

Joseph Pastori

Central Focus of the New Testament

July 6, 2013

A Paper

Presented to

Professor, John W. Wyckoff, Ph.D.

Southwestern Assemblies of God University

Waxahachie, Texas

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Course

THE 5313 Biblical Theology of the New Testament

## CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	1
	A. The Purpose of the Conflict	2
	B. The Entities behind the Conflict	3
II.	Synoptic Gospels	5
	A. The Arrival of God's Kingdom	5
	B. The Advancement of God's Kingdom	6
	C. The Transfer of Kingdom Activity	7
III.	Johannine Literature	8
	A. The Light Triumphs over Darkness	9
	B. The Saints Overcome the World	10
	C. The Ultimate Victory over Evil	10
IV.	The Book of Acts	12
	A. The Kingdom Spreads through the Church	13
	B. The Influence Preserved through Purgings	13
	C. The Message Demonstrated with Power	15
V.	Pauline Epistles	15
	A. The Supremacy of Christ's Cross	16
	B. The Disarming of Spiritual Powers	16
	C. The Victory over Sin and Death	17
VI.	Other New Testament Writings	18
	A. The Inevitability of Evil Opposition	19
	B. The Necessity of Steadfast Endurance	20
	C. The Certainty of Ultimate Triumph	20



## INTRODUCTION

When my younger son, Shane, was a little child (perhaps five or six years old), I can remember having to give him a tough lesson in sound theology. It appeared to be a bedtime like any other. After reading a Bible story, we took time for prayer. Usually, this would prove simple, if not routine. However, this time his prayers put his childlike simplicity on a collision course with hard spiritual reality. As he offered his various supplications to God on behalf of his loved ones and family, he then prayed for the devil, "that he would repent and be saved."

Who would have thought that my child's simple bedtime prayers would put me in a deep theological quagmire! It wouldn't be the first time that I have had to be the bearer of hard truth to my son, and I have had to do it many times since. Yet, I can remember distinctly how it pierced his sensitive heart and made him cry. After all, to his childlike mind, God's love knew no limits, the cross of Christ could cover even the worst of sins, and any who repented and received Christ would receive the right to become a child of God.<sup>1</sup> However, like many relationships that have gone bad, I could only describe the problems between those allied with God and those standing in defiance against him as, "It's complicated!"

Nevertheless, he had to find out sooner rather than later that we as believers are engaged in spiritual combat with the

forces of darkness, and there is no détente. And now my son "became like one of us, to know good and evil," as it were, and he found out exactly where the battle lines were drawn in that age-old conflict.

### **THE PURPOSE OF THE CONFLICT**

Since the Garden of Eden, humankind has had to struggle with the problem and presence of evil in the world. In the face of seemingly senseless pain and suffering throughout the ages, people have often wondered where God is in all of this. People routinely question why or how a benevolent God could allow evil activity. Others conclude that the presence of gross evil testifies against the existence of God. Yet, the Bible teaches that, much like the Garden of Eden, "God is involved with his creation. The entire biblical narrative, from creation to consummation in Christ, shows the ways in which God's purposes intersect with history."<sup>2</sup>

According to Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave, the existence of evil actually has a way of serving God's ultimate plan for humanity, a redemptive aim that serves the overall good. They write, "It is evidently the purpose of God to secure a company of beings for His own glory who are possessed of that virtue which is the result of a free-choice victory over evil. But man cannot make a choice between good and evil unless evil

exists."<sup>3</sup> This presence of evil, though it serves God's goal in this age, will not continue for eternity. As Charles H. H. Scobie observes, the New Testament overall gives an clear expectation that a final triumph over evil will take place, and until then, God continues to work in human history to bring about his purposes.<sup>4</sup> In the mean time, God's people have the responsibility to work for the cause of good, even though humanity will not overcome evil in its entirety before the end of the age.<sup>5</sup> He observes further, "While the NT sees the possibility of limited progress within history (cf. 3-4.4), its main ground for hope is the promised victory over evil and all that is opposed to God at the final consummation."<sup>6</sup> Norman L. Geisler agrees, stating further that all things are headed toward a final conclusion that will bring about ultimate restoration:

History is headed toward a completion. At this end of time, there will be an ultimate victory of God over Satan and of good over evil. Evil will be separated from the good, and the righteous will be resurrected into a perfect body and a perfect state. The paradise lost at the beginning will be regained by God in the end.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Entities behind the Conflict**

His observation points out the nature of the powers behind the conflict between good and evil. Consistently throughout, the New Testament identifies Satan and the powers of darkness allied

with him as the enemies of God, believers in Christ, and all that is good. According to Scobie,

But what distinguishes the biblical view of the adversaries of God's reign is the recognition of their spiritual dimension. Building on views incipient in the OT, the NT witnesses clearly to an array of supernatural powers of evil, loosely linked to the dominant figure of Satan. Behind all earthly manifestations of evil lie cosmic powers opposed to God. For the NT these powers are real.<sup>8</sup>

Frank D. Macchia points out that Satan has no connection with God's redemptive purpose,<sup>9</sup> noting that God allows satanic opposition, but his ultimate redemptive will calls for complete victory over Satan's forces.<sup>10</sup> Scobie characterizes Satan's defeat as complete but not completed, borrowing an analogy from O. Cullmann comparing Satan's defeat with D-Day (the decisive battle that turned the tide of WWII in Europe) and the final consummation with VE-Day (the final triumph of Allied forces in Europe).<sup>11</sup> Though God reigns sovereignly over all creation (including the powers of darkness),<sup>12</sup> the New Testament records the working out of his ultimate victory over all evil powers:

They will be defeated in two stages (\*cf. Is. 24:21-22). The second stage can be expected in the eschaton; the first takes place in the ministry of Jesus, either focused in his exorcisms (Matt. 12:28; par. Luke 11:20) or in the cross event (John 12:31), and is then played out in the ministry of his followers (Luke 10:17-18), and in the very existence of the church (Eph. 3:10).<sup>13</sup>

The story of the New Testament, then, is how God works to bring these things about as human history approaches the consummation of all things at the end of the age.

### **SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**

The Synoptic Gospels place a heavy emphasis on the Kingdom of God. According to I. Howard Marshall, "The kingdom of God is the main theological theme in the teaching of Jesus. It is so announced in Mark 1:15 as the content of the gospel."<sup>14</sup>

### **THE ARRIVAL OF GOD'S KINGDOM**

Macchia notes that the New Testament places a much greater importance on overcoming the powers of darkness than the OT,<sup>15</sup> and it becomes readily apparent in the Synoptic Gospels. He writes, "Jesus confronted His audiences with the astounding assertion that the kingdom of God had broken in to clarify the conflict with the forces of darkness and to bring it to a decisive turn."<sup>16</sup> George Eldon Ladd points out that the Synoptic Gospels make clear that the enemies of God's Kingdom are not the heathen nations (as the Old Testament suggests), but the spiritual powers of darkness.<sup>17</sup> While Matthew, for example, places emphasis on Jesus Christ as the heir of the throne of David, he reigns over a spiritual kingdom; and the arrival of his kingdom means destruction for the powers of darkness. As



God's King, Jesus breaks the spiritual strongholds of darkness as he extends God's rule in the lives of people.<sup>18</sup> As Ladd observes, this presented a very different portrait of Messiah, which may have conflicted with the expectations of contemporary Jews.<sup>19</sup> He writes further,

What was present was not the *eschaton*, but the kingly power of God, attacking the dominion of Satan and delivering people from the power of evil. "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his goods" (Mt. 12:29). In these words, Jesus declares that he has invaded the kingdom of Satan and has "bound" the strong man.<sup>20</sup>

#### **THE ADVANCEMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM**

Though the kingdom of God has a definite future focus, it also had an immediate impact through the teaching and ministry of Jesus. Ladd notes, "Instead of waiting until the end of the age to reveal his kingly power and destroy satanic evil, Jesus declares that God has acted in his kingly power to curb the power of Satan."<sup>21</sup> Ladd observes that this further underscores the twofold manifestation of the Kingdom's advancement. Yes, the proclamation of the Kingdom looks forward to Satan's ultimate demise. Yet, in the mean time, people continue to receive deliverance from his power as the Kingdom continues to advance.<sup>22</sup> The manifestation of the Kingdom means power over sin, sickness,

demonic powers, and death,<sup>23</sup> causing considerable damage to the kingdom of darkness.<sup>24</sup>

All of this occurs, as Ladd puts it, "without disrupting the present structure of society." He goes on to observe that in this way evil and good will continue to exist in conflict in this world until the eschatological consummation. In other words, though the arrival of the Kingdom presents problems for the powers of evil, it by no means signals an end of enemy activity in this age.<sup>25</sup>

#### **THE TRANSFER OF KINGDOM ACTIVITY**

However, the Synoptics do call attention to developments that signal ultimate defeat for the powers of darkness. The real *coup de grâce* for Satan and his minions takes place at the cross. R.A. Torrey writes, "His dominion received its death blow at Calvary. The actual casting out thus secured may be in the future, but the death of Christ secured it and it is now assured."<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the resurrection of Jesus seals Satan's doom as it reveals Christ's power over the enemy of all humanity—the grave. In this, God's ultimate triumph over the powers of darkness is assured.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, with the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the Activity of the Kingdom passes to his followers, the church, and will continue to inflict injury on the enemy's kingdom. In

Mark's account of the Great Commission,<sup>28</sup> the evangelist places considerable emphasis on a continuation of Kingdom ministry that will weaken Satan's strongholds in the lives of people. The gospel proclamation should advance with signs and wonders that bear witness to the power of God and spoil the enemy's kingdom. As Stanley M. Horton notes, "Both the gifts of healing and miraculous powers demonstrate to us and to the world around that Jesus is indeed Victor."<sup>29</sup> He writes further that these signs follow believers that act in faith and obedience in declaring the gospel of the Kingdom.<sup>30</sup> The significance here comes in the passing of this Kingdom activity from Christ to *all* who profess faith in Jesus, not only the Apostles. As Macchia states,

God wills to triumph over satanic opposition, not only for believers, but also through them. Therefore, the triumph of God's grace has a history and a development. This triumph is not dependent primarily on human cooperation for its progress and accomplishment, but in its strategic fulfillment it does include the history of humanity's faithful response to God.<sup>31</sup>

### **JOHANNINE LITERATURE**

The Apostle John's writings have a distinctive literary style and thematic focus, which causes them to differ greatly from that of the other New Testament writers. Still, they also concentrate on the ultimate victory of God over evil and contribute to the overall balance and unity of the New Testament's message.

### **THE LIGHT TRIUMPHS OVER DARKNESS**

Though John's writings also highlight the demise of the Adversary, he places much less emphasis on the advance of the Kingdom through the gospel proclamation, with all of the associated signs and wonders. Instead, he characterizes the spiritual battle in terms of the light of Christ invading the darkness of Satan's domain and exposing the associated evil. Macchia observes, "Indeed, the coming of the light into the world clarified the works of darkness (John 3:19-21). This means that the demise of darkness can be understood only in the light of God's grace and deliverance."<sup>32</sup> This is not to say that the Gospel of John downplays Christ's miraculous power. Rather than feature the miracles as a demonstration of the plundering of Satan's kingdom, those signs carefully selected by the Apostle serve more to bear witness to the deity of Christ. In referring to Jesus' healing of the blind man, Roy B. Zuck puts it this way:

As the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5), Jesus has defeated the darkness (cf. 1:5). Thus this miracle has particular significance for John as one of the seven sign-miracles he employed to point to Jesus' identity and messiahship. John developed the antithesis of light and darkness at considerable length in his gospel.<sup>33</sup>

John likewise makes Christ's atoning death the focal point of defeat for Satan,<sup>34</sup> marking the beginning of the end for the

powers of darkness. According to Macchia, "When Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" He was declaring the completion of His passion for our redemption and of His decisive victory to be fulfilled in the resurrection over death and the forces of darkness headed by Satan.<sup>35</sup>

### **THE SAINTS OVERCOME THE WORLD**

Christ's victory over the Adversary extends to his followers, for they overcome even as he did in the face of this world's opposition.<sup>36</sup> Daniel L. Akin highlights the security that believers experience in Christ, obtained by the Lord's victory over the devil.<sup>37</sup> In fact, he writes, "A part of Christ's redemptive mission was to destroy the works of the devil....The devil's works (*erga*) are all those sinful and evil attitudes and actions of which he is the source."<sup>38</sup> Believers can have confidence because Christ has triumphed, and his victory makes it possible to overcome the adversary, the world,<sup>39</sup> and the power of sin and death in this life, along with providing the hope of eternal life.<sup>40</sup>

### **THE ULTIMATE VICTORY OVER EVIL**

This would come as welcome news to first-century Christians who are weary with persecution (or possibly anticipating it). John likely wrote Revelation to encourage believers to endure

hostility, knowing that God will ultimately triumph and bring judgment on the ungodly.<sup>41</sup> Their persecution of the righteous will ultimately serve as their undoing, as long as God's people remain faithful.<sup>42</sup> Believers can find encouragement in their suffering, knowing that it has an ultimate connection with Christ's victory over evil.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, Revelation serves to give Christians of all generations a clear picture of the final victory to come. John reveals Jesus, not only as the Lamb of God, but also in all his glory in a way that his followers have not yet experienced. Christ, the Alpha and Omega, stands ready to claim ultimate victory over the powers of darkness.

This is another way of saying that God is the beginning and the ending of all things, including human history. God is from everlasting to everlasting; he is Lord over everything from creation to the consummation of history. To him belong the final victory over evil and the rulership over all things.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to claiming victory, the testimony of God's holiness will vindicate his judgments and justify his ways to humankind in the end.<sup>45</sup>

Like other apocalyptic literature, Revelation places emphasis on theological concepts such as "relation between heaven and earth, the rule of God over both, and his ultimate victory over evil."<sup>46</sup> This is portrayed most vividly at the climax of the book, the Battle of Armageddon, the scene of the

final conflict, which ends in defeat for the Antichrist and his followers.<sup>47</sup> Duffield and Van Cleave summarize it as follows:

"The Beast gathers his subject nations together to make war with the Lamb at the Battle of Armageddon, where he is utterly defeated and cast, together with the False Prophet, into the Lake of Fire."<sup>48</sup> Their defeat comes by way of the glorious appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed in all of his sovereign majesty as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.<sup>49</sup> However, the final triumph over evil will occur later when Satan himself is judged and cast into the lake of fire. That will mark God's ultimate victory over evil. Scobie describes it this way:

The final eschatological battle and the final victory over Satan himself are portrayed in Rev 20:7-10. Having been released after the thousand years and having gathered the forces of Gog and Magog (above, 4-4.4b), Satan and his cohorts surround "the camp of the saints and the beloved city" (v. 9). Fire comes down from heaven and consumes them, and finally the devil is thrown into the lake of fire.<sup>50</sup>

### **BOOK OF ACTS**

The Book of Acts, written by Luke (who wrote one of the Synoptic Gospels), serves as an extension of sorts to the Synoptic Gospels, chronicling the advancement of the Kingdom of God as it spread from Jerusalem throughout the Roman Empire. It also marks the completion of the transfer of Kingdom responsibilities to the Apostles and their followers.

### **The Kingdom Spreads through the Church**

Having promised that his followers would receive power to advance the Gospel of the Kingdom by way of the Holy Spirit,<sup>51</sup> Jesus entrusted the ministry into their hands, along with the assurance that they would have the same spiritual impact.

According to Macchia,

“On the Day of Pentecost, the same Spirit of God by which Jesus defeated the forces of darkness was transferred to the Church. In the power of the Spirit, the Church could continue Jesus’ ministry of “doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil” (Acts 10:38).”

As the church grew, so did its influence, largely because of the tangible impact their ministry had in the lives of people.<sup>52</sup> In time, this caused the message to spread throughout the region, as people received long-needed relief (by way of healing and deliverance) from Satan’s affliction. Of this, Horton writes, “This was a critical point in the history of the Church, and God did special things that demonstrated the power of the gospel and the presence of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>53</sup> Duffield and Van Cleave further observe that this spoiling of the devil’s kingdom extended the victory won by Christ.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Influence Preserved through Purgings**

However, at the same time ungodly influences from within the church threatened to undermine the message and dilute its



influence through spiritual corruption. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, God acted swiftly in retribution in order to clarify his displeasure with this and to disassociate the church from evil influences that could misrepresent the character of Kingdom ministry. According to Horton, "He is indeed holy, and it does not pay to lie to Him. This encouraged holiness and undoubtedly kept others from the same kind of sin."<sup>55</sup> As such, Christ's followers have to remember that Kingdom ministry must take place in the power of the Spirit, in keeping with his holiness. Even so, this instance presents a foreshadowing of the various corrupting influences that the church would face in times to come (as addressed in the epistles).

Moreover, the manifestations associated with the Gospel attracted the attention of those who would use it as a magic formula of sorts, recognizing its power and perceived that it could bring worldly influence.<sup>56</sup> This met with severe censure because of the failure to respect the holiness associated with the power of the Spirit. Likewise, when the sons of Sceva attempted to use the name of Christ like a magic formula, it backfired, further underscoring the holy, spiritual nature of the Gospel's power.<sup>57</sup> As Horton observes, "From what the demon had done to the sons of Sceva they learned that using the name of Jesus is not a magical formula. "Only those with a personal relationship with Christ and who invoke his name in humble faith

are in the correct position to see God act to drive out demons."<sup>58</sup>

### **The Message Demonstrated with Power**

Even in the face of suffering and persecution, the gospel continued to bear fruit. Though Paul and his associates often suffered unjust treatment for the sake of the gospel,<sup>59</sup> they still ministered in the power of the Spirit with signs following, proving that "Triumph and victory may characterize the attitude of each citizen of the kingdom of God, and Holy Spirit-empowered authority is given to be applied to realize results. Yet, God did not promise life without struggle."<sup>60</sup> Even in confrontation (as with Elymas the sorcerer, for example), the Holy Spirit's power proved superior to the powers of darkness. Horton writes, "It is important to note also that the truth of the gospel preached in the power of the Spirit, and this alone, is effective against astrology, pagan magic, and the occult (see also Acts 19:11-20; cf. Luke 10:19)."<sup>61</sup>

### **PAULINE EPISTLES**

No doubt these experiences had an influence in Paul's teaching and the emphasis that he places on the spiritual conflict that all believers in Christ face in this life. Even so, through Christ's death on the cross, the believer

experiences triumph over, not only the spiritual powers of this age, but over the other personal enemies of the Christian—sin and death.

### **The Supremacy of Christ's Cross**

For the believer, the cross of Jesus represents the focal point of victory over all evil, since it "is the most (though not the only) decisive point in the redemptive plan of God for humanity."<sup>62</sup> Paul regards the death of Christ on the cross as the lofty price by which God purchased victory for humanity,<sup>63</sup> noting that the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ make it possible for believers to experience victory in all its facets.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Disarming of Spiritual Powers**

For one thing, Ladd observes that, according to Paul, Christ's cross signals a victory of the forces of darkness.<sup>65</sup> He goes on to write about the triumph over these powers that believers experience through Christ's death:

We have seen that Paul's worldview includes the concept of an invisible world of both good and evil spirits. People are in bondage not only to the Law, sin, and death, but also to this evil spiritual world. One of the purposes of the mission of Christ is to destroy "every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:24-25). In some unexplained way, the death of Christ constituted an initial defeat of these powers.<sup>66</sup>

Through the blood of the cross the powers of evil have experienced defeat, making a statement of God's abhorrence of sin, while giving him a decisive triumph over evil by way of his goodness.<sup>67</sup> In his analysis of Colossians 2:15, which speaks of Christ's ultimate triumph over hostile spiritual forces through his cross, Ladd sums it up this way: "Christ has disarmed the spiritual powers, stripping them of their insignia of rank or of their arms. Thus the verse states that by his death Christ triumphed over his spiritual enemies, winning a divine triumph over the cosmic powers."<sup>68</sup> Through the church and its ministry, God intends to extend Christ's victory over these evil entities.<sup>69</sup>

### **The Victory over Sin and Death**

The power of the cross doesn't stop at triumph over spiritual powers. It also gives the believer victory (in a way that nothing else before could) over sin and death. Paul places emphasis on the power that the Law of Moses exerted over sinful humanity.<sup>70</sup> However, Christ's atoning death provided redemption from the curse of the law,<sup>71</sup> freeing people from long-held captivity in sin. According to Millard Erickson, "Now the message of the cross is that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law and thus freed us from the slavery in which Satan held us."<sup>72</sup> This leaves the enemy without a course for

exploiting the effects of sin in the lives of people. Erickson writes further,

By bearing the penalty of our sin and thus satisfying once and for all the just requirements of the law, Christ nullified Satan's control over us at its root—the power to bring us under the curse and condemnation of the law. Christ's death, then, was indeed God's triumph over the forces of evil, but only because it was a substitutionary sacrifice.<sup>73</sup>

By releasing humanity from the effects of sin under the law, Christ also freed people from the fear of death. The resurrection of Christ assures people of a hope beyond the grave. Not only do they need not fear the effects of sin in terms of death (eternal condemnation), but they also have a hope beyond the grave.<sup>74</sup> What a spectacular reversal for humanity! Duffield and Van Cleave describe the despair of generations preceding Christ as follows: "As a dread monarch on a sepulchral throne, death had continued to reign over the sons of men. Each succeeding generation had arisen full of hope, only to go down before the same deadly foe."<sup>75</sup> However, the Christian has assurance beyond the grave. Horton rightly declares, "For the believer, though death is still 'the last enemy' (15:26), it cannot be victorious over us."<sup>76</sup>

#### **OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS**

The remaining writings of the New Testament consist of epistles written to various groups. Still, they share many common themes with each other (as well as the rest of the New Testament), especially as it relates to God's ultimate triumph over evil, and thereby maintain the unity of the New Testament as a whole.

### **The Inevitability of Evil Opposition**

Like the other New Testament writers, the authors of these epistles dealt with the effects of evil in various forms, all of which threatened to have a discouraging effect upon the believers. Whether they faced struggle in the form of the temptation to return to Jewish ceremonial law (Hebrews),<sup>77</sup> the various trials and temptations of life (James),<sup>78</sup> suffering for the faith (1 Peter),<sup>79</sup> or dealing with false teachers (2 Peter<sup>80</sup> and Jude<sup>81</sup>), the authors realized that they had to address these matters. According to Leon L. Morris, "The New Testament writers never underestimate the strength of evil; they encountered it in their own lives as they tried to live out the faith in the face of strenuous opposition, and they were sure that it would continue to the end of time."<sup>82</sup> With that in mind, they expected such opposition, knowing that it was a characteristic of the times as events headed toward the end. Scobie writes that "in the NT is there an emphasis on an intensification of opposition

before the final victory. To outward appearances at least, Satan will continue to dominate this world; he will even have a kind of final fling before his eventual defeat."<sup>83</sup> He writes further that, in the struggle between good and evil in this age, "things will get worse before they get better."<sup>84</sup>

### **The Necessity of Steadfast Endurance**

For this reason, these writers counsel believers to endure suffering and trials in this life, knowing that, as Duffield and Van Cleave put it, Satan is already defeated.<sup>85</sup> The believer can take courage in the realization that the enemy has his own share of defeats to endure.<sup>86</sup> Likewise, believers can take courage in the testimonies of those who have gone before,<sup>87</sup> knowing that God gave them grace to overcome also. For example, in referring to Noah, Zuck points out that his testimony of maintaining a faithful witness while enduring mocking and ridicule would have encouraged Peter's readers.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, as they ponder Christ's victory over all evil powers, they could take courage, knowing that "Jesus' descent into hell to proclaim the victory of the Cross is meaningful as a sign to all that there is no dimension of evil or darkness outside of the reach of the Cross."<sup>89</sup>

### **The Certainty of Ultimate Triumph**

This leads to the main source of confidence that sustained the faith of the New Testament writers—their knowledge that God would ultimately triumph!<sup>90</sup> They looked forward to a time (as they waited with Christ) when his enemies would be his footstool.<sup>91</sup> Again, in his observations about 1 Peter, Zuck offers observations that have universal application for those who look forward to God's ultimate victory:

In the wider context of 1 Peter these verses are designed to encourage suffering believers that victory is ultimately theirs in Christ. All the ungodly and the enemies of the gospel will be defeated, while Christians, though they suffer now, will be delivered and will share in Christ's glorious triumph in the future.<sup>92</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

I have heard many preachers, in an attempt to encourage believers to persevere in their Christian faith, say something to this effect: "I've read the back of the book, and we win!" Thought the statement may sound trite, it does summarize the end of the matter for those who believe in Christ. Revelation chapters twenty-one and twenty-two give the reader a picture of life as it will be when God has finally triumphed over all evil.

The message of the New Testament, with all of its variety, ultimately leads believers to this conclusion: God will achieve total and complete victory over Satan and all forms of evil. In this life, we still engage in a struggle requiring that, as good soldiers, we take up the full armor of God,<sup>93</sup> and fight the good



fight of faith.<sup>94</sup> The believer can take courage in knowing that even though we may have to endure hardships in this life,<sup>95</sup> we still have victory assured. In addition to God's abiding presence,<sup>96</sup> we have the power of the Holy Spirit that will enable us to triumph over the enemy in this life.<sup>97</sup> We can look ahead with confidence and take courage in Paul's declaration: "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57, NKJV)."

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> John 1:12

<sup>2</sup> K. E. Brower, "Eschatology," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Duffield, Guy P., and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), 148.

<sup>4</sup> Charles H. H. Scobie, *Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 232.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 740

<sup>7</sup> Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 62.

<sup>8</sup> Scobie 2002, 265

<sup>9</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "Repudiating the Enemy: Satan and Demons," *Systematic Theology: Revised Edition*, ed. Stanley M. Horton (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2007), 202.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Scobie 2002, 248-49

<sup>12</sup> G. H. Twelftree, "Spiritual Powers," Alexander and Rosner 2000

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 78.

<sup>15</sup> Horton, *Systematic Theology: Revised Edition* 2007, 198

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Donald A. Hagner, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 65.

<sup>18</sup> *New Spirit-Filled Life Bible*, ed. Jack W. Hayford, Paul G. Chappell, Kenneth C. Ulmer et al. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Bibles, 2002), 1293.

<sup>19</sup> Ladd 1993, 142

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 63

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 63-64

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Stamps, Donald C., and John Wesley Adams. *Life in the Spirit Study Bible*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 1416.

<sup>24</sup> Luke 10:18

<sup>25</sup> Ladd 1993, 110

<sup>26</sup> R. A. Torrey, *What the Bible Teaches a Thorough and Comprehensive Study of What the Bible Has to Say Concerning the Great Doctrines of Which It Treats* (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898), 534.

<sup>27</sup> J. G. Millar, "Victory," Alexander and Rosner 2000

<sup>28</sup> Mark 16:15-20

<sup>29</sup> Stanley M. Horton, *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2005), 276.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 112

<sup>31</sup> Horton, *Systematic Theology: Revised Edition* 2007, 202

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 198

<sup>33</sup> Roy B. Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 178.

<sup>34</sup> G. K. Beale, "Revelation (Book)," Alexander and Rosner 2000

<sup>35</sup> Horton, *Systematic Theology: Revised Edition* 2007, 199

<sup>36</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: a Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 230.

<sup>37</sup> Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, vol. 38, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 105-106.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 147

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 111

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 124

<sup>41</sup> Marshall 2004, 549

<sup>42</sup> G. K. Beale, "Revelation (Book)," Alexander and Rosner 2000

<sup>43</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1848.

<sup>44</sup> Stamps and Adams 2003, 2039

<sup>45</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed. *The Pulpit Commentary: Revelation*. (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 23.

<sup>46</sup> Stephen Motyer, "Apocalyptic," *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, electronic ed., Baker reference library; Logos Library System (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, 538

<sup>49</sup> Walter M. Dunnett, *Exploring the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 97.

<sup>50</sup> Scobie 2002, 264

<sup>51</sup> Acts 1:8

<sup>52</sup> Acts 5:12-16

<sup>53</sup> Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2001), 122.

<sup>54</sup> Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, 106-07

<sup>55</sup> Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* 2001, 118-19

<sup>56</sup> Acts 8:18-23

- <sup>57</sup> Acts 19:13-17
- <sup>58</sup> Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary 2001*, 324
- <sup>59</sup> Acts 14:19; 16:19-24; 17:13
- <sup>60</sup> Hayford, et al. 2002, 1518
- <sup>61</sup> Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary 2001*, 237-38
- <sup>62</sup> D. J. Moo, "Paul," Alexander and Rosner 2000
- <sup>63</sup> J. G. Millar, "Victory," Alexander and Rosner 2000
- <sup>64</sup> D. J. Moo, "Paul," Alexander and Rosner 2000
- <sup>65</sup> Ladd 1993, 612-13
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., 476
- <sup>67</sup> H. A. G. Blocher, "Evil," Alexander and Rosner 2000
- <sup>68</sup> Ladd 1993, 476-77
- <sup>69</sup> Hayford, et al. 2002, 1642
- <sup>70</sup> Romans 3:19-20
- <sup>71</sup> Galatians 3:13
- <sup>72</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 839.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>74</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:13-17, 20-22
- <sup>75</sup> Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, 202-03
- <sup>76</sup> Horton, *I & II Corinthians: A Logion Press Commentary 1999*, 161
- <sup>77</sup> Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:19-23, 38-39
- <sup>78</sup> James 1:2, 12; 4:1-10
- <sup>79</sup> 1 Peter 1:6; 3:13-17; 4:12-14
- <sup>80</sup> 2 Peter 2:1-22
- <sup>81</sup> Jude 3-19

<sup>82</sup> Leon L. Morris, "Second Coming of Christ," Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* 1996

<sup>83</sup> Scobie 2002, 259

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, 506

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Hebrews 11

<sup>88</sup> Zuck 1994, 450

<sup>89</sup> Horton, *Systematic Theology: Revised Edition* 2007, 200

<sup>90</sup> Leon L. Morris, "Second Coming of Christ," Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* 1996

<sup>91</sup> Hebrews 10:12-13

<sup>92</sup> Zuck 1994, 449

<sup>93</sup> Ephesians 6:10-18

<sup>94</sup> 1 Timothy 6:12

<sup>95</sup> 2 Timothy 2:3

<sup>96</sup> Hebrews 13:5-6

<sup>97</sup> Luke 10:19

### Works Cited

- Akin, Daniel L. *The New American Commentary: 1, 2, 3 John*. Vol. 38. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001.
- Alexander, T. Desmond, and Brian S. Rosner, . *New Dictionary of Theology*. Electronic Ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Duffield, Guy P., and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983.
- Dunnett, Walter M. *Exploring the New Testament*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001.
- Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Electronic Ed., Baker Reference Library; Logos Library System. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996.
- Elwell, Walter A., and Barry J. Beitzel. *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B., David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer, . *New Dictionary of Theology*. Electronic Ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Geisler, Norman L. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Baker Reference Library*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.
- Hayford, Jack W., et al. *New Spirit-Filled Life Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Bibles, 2002.
- Horton, Stanley M. *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary*. Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2001.
- . *I & II Corinthians: A Logion Press Commentary*. Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 1999.
- Horton, Stanley M., ed. *Systematic Theology: Revised Edition*. Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2007.

- . *What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2005.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Edited by Donald A. Rev. Hagner. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Menzies, William W., and Stanley M. Horton. *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective*. Edited by Stanley M. Horton. Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 1993.
- Scobie, Charles H. H. *Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.
- Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. *The Pulpit Commentary: Revelation*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1909.
- Stamps, Donald C., and John Wesley Adams, . *Life in the Spirit Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- Talbert, Charles H. *Reading John: a Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*. Rev. ed. Reading the New Testament Series. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005.
- The Holy Bible, New King James Version*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1982.
- Torrey, R. A. *What the Bible Teaches: A Thorough and Comprehensive Study of What the Bible Has to Say Concerning the Great Doctrines of Which It Treats*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898.
- Zuck, Roy B., ed. *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. Electronic Ed. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994.