

Overcoming the Strongholds of the Mind

(Sabbath During UB)

Fred R. Coulter—April 8, 2023

Here we are during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and we know that God tells us to put out the leaven and eat the unleavened bread. This is the Word of God. Let's look at the world the way it is today, as Jesus said, 'As it was in the days of Noah before the Flood...' Let's see how God looks at the world.

There are many people who think that people are good by nature. If they're trained decently they are probably good people in the world. However, what does God look to?

Always remember that when we're small our mind is not organized for anything, yet; we have to be trained. First think you need to do, as God says, *obey your parents!* Why? *Because when you're little you don't have the correct amount of education and training to make good decisions!*

- when you're not taught the right way
- when you don't know God's way
- when you never heard of God's way

or

- when you just completely reject God's way

Here's what happens, this is how God looks at it:

Genesis 6:5: "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually."

We can see that today! Have you seen what the new 'religion' of transgenderism is bringing? Why? ***Because Satan is out of the closet big time!*** There's open worship of Satan!

Watch the last things that I've done on Church at Home, and you will see how this world really, really is! We try to avoid a lot of these things because we don't want to get involved in them, which is good.

However, there are other things that come into our lives that presents what you might call *the sin within!* ***The sin within does not know the way!*** The first thing we have to admit is this, and this is all part of repentance and coming to understand:

- your own way
- God's way
- why we need Him
- why we need His commandments
- why we need His Holy Spirit

Jeremiah was a priest and what called by God to bring 40 years of prophecy to the Jews before they were exiled.

Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD..."

Here's the confession, and the older you get the more you understand it. When we're young and think we're smart, when we're filled with the leaven of vanity, and remember that ***the best that any man or woman can ever be is vanity; that is without God!***

Why? *Because we were made to have God's Spirit and God's Laws and His Way written in our hearts and minds!* That's the ultimate goal of this life.

Verse 23: "O LORD, **I know that the way of man is not in himself...**"

- Isn't that happens with everything? *If we all get together and we're going to make it better!*
- Have they ever made it better? *Maybe for a while!*
- If you put forth your best effort you're going to be ***what you want*** to be?
- Those women ***who want*** to be men, they can think about it all day long, but do they become men?
- And men ***who want*** to become women, they can think all day long, can they become women? ***NO!***

Likewise with the human mind, it is evil only continually! If you don't believe that, just take a look at all of the movies and television and everything that's online and so forth, they are all based on:

- human reasoning
- demonic influences
- satanic direction

That's where we are today!

So, Jeremiah says, this is what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about. This is what the commandments of God are all about: to keep us headed in the right direction where we need to go:

Verse 24: "O LORD, **correct me...**"

The easiest way to have God correct you is that you study the Word of God and with God's Spirit you correct yourself. Otherwise, you may end

up in a trial that God is using to correct you, because you didn't do that. I can tell you this: *the older you get the more you understand how evil that the mind is!* The ultimate thing that we're to establish is how to overcome the sin within!

God is speaking in a warning, and we need to look at this today. I was watching Tucker Carlson Tonight (Fox News) and he brought out what is true. Those who insist on transgenderism are making themselves, each one, a god. Tucker understands that when people do things against God and think that they're over God and can throw away the laws and commandments of God, they make themselves a god!

Jeremiah 16:10—*God speaking*: “And it shall come to pass, when you declare to this people all these words, and they shall say to you, ‘Why has the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? Or what *is* our iniquity, or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?’”

What is it? *If you reject God and you reject His Laws, everything starts with that!* Since we (as a nation) have kicked God out of:

- the schools
- the churches
- the government
- the individual's lives

Everyone is told, ‘be the best that you can be.’ *That's the way evil comes about!*

Verse 11: “Then you shall say to them, ‘Because your fathers have forsaken Me,’ says the LORD, ‘and have walked after other gods...’”

There's never been a time in our lifetime that there have been so many things that people have that are other gods. What we're fighting now, and we're going to see, is Satan *moving, moving, moving* to attack those who are true Christians! He will attack anybody who professes the name of Jesus Christ. All because they've gone after other gods:

“...and have served them, and have worshiped them, and have forsaken Me, and have not kept My Law. And you have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, you walk each one after the stubbornness of his evil heart, without hearkening to Me” (vs 11-12).

This is what is happening and what we're looking at in the world today. It's a tough world to live in. They also ran a special on how bad San Francisco is getting.

Jeremiah 17:5: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Cursed...’ *That means you automatically:*

- bring a curse
- bring problems
- bring the wrong decisions

“...is the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the LORD” (v 6).

God has called us to Himself! That's what's so good, and it's more evil than the world is out there.

Verse 6: “For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes. But he shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land that is not inhabited.”

Notice in v 7 that these are the people of God; this is what we need to keep in mind all the time!

Verse 7: “Blessed... [What did we read on the other one? *Cursed!*] ...is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose hope is the LORD.” *Let's see how trust works:*

- What does trust involve?
- What does it mean?
- How do we apply it?

that starts with:

- loving God
- believing God
- keeping His commandments

That's how it comes!

Proverbs 3:1: “My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commandments... [*always, always, always*] ...for they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace, to you. Do not let mercy and Truth forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart” (vs 1-3). *Think about that!*

This is what God wants! He wants to write His Law in our mind and inscribe them! That is a perfect description of how our mind works to think, store knowledge, etc. Write it! Why? *Because that will help direct you! It will give you the thoughts on how to make right thoughts!*

Verse 4: “And so you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.”

Now this next verse is the key thing, look at what it says. There are two key important things right in this one verse.

Verse 5: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart... [at all times] ...and lean not to your own understanding.”

Why? *Because everyone does what is right in his own eyes!* Look at what we have today! What a mess!

I was watching the news last night and it was one riot after another riot, after another riot, after another killing!

Verse 6: “In all your ways acknowledge Him... [Then what happens?]: ...**and He shall direct your paths.**”

- Have you ever gone along and all of a sudden BING! there’s an idea that comes into your mind that’s a good one?
- Who do you suppose put that there?
- Do you have the Spirit of God? *Yes!*
- Do you study His Word? *Yes!*
- Do you live by every Word of God? *Yes!*

God is there with you!

This next verse is one we’ve read over and over how many times, but deceitfulness is tricky. It can sound really, really good.

Tucker Carlson had Franklin Graham on to give a little Easter speech. All the words were very nice and basically based on Scripture. He said a true thing: *we all need to repent of our sins and have Jesus in our lives! But he never tells people what sin is! That’s deceitfulness!*

You can speak the Truth partially, but is that the whole Truth? We don’t invite Jesus into our lives; *He invites us into His life!* The other way around!

He calls us! We don’t call God! We can seek Him and He will answer us, that is true. But then we have to follow through.

Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

This is why in Gen. 6:5 God based the Flood on the thought of people. All their actions were evil because their thoughts were evil.

Verse 10: “**I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins...**”

God can know the thoughts of anyone at anytime that He wants to. But He’s not going to clutter up His life with everybody’s evil thoughts coming to Him. But the reins are the way that God can check into the mind and heart of anyone at any time!

“...even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” (v 10).

God will do that, and that’s why we overcome. This is what repentance is all about! As we grow in grace and knowledge and go year-by-year, we repent all the time! Why? ***Because we need the thoughts of God! Not our thoughts!*** That’s what gets the world into problems, and our lives into problems. When you get your mind centered on yourself, and what you want, rather than on God and what He wants, and what He wants you to do.

This is why we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread every year. We put out the leaven—which represents sin—and we put in the Truth:

- the Word of God
- the righteousness of God
- the Spirit of God

so that we can overcome! Remember two things from the Churches of Rev. 2 & 3:

- How does He start out every Church? ***I know your works!***
- How does He end the messages to each of the Churches? ***To the one who overcomes...!***

That’s the goal of Unleavened Bread:

- we overcome sin
- we overcome self
- we do that

The panicle thing of what God wants it all to come to ***is to love God!***

His love is everlasting! It’s not unconditional! His love, and our love to God must come together by keeping the commandments of God with a willing heart and mind to accomplish what God wants us to accomplish.

We will see how to overcome the sin within, because we’re all fighting sin all the time! This is my 62nd Feast of Unleavened Bread, and we know that it gets down to the question:

- Why is there sin?
- Couldn’t God have made us so we wouldn’t sin?
- Does God want robots?
- Can robots, by choice, love? *No!*

It’s like all of this artificial intelligence; it’s not artificial. It’s the collection of people’s sayings put into a program where it can speak. There’s no choice about it! There’s no personality in it! ***God wants free choice!***

Did God give free choice to the angels? *Yes, He did!* It says of Satan that he was perfect in his ways until sin entered in. *Sin is the transgression of God's Law!* Even angels are to keep the Laws of God. Plus whatever other laws that they're subject to that we are not aware of, which I'm sure that there are a number of those.

God wants free moral agency. He wants us to choose Him, to love Him, by our own choices. Then that becomes truth coupled with God's Spirit. Adam and Eve were given a choice. They ate of the tree that they shouldn't eat of, and it brought judgment onto all human beings. We're all born with it. When babies are born, they're sweet, lovely, cuddly, cute, all of this.

But they have free moral agency, too, have you ever tried to deal with a five-year-old who doesn't want to do something? How about a teenager who absolutely refuses and spits in your face? *That's choice!* So, what happened after Adam and Eve sinned. God judged Satan, God first of all judged Himself, the prophecy of His coming to be the sacrifice for the sins of all human beings *past, present and future!* At that point all future human beings.

Then there was the judgment against Satan, against Eve and against Adam. The inherent judgment that we all received, that is passed on genetically to all human beings is what we're going to talk about right now. Paul labels that *the law of sin and death!*

That's in us! Enough that we can't have our own righteousness. We might be able to overcome some of it, like God told Cain when he brought the wrong offering, God said, 'Sin lies at the door but *you* must rule over it!'

God expects us to use our choice to overcome sin. When we're converted, He gives us His Spirit so we can. That's the key! But even people in the world, if they're trained properly with proper morals and certain understanding that is parallel with God's Laws and things, you have a good society. But when you get rid of God, you have what you see on the news every night, and in the newspapers. It snowballs and gets worse and worse ***because a little leaven leavens the whole lump!*** If you don't cut it off and stop it, it keeps growing and growing and growing!

Satan enters into it, and that's what we're seeing now with Satan out of the closet. So, Paul answered the question: How did sin begin? *We know it began with Satan the devil, but Paul is talking about human sin!*

Romans 5:12: "Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world..." *That is the human realm!*

Sin was already in the realm of angels. So, you had two-thirds of the angels stay faithful and loyal to God by choice. You had one-third of the angels led by Satan the devil who went off in rebellion and they became the demons and Satan became the king over them.

God has His righteous angels on one side, and Satan has his evil angels on the other side. *Here we are in middle!*

Verse 12: "Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world... [which also tells us that if Adam would have said to Eve, 'Put that fruit down; don't eat it!' He could have stopped it right there, and we probably would have entered into a time like it's going to be during the Millennium.

That's why it's called in Acts 3, when Christ returns *it's the restitution of things!* Human nature will have that sin of law and death mitigated to the point that it will not be as devastating as it is now with those of us in this world today.

"...**and by means of sin came death...**" (v 12).

Dust you are and unto dust you shall return, and no one except Christ has overcome that.

Every time I turn to NatGeo, it seems like they're digging into Egyptian tombs and looking at bones, teeth, writings and so forth.

Sidebar: I'll tell you one thing, they had to have electricity to have lights to put all of those decorative things in those tombs that are under the ground. If you don't have lights you can't see, and it certainly wasn't done by torches, because all the ceilings would be black with soot.

Are they all dead? *Yes!* Some people have said that they have to go after the dead to find out what happened. *Read the Bible, that will tell you!*

"...**and by means of sin came death**, and in this way death passed into all mankind..." (v 12)

That is *there's a death gene!* All the scientists are trying to figure out how to find that death gene so we can get rid of it. But they can't get rid of it because God won't let them.

"...and it is for this reason that all have sinned" (v 12).

How many times have it come out that some people come out and look so good and are wonderful and great people. Then all of a sudden something happens and you find out how evil they really are.

That's why God judges the thoughts as we covered earlier.

Let's see what Paul has to say about this in Rom. 7. in Rom. 6 he talks about repentance, baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit, and that we are under grace. This means that if you have the Holy Spirit of God—which all of us do—that we have direct contact with God the Father.

Think about that! That's why it's so important that we yield to God and use our free choice to love Him! It doesn't matter where you are or who you are, whatever! You come to God on His terms with repentance and baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, and then He will lead and guide your life as you work spiritually toward accomplishing what God wants.

Rom. 7 is one of those chapters that when I first read it, I thought: *Was Paul ever converted? You read it!*

Romans 7:1: "Are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law) that the law rules over a man for as long a time as he may live?" *All kinds of laws:*

- Laws of God
- laws of the body
- laws of the environment
- laws of the air
- laws of the soil
- laws of the water

Whatever! All affecting human beings! You have to have a pulse rate within a certain range, and a temperature within a certain range. You must have elimination of liquids and solids. Those are laws. When those laws are broken you get sick! That's what sickness is!

I might mention there needs to be more trust in anointing and taking care of your own body. God has given you a body, every single one of us. How do you take care of it?

- look at what happens when people abuse it
- look at what happens to all of these druggies when they get hooked on it.

Their lives, their minds, everything is ruined!

Now Paul talks about marriage next. Then this blends into the covenant that God had with Israel, where He says in Isa. 54 that 'your Maker is your Husband.'

Here's a principle to understand with the covenant that God made with Israel: Covenants cannot be terminated until for those who participate

in the covenant *one of them has to die!* That's why with marriage it should be: *until death do you part!* That ends the covenant relationship of marriage.

The covenant relationship with God and Israel was this—and one of the reasons that Christ came; that was depicted in Gen. 15, as well—that in order for there to be a New Covenant there had to be the death of all Israel or God. That's one of the reasons why Christ came in the flesh, to die and terminate the covenant with Israel.

That's different than a testimony. A last will and testament you can change the last hour of your breathing life.

A covenant is only established only after you make a sacrificial sacrifice (Gen. 15). That's why Christ had to die; nothing else could terminate the covenant that God made with Israel and Himself. He had to die! Plus, since He put sin in all human beings, He had to take it all Himself in order to redeem all human beings who are willing to repent.

When your children were born they didn't look up and say, 'O Mommy, give me the law of sin and death.' No! You're born in it, and you have it!

So, Paul brings this out concerning marriage and he's referring to the covenant between God and Israel:

Verse 2: "For the woman who is married is bound by law... [that law is the covenant] ...to the husband as long as he is living; but **if the husband should die, she is released from the law that bound her to the husband.**" *That's a correct translation!*

Protestants read that and say the you're released from the Law and you don't have to keep the Law, there's nothing for you to keep.

Verse 3: "So then, **if** she should marry another man as long as the husband is living, she shall be called an adulteress..."

- What happened when the children of Israel went after other gods? *They were adulterers and adulteresses!*
- Why? *Because they were having relationships with other gods, **rather than the true God!***

"...but **if** the husband should die she is free from the law *that bound her to the husband*, so that she is no longer an adulteress if she is married to another man" (v 3).

That's saying the children of Israel are released from the law of the covenant of marriage, which was called the covenant with Israel with

Christ's death! You can't enter into another covenant until you terminate the one before. So, instead of all Israel dying, God died! But He rose from the dead to begin the New Covenant. The children of Israel—who were bound under the Old Covenant—were released from that so that they could be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit and have the begetting from God the Father. Now their Husband becomes Jesus Christ Who is the Head of the Church. We have the celebration of that in Rev. 19: *the marriage supper of the Lamb and the Bride!*

Verse 4: "In the same way, my brethren, **you also were made dead to the marriage law of the Old Covenant** by the Body of Christ in order for you to be married to another, Who was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God. For as long as we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which *were* through the law, were working within our own members to bring forth fruit unto death" (vs 4-5).

That's saying that without the Law of God, without the Spirit of God, everything you do in your life is going to end in death. We know that there's the second resurrection, but that's because of God's mercy and grace.

Verse 6: "But now we have been released from the law... [the covenant relation that Israel had with God] ...**because we have died**..."

When there's a covenant you have to have a promise of mutual death or the actual death. In Christ you have the actual death of Christ. With us, we have the symbolic death of baptism. ***That's our death pledge!*** That's why baptism has to be by emersion. You can't sprinkle!

Have you ever gotten rid of a corpse by sprinkling it with a little dirt? *Never happen!* We have died symbolically to enter into that covenant.

"...to that in which we were held so that we might serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (v 6).

Isn't that interesting how seldom that is really read. Now then, we go clear back to where I started in Gen. 6:5: *The thoughts serve in newness of spirit!* You keep the Laws of God in the spirit! You have your mind on the way of God with God's Spirit in you!

Verse 7: "What then shall we say? *Is the Law sin?*..."

That's about what Protestants say: the Law is a curse! ***NO!*** There is the curse of the Law, which is the penalty for breaking it. The Law itself is not a curse. Read everything about how blessed you are if

you keep it, even if you're not converted. There are blessings that come with it, because they're automatic just like the law of gravity.

"...*Is the Law sin?* **MAY IT NEVER BE!** But I had not known sin except through the Law. Furthermore, I would not have been conscious of lust, except *that* the Law said, 'You shall not covet'" (v 7).

What Paul is getting into is now in the New Covenant we enter into a different situation concerning sin. It's not based just upon your behavior. ***It is based upon your thoughts!*** We can all have good behavior out here. Even the most wicked and vial people can have seemingly good behavior.

But God is interested in the mind and in the heart. This is what He's getting into, and He's showing that the changing and the conversion of the mind comes within from God's Spirit.

Verse 8: "But sin, having grasped an opportunity by the commandment, worked out within me every *kind of* lust because apart from Law, sin was dead."

In other words, Paul is saying that if there was never any Law there would never be any sin! This is what it is! This what we fight today: ***the sin within!*** We have a lot of things to project in there!

A hundred years ago, people didn't have to battle the problems of what we have with smart phones, television, all of the other things that bring sin into our lives.

Verse 9: "For I was once alive without Law... [just living as an ordinary human being] ...**but after the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.**"

- What does that mean? *That means that when the commandment came I understood it for what it really means!*
- How did I die? *By water baptism!*

*He didn't die a physical death, he died the promise of spiritual death **IF** he didn't serve God!*

Verse 10: "And the commandment, which was meant to result in life, was found to be unto death for me... [the wages of sin is death] ...because sin, having taken opportunity by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me" (vs 10-11).

Look at the word *deceive*, what did we read in the first part of the message. *The heart is deceitful above all things!* It's there, and it's easy to deceive yourself ***if you think you're going to get a benefit!***

That's why there are those financial advisors who end up being total crooks, because they have so much money that they're taking care of, they think they can get away with taking some of it for themselves, because they're deceitful-minded!

The thing comes down to this for each one of us, and let's understand how to look at it: ***We need to be completely honest with ourselves all the time, and that can only come with prayer and yieldedness to God, and repentance!***

Because something will come along that looks like a good benefit. *Oh, it won't hurt! Try it, you'll like it!* That's what happened in the Garden of Eden!

Verse 11: "Because sin, having taken opportunity by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me... [that's why it says *that you dead in your trespasses and sins* though you're still alive] ...Therefore, the Law is indeed Holy, and the commandment Holy and righteous and good" (vs 11-12).

The Law is good, the problem is not the Law. The Protestants say that the problem is the Law. That's not true! The problem is ***the deceitfulness of human nature and the sin within, which we will see that he names 'the law of sin and death'!***

That's what we have to overcome, that's what Paul brings out here.

Verse 13: "Now then, did that which *is* good become death to me? MAY IT NEVER BE! But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin in me by that which *is* good, was working out death; so that by means of the commandment, sin might become exceedingly sinful."

Meaning I understand that my sins killed Christ! That's "...exceedingly sinful."

Verse 14: "For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal..."

When I read that, I thought: was Paul really converted? He saw the depths of human nature compared to:

- the Way of God
- the Laws of God
- the Spirit of God

"...having been sold *as a slave* under sin; because what I am working out myself, I do not know...." (vs 14-15).

- Have you ever done something and you say, 'I don't know why I did that'?

- Why did I do that? *That was stupid!*

When you do that is ***correcting yourself!*** That's what God wants! If with the Spirit of God and the laws and commandments of God ***you correct yourself by choice***; that's what God wants! And you have forgiveness on top of that!

Verse 15: "Because what I am working out myself, I do not know For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do.... [that's the struggle with the sin within] ...But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the Law that *it is* good" (vs 15-16).

It's not the Law that's the problem; ***it's me with my sin!***

Verse 17: "So then, I am no longer working it out myself; rather, **it is sin that is dwelling within me.**"

This is why the Spirit of God in you will expose your thoughts of sin so that you can repent! This is what Paul is getting to. There is nothing you can do on your own. It must come from God and His Spirit. He says that the Law is good, repent and come back to the Law; come back to God!

Verse 16: "But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the Law that *it is* good. So then, I am no longer working it out myself; rather, **it is sin that is dwelling within me.** Because **I fully understand.**... [here is the conclusion of what he has been leading to] **...that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—any good....**" (vs 16-18).

That means ***the goodness of God!*** There is good that human beings can do, but that's not the goodness of God. That's from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But within us...!

- that's why conversion is so important
- that's why the Feast of Unleavened Bread is so important

Once a year we take the time to look at ourselves, at our lives, and we look at our heart, mind, soul and being and everything that we have, and we ask God to lead us in the way we need to go. ***This is what Paul is getting at!***

Verse 20: "But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but sin *that is* dwelling within me. Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me" (vs 20-21).

- Have you ever found that?
- Have you ever done something that's good and after you've done it, all of a sudden

there comes an evil thought into your mind?

The overcoming is in the mind, not out here. The overcoming is in the heart and the mind with God's Spirit.

Verse 22: "For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members" (vs 22-23).

That's the struggle of overcoming! Right there! That's why! People have asked, 'After I'm converted, why do I still have evil thoughts?' That's something you have to overcome; that's part of being converted. What you've had in your mind for so many years, and what you've learned for so many years, you have got to have that erased with the Spirit of God and by your actions and the Word of God!

That's why when I brought the message on the first Holy Day, *taste and see that the Lord is good!* Eat the Word of God! That means to take the Word of God and make it part of your mind and part of your heart!

Verse 24: "O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death?"

In other words, this is a conundrum that the greatest philosophers of the world cannot understand nor give you a way out of, nor can *any human being* find a way out of!

Verse 25: "I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ.... [that's the way, salvation through Christ] ...Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the Law of God with *my mind*; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve the law of sin.*" *That's is whenever he sins!*

All of us sitting here on this Sabbath Day, no one of us here are desirous of sinning. You might leave here and even on your way home something comes along that's sin. BOOM! There it is, and you need to repent of it. That's what it's all about. Because you have this law of sin and death in you, are you condemned forever? *No, but you have to overcome it!* So, Paul says:

Romans 8:1: "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the flesh*, but according to *the Spirit.*"

If you're walking according the Spirit, because the Spirit of God is in you:

- you love God

- you trust God
- you keep His commandments
- you do what's pleasing in His sight
- you have forgiveness for those sins
- God knows that they come
- God knows that they're even still in you with the law of sin and death

But that will be overridden with ***the power and spirit of the Holy Spirit of God; that's what the great thing is!*** People in the world can't figure it out and they have no way of knowing.

Every good thing that people try to do ends up in sin and catastrophe! Just look at our welfare program to help people. It's ended up killing more people that it has helped. Granted, it has helped some, that is true. It is good to have that, but then look at the catastrophe that happens because of the law of sin and death operating in so many people, and especially in the politicians who take the graft coming from it.

Let's see the solution! Here is the solution and how we are to use our free moral agency coupled with the Holy Spirit. It's not something that you're going to find in a psychology book. It's not something that's going to make you rich and a better person. ***It comes from the Word of God through repentance and coming to God!***

2-Corinthians 10:1: "Now, I Paul am personally exhorting you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. On the one hand, when present with you I *am* base; but on the other hand, when absent I am bold toward you. But I am beseeching *you* so that, when I am present, I may not have to be bold with the confidence with which I intend to show boldness toward some, who think that we are walking according to *the flesh*" (vs 1-2).

We don't live according to the flesh, the standards and ways of human beings or modern psychology today.

Verse 3: "For although we walk in *the flesh*, we do not war according to *the flesh.*"

We have a warfare! Paul told Timothy to 'fight the good fight of faith!' We have a battle! We have not only the sin of death, but we have Satan and the demons out there against us. So, we need to be strong in the Lord!

Verse 4: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal..." *No, they're spiritual through:*

- study
- prayer
- fasting

- loving and obeying God
- loving the brethren
- carrying out the things that way that God wants done

We overcome by choice, by free choice!

Now, if someone comes up and points out something that you did, or said was wrong:

- What are you going to do?
- Are you going to ignore it?

or

- Are you going to readily admit that it was true?

It doesn't matter who does it, truth is truth!

“...but mighty through God... [through His Spirit, through His Word] ...**to the overthrowing of strongholds**” (v 4).

Where are those strongholds? *Right in the mind!* Some of those strongholds take a long time to really get rid of! Here's how you do it:

Verse 5: “Casting down *vain* imaginations...”

You know they show the ‘light bulb’—a *good idea*—which may not be of God!

“...and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...” (v 5).

What is the knowledge of God? *That starts with:*

- the commandments of God
- the love of God
- Christ
- forgiveness of sin
- the way of Truth

and everything like that through God!

“...and **bringing into captivity every thought**...” (v 5). *That's how you overcome the sin within!*

That is a lifelong struggle! If you don't overcome it, then you get yourself in trouble. Look at what happened to King Hezekiah. He was a wonderful man, did a lot of work in helping to canonize the Bible and bring certain things together. God destroyed the Assyrian army.

Then Hezekiah got sick and cried out to God, ‘O God, remember how I have served You.’ God said, ‘Okay, I'll give you 15 more years. He even made the shadow on the sundial go backward. So, God added 15 years.

But then here comes a very friendly entourage from Babylon. All the ambassadors from Babylon and they said, ‘O King Hezekiah, we heard how great the defeat was of the Assyrians and we're glad that the armies are gone, because they've been giving us trouble for a long, long time.

- How was it that God did it?
- What did He do for you, you're such a good king?

Well, it says that God gave him 15 more years. Furthermore, look at all the good things that I've got from the Assyrians and came because God won the battle for me.

He got lifted up in his vanity! What happened because of that? Isaiah came to Hezekiah and said, ‘What did these ambassadors, what did they see?’ *Oh! Everything! I showed them everything!*

Isaiah said that God said ‘It's all going to go to Babylon! But not in your lifetime.’ Then Hezekiah said, ‘Oh, that's a good thing that it won't happen to me.’

See how the law of sin and death, greed and not trusting in God is all wrapped up into that? What was the result of it? ***IF*** *you don't bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ, and you let everything go!* So you think is a benefit for you and you go after the things of the flesh, guess what's going to happen?

God is going to correct you in hopes that you repent!

What happened to Judah because of the sin of Hezekiah? *The next king was Manasseh, and he started at 8-years-old and was the worst king possible! You can read that in the books of Kings and Chronicles!*

I draw one parallel here: Do we not see the same thing with our current president and federal government, and many state governments? *Because the people sin they are given stupid leaders! Sinful leaders! God haters to run their lives!*

And the people in the world don't have a clue as to what is happening! But ***it is the hand of God using other people to carry out His correction upon us!***

- The question for the nation: Will they heed? *Don't know!*
- The question for us: Will we draw closer to God?

OR

- Will we be sucked up in the vacuum of sin

that's sweeping this country?

That's the whole lesson of the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

"...bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ" (v 5).

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 6:5
- 2) Jeremiah 10:23-24
- 3) Jeremiah 16:10-12
- 4) Jeremiah 17:5-7
- 5) Proverbs 3:1-6
- 6) Jeremiah 17:9-10
- 7) Romans 5:12
- 8) Romans 7:1-7, 16-18, 20-25
- 9) Romans 8:1
- 10) 2 Corinthians 10:1-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 2; 3
- Acts 3
- Romans 6
- Isaiah 54
- Genesis 15
- Revelation 19

FRC:bo
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