

Week 1: Spiritual Learning Journal

Alexander Steward wrote the following regarding the portrait of “overcoming” in Revelation:

John’s primary goal in the language of Revelation is to motivate his hearers to overcome. Every part of the book is designed to transform his hearers into overcomers. For some of his hearers, this encouragement to overcome reinforces their present convictions and conduct, while for others, the encouragement to overcome calls for drastic changes to their beliefs and actions. For every hearer, John presents overcoming as necessary to participate in God’s new creation.

The book gives several commands that help us understand what it means to overcome. The hearers are to:

1. Remember from where they had first fallen! (Rev. 2:5)
2. Repent! (2:4, 16; 3:3, 19)
3. Do the works you did at the beginning when filled with faith! (2:5)
4. Do not fear threatening suffering! (2:10)
5. Be faithful unto death! (2:10)
6. Wake up! Strengthen what is about to die! (3:2)
7. Remember and keep what has been received and heard! (3:3)
8. Hold on to what you have! (3:11)
9. Fear God! Give Him glory! Worship Him! (14:7)
10. Come out from Babylon! (18:4)
11. Rejoice over Babylon’s judgment! (18:2)
12. Praise God! (19:5)
13. Rejoice, exult, and give God glory! (19:7)
14. Continue in righteousness and holiness (22:11)

These commands can be summarized in 5 major themes: repentance, perseverance, obedience, witness, and worship.

Look up the following verses in 1 of the 5 categories that interest you and explore this topic further:

1. **Repentance** (Rev. 2:5, 16, 21, 22, 3:3, 19; 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11).
 - a. What do you learn about repentance? (For example, who needs to repent of what and why?)
 - b. How do these verses compare to Romans 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; and 2 Peter 3:9?
 - c. What would be the evidence of repentance from the Bible’s perspective and yours?
 - d. Write out a prayer to God that incorporates the need for and expresses repentance.
2. **Perseverance/Endurance** (Rev. 1:9; 2:2, 3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12), **be faithful** (1:5; 2:10, 1, 3:14; 17:14), **hold fast** (2:13, 25; 3:11).
 - a. What do you learn about perseverance/endurance, being faithful, and holding fast?
 - b. How do these verses compare to Romans 8:18-28?

- c. Write out a prayer to God that incorporates the need for endurance, faithfulness, and holding fast to what God has taught you.
3. **Obedience:** Keep the commandments and do good works (Rev. 1:3; 2:2, 5, 19, 26; 3:3, 8; 12:17; 14-12-13; 22:7).
 - a. **What do you learn about obedience from these passages?**

I learn that Obedience is paramount! I studied the Torah last year into this year, and the ringing theme of obedience throughout really drove home it's importance. Seeing it bookended here in Revelation also, I am learning how important obedience is (and just how rare and difficult it is!)
 - b. **How does this teaching compare to 1 Peter 1:13-25? What does Peter add to your understanding?**

To me they compare very well. 1 Peter 1:13 was a theme verse for me last year. I didn't know why at the time, I just felt the Lord leading me to stay "sober, self disciplined, spiritually alert". I suppose it was His way of keeping my attention fixed, because throughout the end of last year and into this year I have been on a beautiful journey of gaining greater Biblical literacy. So, I love the continuity between what I understand of the Torah's repeating the need for total obedience, Peter's repeating the need for obedience BUT coming from a heart that understands Jesus' love, and then John's repeating the need for obedience but coming from a perspective of the potential repercussions as it relates to the end of this age
 - c. **Write out a prayer to God that incorporates the need for or a commitment to obedience.**

Lord, I thank You for Your word and its consistency and continuity. I thank You that You never change. Thank You for reminding me that You are in charge, and not me. You are leading, and I am following. Thank You for giving us clear boundaries and guidance to follow so that we might be safe and remain in Your will. I pray that I might keep catching this revelation of the importance of total obedience to You and the direction from and examples of Your Word. Let total obedience be my theme this year so that I might build finer habits and continue to grow and mature my own personal character so that I might keep becoming more of who You have created me to be. Amen.
4. **Witness:** (Rev. 1:2, 5, 9; 2:13; 3:14; 6:9; 11_1-14; 12:10-12; 17; 19:10; 20:4-6.)
 - a. What do you learn about witnesses from these passages? (Who is a witness to what?)
 - b. How do these passages compare with Hebrews 12:1-29? What insight is added?
 - c. Write out a prayer to God that incorporates the need for or a confession of witness.
5. **Worship:** (Rev. 4:1-11; 5:6-14; 7:9-17; 18:1-5; 11:15-19; 12:10-12; 14:1-5, 7; 15:1-4; 16:1-7; 19:1-8)
 - a. Write out a definition of worship based on these passages from Revelation.
 - b. What did you learn about worship from these passages in these contexts?
 - c. Write out a prayer to God that incorporates the need for or an expression of worship.