



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 522

1 John 4:4 *“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”*

I love this verse and I use it often. It's powerful, profound and very encouraging. The verse is packed with pronouns: *you, them, He, and he*. As with any Bible passage, grasping the context is essential. Without that, the "hes" and the "yous" and the "thems" can mean just about anything you want.

The chapter begins with John reminding the brethren not to believe everything they hear. They were encouraged to test the spirits to see if they are from God. He warns that there are many false prophets. The spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is from God. Those that don't confess that are not. The background to these verses is the Gnostic influence that was just getting a start in the late first century. It was a philosophy and theory that God is too holy to dwell in the flesh. It also contended that what the flesh does has no impact upon the spirit. Many spin off ideas came from this. One of them is that Jesus was not the Christ or that Jesus was never in the flesh. Crazy stuff that confused folks and chipped away at the teachings of the New Testament. Throughout this letter you will find references to "know" or knowledge (which the Greek word *gnosis*-Gnosticism came from) and references to Jesus in the flesh.

The "you" of our verse are the Christians John is writing to. The "greater is He" is God who is in us. The "he" that is in the world, would be these Gnostic prophets that were spreading their poison, but more so, Satan, who is always behind everything that is crooked and false.

Greater is God who is in you than Satan who is in the world. That's how we are going to look at this passage.

First, Satan is powerful. The Bible acknowledges that. We are told to not be ignorant of him. He is portrayed as a roaring lion. We know this all too well. Satan is everywhere. There is no town that is "Satan free." There is no man made defense that keeps Satan completely out. As you go to work, Satan is already there. At school, Satan is there. On your day off, Satan will find you. He'll be at your vacation spot. He'll be at the stores. He'll be at the movie theatre. He even goes to church. He's

never sick. He observes no holidays. He never retires. And he has an agenda. He wants your soul. He'll attack your church. He'll attack your marriage. He'll attack you. He deceives. He lies. He tempts. He creates doubt. He confuses. He finds you when you are having a bad day. He seeks you when you are stressed. He follows you when you are alone. He loves the night and he loves when you are vulnerable. That's Satan. Satan knows the word of God. He's demonstrated that twice-once with Eve by adding a word, and once with Jesus, by misapplying a passage. He can twist and turn the Bible so it won't do what it's supposed to do nor help you as it should. He knows that God's word is the sword. He knows that the word is your avenue to stay connected with God and to keep you holy and on the path to Heaven. I expect he hates Jump Starts or any other tool that helps you spiritually. Satan loves to dangle carrots of lust, pride, materialism and selfishness before our eyes. The forbidden fruit looks so good. He knows that. He uses that. Thousands fall to his tricks everyday. You and I trip and stumble before we realize what he is doing to us. This is Satan. He is your greatest enemy. He cannot be ignored. You have to face him and fight him. This is your greatest struggle in life.

Our passage tells us, as great as he is in the world, God who is in us is greater. Satan is not equal to God. Satan is not eternal. He is not all powerful. He had to get permission to sift Peter. He was given limits as to what he could do to Job. The future of Satan is sure. He's headed to Hell. God made hell just for Satan. People are not supposed to go there, but they will if they live without God. Hell is ugly, painful and pitiful-just what Satan deserves. God tells us how to deal with Satan. James says resist and he will flee. Timothy was told to flee youthful lusts. The Ephesians were told to put on the full armor of God and to stand firm. God's armor would extinguish every flaming missile of the evil one.

Where is God? He is in you. He is in those who walk, love, follow and obey Christ. This is a blessing of being a child of God. We have God. We have God with us everywhere. God is in you when you go to work and Satan is there. God is in you when you are at school and Satan is there. God is in you working, reminding, and helping us. God's word works. Jesus went to the word to fight Satan in the wilderness.

Greater is God who is in us than Satan. I don't have to give in to Satan. I don't have to choose wrong. Saying, "I couldn't help it," doesn't fly for the Christian, because you can help it. God is in you and he is greater than he who is in the world. You can win. You can be holy. You can be righteous. How? The world is so polluted with sin, how can I? Greater is God who is in you than Satan who is in the world-that's how.

Pray to God-He's not far away. Use godly tools. Know the word. Know Satan. Know what buttons he pushes to get you confused and foggy. The battle belongs to the Lord.

God is in you...you don't have to run to the church building...you don't have to run to a city of refuge, as they did in the O.T., nor find a priest as they did in the O.T. God is in you. He chooses to dwell in your heart. He does that so you will dwell in Him.

Satan is watching you right now. But greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world.

Roger Shouse

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