

James Rafferty Q1-L8-2025-Christ Has Overcome the World  
-Feb 20

Lesson 8: (Thursday)

February 15-21

**Thursday**      *February 20*

## **Christ Has Overcome the World**

If everything occurred according to God's ideal will, there would never have been evil but only the perfect bliss of love and harmony. Eventually, the universe will be restored to this perfect, ideal will of God. In the meantime, God is working out His will in a way that takes into account the free decisions of His creatures.

Imagine a baking competition in which all participants are required to use some particular set of ingredients, but they can add any other ingredients they want in order to bake any kind of cake they want, as well. In the end, whatever cake a baker ends up making will be determined, at least partially, by some ingredients that the baker did not choose.

Similarly (in this limited respect), because God has committed Himself to respecting creaturely freedom of the kind necessary for love, many of the "ingredients" that make up world history are not chosen by God but are actually the opposite of what God desires.

In this view, divine providence is not simply one-dimensional, as if God unilaterally controls everything that happens. Rather, this requires (at least) a two-dimensional view of God's providence. Some things in this world are caused by God, but other occurrences are the result of the free decisions of creatures

(as are all evils). Many things happen that God does not want to happen.

MATTHEW 6 AND THE LORDS PRAYER IS A CLEAR CONFIRMATION OF THIS BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT GODS CHARACTER OF LOVE. JESUS SAYS THAT WE SHOULD PRAY:

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN (APPARENTLY BECAUSE IT IS NOT) AND DELIVER US FROM EVIL (IF EVIL WERE PART OF GODS WILL WHY WOULD WE PRAY TO BE DELIVERED FROM IT?)

**Read John 16:33. What hope, even amid tribulations, does the text offer us?**

**33** 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.

Particularly in times of suffering or trial, people's faith may waver because they hold the mistaken belief that God will or should spare them from suffering and trials in this life. But Jesus tells us a very different story, warning His followers they will experience trials and tribulations in this world, but there is hope, for Christ has overcome the world (*John 16:33*).

The fact that we encounter suffering and trials does not mean that this is what God ideally wants for us. We must always keep in mind the big picture: the great controversy. However, we can be confident that, while evil itself is not necessary for good, God can bring good even out of evil events. And, if we trust God,

God can use even our sufferings to draw us closer to Him and to motivate us to be compassionate and to care for others.

ROMANS 8:28

**28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *His* purpose.

2 Cor 1:3-6

**3** Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

**4** Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

**5** For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

**6** And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.