

I mentioned last week that vv17-21 form an intimate unit, with a common theme or principle—do not repay evil for evil, but by good, seek to live peaceably with all men—this principle is stated (vv17-18), expanded by two motives (vv19-20), and summarized (v21)—having considered the first of these last week—it's my desire this morning to merely examine v21...

Most of the time, what makes a movie or a book interesting—is the general plot of good verses evil—of evil being overcome by good—the good guy defeats the bad guy—but, oh dear brethren—what we find in our text is the greatest of all plots—for it's reality and not fiction—it's the grand story of God overcoming evil with good—hate being defeated by love...

## I. The Text Simply Explained

### II. The Text Greatly Expanded

#### I. The Text Simply Explained

1. The first word that needs explaining is "overcome"—the word means—"to conquer, triumph over, or defeat..."
2. The word is used throughout the book of Revelation—to describe the people of God overcoming this evil world...
3. Rev.2:7—"To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God..."
4. The implication of this word is opposition—there's serious and strong resistance—that needs overcoming...
5. The point being—we should not be defeated or conquered by evil—but we should defeat or conquer evil with good...
6. [1] Do not be overcome by evil—that is—do not allow the unjust mistreatment of others—overpower or defeat you...
7. In other words—don't let them defeat you by becoming angry—and responding to them—with evil for evil...
8. Do not let the mistreatment of others—conquer you—do not let others—mould you into their image or likeness..
9. Thus—to be overcome or defeat by evil—means we respond to evil in a way the apostle has told us not to...
10. For example—if we curse those who persecute us, repay with evil with evil, or seek our own revenge—we have been overcome by evil...
11. Barnes—"They are overcome by evil who suffer [allow] their temper to be excited, who become enraged and revengeful and who engage in contention with those who injure them..."
12. [2] Overcome evil with good—that is—with good words and works—overpower or defeat them—with good...
13. Now—I suggested last week—within vv19-20 the apostle provides two motives to overcome evil with good...
14. [a] A sober motive, v19—"beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord..."
15. That is—it's God's right to repay evildoers, for ultimately speaking—all sin and evil is committed against Him...
16. [b] A hopeful motive, v20—"therefore, If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head..."
17. I mentioned last week—that this was a positive thing—and refers to the pains associated with evangelical repentance...
18. Thus—we are to conquer evil with good in one of two ways—either we conquer their wickedness with kindness...

19. That is—our kindness brings a sense of shame to their conscience—that curves the intensity of their evildoing...
20. Or else—our kindness, under the blessing of God, is used as a means of their eternal and everlasting salvation...
21. Prov.15:1—"a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger [a gentle tongue breaks a bone, 25:15]..."
22. This verse is similar to our text—notice it too has two parts—[a] overcoming evil, [b] being overcome by evil..."
23. [a] Overcoming evil—"a soft answer turns away wrath"—that is—not returning evil for evil but with good...
24. [b] Being overcome by evil—"but a harsh word stirs up anger"—that is—returning the evil of others with evil...
25. Here—I want to return to the NT—and briefly examine two passages from 1Peter—that we looked at last week...
26. 1Pet.2:11-12—"Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation..."
27. I mentioned last week—that the phrase—"in the day of visitation" can either refer to conversion or consummation...
28. That is—our enemies will be changed, and by the grace of God, glorify Him—instead of blaspheming Him...
29. Now—I also mentioned last week that—conversion is the result of the gospel—and not merely good deeds...
30. But—good deeds can serve—under the blessing of God—as the means to plough-up the soil of our souls...
31. 1Pet.3:1—"wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives..."
32. This doesn't deny the necessity of the word of God (1Pet.1:23)—but is an illustration of—overcoming evil with good...
33. 1Pet.2:13-15—"Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men..."
34. Here—the "silencing of evil"—may or may not result in conversion—but either way—evil is overcome by good...
35. Thus we overcome evil with good—either by silencing them, or, by the GRACE of God, converting them...

## II. The Text Greatly Expanded

Here—I want to expand upon our text—examining it from a broader perspective—the text specifically speaks of overcoming evil with good—that is—those who mistreat and abuse us because we're Christian—we are to overcome them with good—we are called to be OVERCOMERS—we are warriors in a fight against evil—and I want to suggest that all Christians—HAVE overcome evil, MUST overcome evil, and SHALL overcome evil...

### A. Christians HAVE overcome

1. This is why we are told to overcome evil with good—simply put—we overcome because Christ overcame...
2. That is—the ONLY reason Christians can overcome their enemies—is that Christ overcame His enemies...
3. In other words—Christians, in Christ Jesus, already have overcome evil—by the GOOD gospel of free grace...

4. Now—this presupposes that we were all, at one time, overcome or conquered by evil—we were enslaved to evil...
5. Yet—the Scriptures necessitate that I go further—we were not only slaves of Satan—but willing slaves of Satan...
6. Thus—the Son of God came to earth to overcome evil—that this victory—might be experienced by His people...
7. Or—put another way—Christ came to conquer our enemies—and liberate us from our enslavement to evil...
8. [1] What have we overcome—simply put, we have overcome our three enemies—sin, Satan, and this world...
9. Let me illustrate—all men are personally shackled, within a prison, which is overseen by a tyrannical warden...
10. That is—we are all enslaved to our own personal evil, enslaved to an evil world, which under the sway of the evil one...
11. Or—put another way—we are all willing slaves of sin, enslaved to a wicked world, which controlled by Satan...
12. 1Jn.2:12-14—"I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. 13 I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one..."
13. John makes a threefold distinction concerning Christian experience—"little children" "young men" and "fathers..."
14. He describes each groups of believers—by something that was especially or specifically true of those people...
15. "Little children" know their sins are forgiven—"fathers" know God—"young men" are strong and have overcome the evil one...
16. Now—this DOES NOT deny—that everything said about each group—is also true of the other two groups...
17. Thus—all of them are forgiven, know God, and have overcome the evil one—these are true of every Christian...
18. Thus—every Christian has overcome the evil one—every Christian is an overcomer—more than conquerors...
19. [2] How have we overcome—simply put—we have overcome sin, Satan, and this world—because Christ overcame...
20. Rom.8:37—"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" 1Cor.15:57—"but thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ..."
21. Gal.1:3-5—"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen..."
22. Christ, as our GREATER than Moses, liberated His beloved and enslaved people from a spiritual Egypt and Pharaoh...
23. [a] Delivered by payment, v4a—"who gave Himself for our sins"—He gave Himself as a ransom for our sins...
24. [b] Delivered by power, v4b—"that He might deliver us from this present evil age"—this present wicked world...
25. 1Jn.5:4-5—"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God..."
26. [a] When we overcome—"whatever is born of God overcomes"—that is—we overcome when we become Christians...
27. [b] What we overcome—"whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world..."

28. [c] How we overcome—"this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith"—that is—faith in Christ...
29. A person defeated by evil—is a person who has never overcome evil—and is thus—still a willing slave to evil...

#### B. Christians MUST overcome

1. Most of you will know—that the Scriptures often speak about two things that seem to contradict each other...
2. For example—Christian people HAVE BEEN saved, they are BEING saved, and they WILL one day be saved...
3. So too—there is a true sense in which Christians HAVE overcome, they MUST overcome, and they WILL overcome...
4. Now—that Christians MUST overcome evil is found in our text—"do not be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good..."
5. That is—evil in all forms—from evil people who dwell in an evil world—which is controlled by an evil being...
6. Christians are behind enemy lines—they are warriors—opposed by evil—which must be overcome by good...
7. CHS—"You must either be overcome of evil, or you must yourself overcome evil: one of the two. You cannot let evil alone and evil will not let you alone. You must fight, and in the battle you must either conquer or be conquered..."
8. What an amazing thought—Christians find themselves in an evil world, opposed by evil, armed only with good...
9. But—and this is very important—all that's needed to overcome—has been given to us for the sake of Christ...
10. In other words—Christians are not left to their own resources—they are not expected to overcome on their own...
11. Now—I want to suggest that every Christian has four major weapons—Gospel example, motives, power, and grace...
12. [1] Gospel example—that is—every Christian soldier is given the example of their Captain to lead and guide them...
13. Christ's life is the perfect example of love—love for God, yes—love for our neighbor, yes—and love for our enemies...
14. Lk.23:34—"then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" v47—"so when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous Man..."
15. Mk.15:39—"truly this man was the Son of God"—that is—He was God and Man—or—the righteous GodMan...
16. [2] Gospel motives—that is—every Christian soldier is encouraged by various gospel incentives or motives...
17. Rev.2:7—"To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" 2:11—"He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death" 2:17—"To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat" 2:26—"he who overcomes I will give power over the nations" 3:5—"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments" 3:12—"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more" 3:21—"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" 21:7—"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son..."
18. [3] Gospel power—that is—every Christian soldier is indwelt by the PERSON of the Holy Spirit of Christ...
19. 1Jn.4:4—"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world..."
20. By "them" is meant the false teachers of v1—"beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world..."

21. That is—evil men were attempting to overcome the saints—with the evil of their false teaching and doctrine...
22. John says—they (the saints) have overcome them—how?—"because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world..."
23. In other words—they are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ—who enables or empowers them—to overcome evil...
24. [4] Gospel grace—that is—every Christian soldier is given enough grace in Christ—to overcome evil with good...
25. Rev.12:11—"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death..."
26. They overcome the devil, this world, and sin—"by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..."
27. [a] By the blood of the Lamb—that is—by the atoning work of Christ—they were more than conquerors in Christ...
28. [b] By the word of their testimony—this phrase is often misunderstood by Pentecostals—as referring to our testimony...
29. But in fact it refers to—our testimony of God's word—or, our use of that word as it teaches about the Lamb...
30. Oh my dear friends—we overcame by Christ—and we can only continue to overcome—by the same Christ...

#### C. Christians SHALL overcome

1. Now only have Christians already overcome, have need to overcome, but they will, without exception, overcome...
2. I mentioned earlier—that Christians remain in enemy territory—surrounded by an evil world ruled by the evil one...
3. Evil attempts to overcome them, to defeat and conquer them—but we have the promise of God it never will...
4. Jn.16:33—"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world [2Pet.2:18-19]..."
5. [a] We will have tribulation in this world—that is—we will experience evil—that will attempt to overcome us...
6. [b] We should be encouraged—because Christ has already overcome this world—and His people shall also...