in the Book of John. Right before Jesus was to be crucified, He told His disciples, ". . . I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). And just a little farther over He said:

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

Brethren, do we see how these come to us? Temptation and tribulation come in large and small packages. Even though these are coming to us, Christ says we have to overcome them to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Christ says He has overcome the world; will we overcome the world or will the world overcome us? This is the major question we need to ask ourselves everywhere we are.

God emphasizes the importance of overcoming by making it the condition He imposes on every one of His seven churches described in Revelation chapters two and three. There we have reference after reference showing that we are to overcome just as Christ said He did.

We are to overcome the world with its corrupt society. We cannot continue to be carnally-minded as Paul warns: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

Paul was a faithful and zealous apostle of God. He was inspired to write more books than all of the apostles. And at the time he was to be martyred, he was confident enough to state:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Timothy 4:7–8).

Those who will be given the crown of righteousness are those who overcame the world—including false teachers and their teachings—those who have refused to change the doctrine which God handed down to the church, and those who remain faithful.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy of the situation we are in now. Paul lists nineteen negative characteristics in 2 Timothy 3:1–5, not one of which reflects the attitude of an overcomer.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (2 Timothy 3:1–5).

So how does having to live in this society affect us? We cannot afford to allow ourselves to be sucked in by a laid-back "do-your-own-thing" society and its liberal permissiveness,

perverted conduct, evil influence, and general ridicule and abandonment of Bible-based teachings. In short, all of us need to be tough on ourselves and realize it is our sins and our mistakes we must fight to overcome! We cannot allow Satan to drag us back into this degenerated world.

The time is coming very soon, because of their gross disobedience and rebellion, that this world will taste the plagues of God, and where will He start to pour them out? Upon the church (Ezekiel 9:4–6). Brethren, converted overcomers believe and trust God, not frail man. The more we place our trust in human leaders, especially those in the church who are going astray, the more we tend to drift away from God! "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (Jeremiah 17:7).

The Apostle Paul gives us an important command from God concerning overcoming:

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles [unbelievers] walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:17–24).

Brothers and Sisters, think of this! We are called not because we are wise as per the world standard, nor rich with wealth, nor handsome, but because we are called with a purpose; and we must overcome what is coming which is contrary to God's Word and requirements.

What does it all mean in relation to overcoming? Let me put it this way: The key to overcoming is conversion, to be changed inside and go that different direction. After God's initial calling, it all starts with our repentance—an unconditional surrender to God to turn from our past way of life, to begin to obey His laws, and to overcome what might hinder us from obeying the voice of God, written in the Bible.

What we then have to do is fight a continuous battle against the three pressures that pull us in the wrong direction: self, society, and Satan. That means self still has carnal nature to overcome. Society exercises an even stronger pull upon each of us as it degenerates. Satan's desire to devour us increases in proportion to the remaining time he knows he has available, and believe me, he knows his time is short.

Overcomers are people whom God has called, who believe God—not man—who strive to do their part, and who are careful not to quench His Holy Spirit. If we do these things, we can and will overcome self, society, and Satan, as did Christ. Of those people who do, God says, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God."

The apostles and prophets overcame. The account in the Book of Hebrews, chapter eleven, records much more of the way they lived, what they did, and in general how they overcame all of the obstacles. What about us?

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months (James 5:17).

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne (Revelation 3:21).

As we know, there are hundreds of groups that came out of the parent organization calling themselves churches of God, but with various beliefs and doctrinal differences. We need to know that which is the truth and that which is false. Knowing this will help us to overcome the false doctrine.

Recently I met a deacon from one of the groups which came out of our parent organization. After this deacon knew that I belonged to Church of God, The Eternal, the man started to throw stones at me (accusations). He said that they do not recognize us as the Church of God because we keep Monday Pentecost, and we do not believe in divorce and remarriage. He ended by saying that they know we are Catholic.

How could I overcome this issue? By standing up to defend the faith once delivered. I asked him some questions which he could not answer:

- 1) Can God reveal false doctrine to His church for forty years and only afterward reveal the truth?
- 2) Does the Bible say that an apostle, prophet, pastor, etc. has authority to change the Word of God?
- 3) Are those who died back when Pentecost was kept on Monday lost?
- 4) Can you now as a deacon divorce and marry again?
- 5) Can we follow an apostle unconditionally even if he begins misleading the church?

The man could not reply to this and he finished by saying, "I DO NOT KNOW." This was his reply. I decided, at all cost, to defend the faith—to overcome these things at this time of the end.

The Apostle Paul said of these last days:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; . . . If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained (1 Timothy 4:1–2, 6).

Here Paul talks about the doctrine we have carefully followed. We know the doctrine God put into His church from the beginning; by knowing this, it will help us overcome the newly-invented, distorted, and so-called new-found faith.

We have to stand in the way and ask for the old paths where lies the good way. Knowing this will assist us to overcome the antagonists—those who think that by their sharp arrows they will succeed.

There are a number of promises that God has for those who overcome:

- 1) Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that *overcometh* shall not be hurt of the second death (Revelation 2:10–11) [emphasis mine throughout].
- 2) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it (v. 17).
- 3) But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that *overcometh*, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations (vv. 25–26).
- 4) Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that *overcometh*, the

same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life (Revelation 3:4).

- 5) Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that *overcometh* will I make a pillar in the temple of my God (vv. 10–11).

To be an overcomer, or to overcome, is to hold fast to what you learned before; to be made a pillar, we must overcome. Brethren, we have reached a time when we must overcome whatever is contrary to the will of God.

Overcoming requires: Strong faith, faith in Jesus Christ. It requires courage. It requires patience. And it requires the Holy Spirit of God.

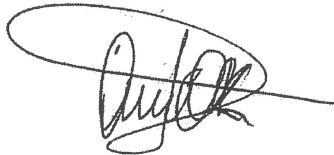
Paul told Timothy:

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith (1 Timothy 6:20–21).

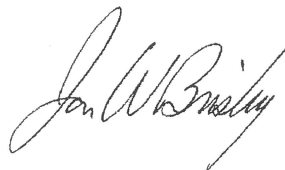
Brethren, this letter is to make us know what is required of us to be in the Kingdom of God. We have been attacked left, right, and center but, WE MUST OVERCOME.

May God the Eternal give every one of you power to overcome.

Yours with love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isaya Owak', enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.

Isaya Owak

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon W. Brisby', written in a cursive style.

Jon W. Brisby