

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

**IN CHRIST JESUS.**

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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## ***To THE ONE CONQUERING***

In some of my most recent articles, I have written of the need to *conquer* and those who do conquer are *conquerors* or ones who will be found worthy to enter the coming eon to reign with Christ. Most translations use the word *overcomes* in place of *conquers*, and most commentators use the word *overcomers* in place of *conquerors*. The Concordant Version uses the word **conquers**.

The Greek word translated **conquers** or **overcomes** is *nikaō*, which means “to subdue (literally or figuratively): conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory” (*The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996).

The word *conquer* [and its other forms] is used 28 times in the Concordant Version of the New Testament: Luke 11.22; John 16.33; Romans 3.4; 8.37 (intensified form), 12.21 (twice); 1 John 2.13, 14; 4.4; 5.4 (twice), 5; Revelation 2.7, 11, 17, 26; 3.5, 12, 21 [twice]; 6.2 (twice); 11.7; 12.11; 13.7; 15.2; 17.14; 21.7.

*Webster’s New World Dictionary*, The World Publishing Company, 1966, gives the following definitions: *Conquer* means “to get possession or control of by or as by winning a war; to overcome by physical, mental, or moral force; defeat; get the better of; to win; be victorious.” A *conqueror* is a person who conquers, that is, a conqueror is a victor. *Overcome* means “to get the better of in competition, struggle, etc.; conquer; to master, suppress, prevail over, surmount or overwhelm; as overcome obstacles; to be victorious; win.”

Further, according to Webster’s, *conquer* and *overcome* are synonyms, which means that “they have nearly identical or closely related meanings in one or more of their senses.” However, they often have subtle differences. “*Conquer* implies gaining mastery over someone or something by physical, mental, or moral force (to conquer bad habits).” “*Overcome* implies overpowering of an antagonist or the surmounting of difficulties.” For comparison, other synonyms of *conquer* are *vanquish*, which “implies a thorough overpowering or frustrating, often in a single conflict or battle”; and *overthrow*, which “implies a victory in which a prevailing power is dislodged by force.”

Based on the difference in the words, I can see why so many use the word *overcomes*, for it implies struggle with other forces; there is no question we are in a spiritual battle with forces of darkness, not to forget the battle between the flesh and the spirit. However, I contend that all who are in Christ are in the One who conquered sin, death, and the world. He alone has brought a people into His victory. John recorded Jesus’ word on the matter: **I have conquered [overcome] the world** (John 16.33 CV). In other words, our Lord is the Victor. He has the victory over the world, and He will return to this world system to rule over it in His righteousness.

To me, *overcome* seems too weak of a word for what our Lord accomplished and what we accomplish in and through His life. He is the Victor, not merely an overcomer, as if He merely overwhelmed some obstacles. He didn’t just overcome obstacles; He defeated them and rendered them totally inoperative. He didn’t just master them; He conquered them as one who fights in a battle and totally wipes out the enemy. He got the better of all the enemies and won. He has defeated the greatest enemy, death. This is true victory, and for this He is our Master, Lord, and King. As I see it, the word

*conquer* is a much more powerful word that actually embraces *overcomes* as well as *vanquishes* and *overthrows*. He accomplished all of this and much more.

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, John heard the Lord command the messengers to write to the seven ecclesias, which are representative of the entire history of the ecclesia of Christ. **“Who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the ecclesias. To the one conquering, to him will I be granting...”** (CV). What is told to one ecclesia is appropriate for all the other ecclesias as well. The spirit is saying to conquer, and for those who do conquer, there is reward in the coming millennial kingdom of Christ, which pertains to being part of the new creation in the first resurrection. Those who conquer will be granted to eat of the tree of life; will not be injured by the second death; will be given of the hidden manna, a white pebble and a new name; will be given authority over the nations when Christ rules with a rod of iron; will be clothed in white garments; will be part of the city of God, the new Jerusalem; and will be granted to sit upon His throne (see Revelation 2-3).

The question is: How are we to conquer? Are we to work up a sweat and strain to conquer? Nay! As Paul tells us, our conquering is not in ourselves but through Christ who loves us.

**What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? According as it is written that “On Thy account we are being put to death the whole day, we are reckoned as sheep for slaughter.” Nay! in all these we are more than conquering [*hupernikaō*] through Him Who loves us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.** (Romans 8.35-39 CV)

Paul used the Greek word *hupernikaō*, which is an intensified form of *nikaō*, meaning “to *vanquish beyond*, that is, *gain a decisive victory*:—more than conquer.” *In Him*, we more than conquer. It is a proclamation of victory. It is not an exhortation to get into the victory but a proclamation *from* victory. **Through Him**, we are in the victory, that is, Christ’s victory. But what conquers all? It is the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Are you more than conquering through Him who loves us? Nothing can separate us from this love, and all who believe are assured of immortality one day. But the question is, in which day, the day of the Lord or the day of God 1,000 years later.

Interestingly, on January 2, 2007, I had a dream of people buying and selling athletic shoes, specifically *Nikes*, and then I heard, **“The race is over. It is finished.”** In Greek mythology, the noun *Nike*, which is derived from *nikaō*, refers to a goddess of victory. In our modern day, *Nike* is the name given to a very popular athletic shoe, as well as a US guided missile. Throughout the year, the Lord spoke to my heart about being in the victory as the end of our present wicked eon comes.

It reminds me of the parable of the ten virgins in which five were ready and five were not ready for the Bridegroom (Matthew 25.1-13). The ones that were not ready were instructed to go and buy oil, but on their return it was too late to enter the wedding feast. A day will come when it will be too late to buy oil; perhaps it is closer than we realize. The picture I have from the dream is that the ones buying and selling the *Nikes* were the five virgins who went off to buy oil when the announcement came of the imminent arrival of the Bridegroom. They were buying, but it was too late. The race of the faith was over at that point. When the midnight shout goes out, either one has been living in the victory that is in Christ or has not been living in the victory. **“Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!”** (Matthew 25.6 NASB). One is a conqueror and one is not.

I leave you with this question: Is the race almost over? **“Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour”** (Matthew 25.13 NASB).