

**Demystifying
Greater
Is He That Is
In You**

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All quotations are from the Authorized (King James) Version.

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Over the years certain Scriptures in the Holy Bible have become so mystified to the extent that they have come to possess some form of magical power. Such Scriptures have become so commonly quoted by Christians in certain situation and they think that the recipients would receive help and comfort in times of need. One such verse from the Holy Bible is the second part of 1 John 4:4. No doubt those Christians who quote such Scripture to offer help to others are sincere and they genuinely believe that they are trying to help. Unfortunately when Scriptures are taken out of context, they do more harm than good and sometimes they even result in disastrous consequences. The purpose of this sermon is to correct the misconception of 1 John 4:4 and show how the misapplication of this verse is of no help at all to those who are supposed to receive help and comfort. May the Lord bless the reading and diligent studying of God's Holy words!

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:1-4)

The often unscriptural use of the second part verse 4 **greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world** can lead to tragedy. This misunderstood part of the verse puts Christians to sleep thinking that all is well when the truth is that they are living in danger of being complacent about the true nature of the spiritual warfare. This part of the verse is so commonly and so readily quoted by Christians whether rightly or wrongly, but most of the time out of context, not knowing that this could have terrible consequences.

The context in which this part of the verse is given is also often ignored or not addressed at all. It appears that this is a cure all panacea given out to Christians whenever a Christian is in distress. Does it really work when this part of the verse is given out to that Christian in distress? Is it true that greater is he, that is the Holy Spirit in a Christian, than he, the unholy spirit that is in the world, will prevent a Christian from getting into harm's way? Is it true that greater is he that is in a Christian than he that is in the world will solve all the problems a Christian has to face?

Then consider the following. How come greater is he that is in a Christian cannot stop a Christian from going astray? How come greater is he that is in a Christian cannot stop a Christian from sinning? How come greater is he that is in a Christian cannot stop a Christian from denying Christ? How come greater is he that is in a Christian cannot stop a Christian from getting into depression? How come greater is he that is in a Christian cannot stop a Christian from going mad? How come greater is he that is in a Christian cannot stop a Christian from doing things that may be unscriptural? How come greater is He, the Holy Spirit cannot stop a Christian from committing suicide? And this list goes on.

So is it true that since greater is he that is in a Christian, nothing can touch or harm that Christian? So is it true that since greater is he that is in a Christian, Satan cannot take control of that Christian? Can it be shown from the Scriptures how and under what conditions a Christian is not exempted from being taken control over by Satan and this part of the verse often quoted by Christians is of absolutely no use at all?

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5)

Here is a case of a man taking his father's wife to be his wife. Of course, this is a very wicked thing to do. This is fornication of the worst possible form. Of course, this woman is not his biological mother. It is common that a man could have more than one wife even in our day.

Did this kind of incident happen in the Old Testament? When King David was old and about to die, the people got him a fair young virgin Abishag, a Shunammite, hoping this sweet young thing could nourish him back to health but it did not work. This young woman was his last wife as King David had many wives. Actually, the consummation of marriage did not really take place as David was too old and weak and he eventually died. Then his son Adonijah who thought he would become king after David but it turned out that Solomon took over the throne. Adonijah then requested to have this last wife of David to be his wife by going to Solomon's mother hoping that his request would be granted. Solomon promptly put Adonijah to death. It is definitely not acceptable. This kind of marriage and the fornication that results is certainly unacceptable to society in any age.

Taking a father's wife is forbidden under the law as well. **And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. (Leviticus 20:11) Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. (Deuteronomy 27:20)**

It is also commonly viewed as a wicked practice even by the unbelieving Gentiles though they do not have the written oracles given to them. But the church in Corinth was apparently quite comfortable with this

sinning member. Here is a case Paul brought before the church in Corinth where they accommodated this wicked man and condoned his practice by their indifference. Paul condemned the church for their attitude and abuse of liberty. Paul rebuked the church for not condemning this sinning member and putting him away. Paul's recommendation was to deliver this sinning Christian to **Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**

How often do you see Christians practise this aspect of church discipline? This is the worst form of discipline a sinning Christian can get from a church. The sinning Christian is delivered to Satan personally and he is left in the hand of Satan to deal with him to destroy his flesh for the express purpose of saving his spirit. So do you think greater is he that is in a Christian is going to do this sinning Christian any good in such a situation like this? Are you going to argue that a Christian cannot be possessed by the Devil? Are you going to argue that Satan can only oppress a Christian but cannot possess him? Such argument over choice of words whether oppress or possess does not make an iota of difference to this Christian being delivered to Satan. Whatever word you want to use to describe a Christian to make him look good that Satan cannot possess a Christian is not going to work or help this Christian in any way. We are told that this sinning Christian is delivered to Satan and it should be understood and accepted as such. He is given over unto Satan and that much is clear.

So is this sinning Christian able to withstand Satan because greater is that is in him? Is Satan going to take control of him? Is Satan going to wreck him and destroy his flesh? Do you know the flesh also includes the mind? So is Satan given the authority to deal with this sinning Christian? What do you think? Do you think Satan holds a welcome party for this sinning Christian and brings him to rock concert, smoke pots and have a good time? You think Satan told him, "Welcome my good and faithful serpent. Let's have some fun?" You may protest that you really do not believe the Devil can possess a Christian. This man mentioned here is definitely not a Christian. A Christian is a saved man and will certainly not do such wicked thing. Fair enough. I will accommodate your sentiments for a while. Then let us consider the Scripture.

I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go

out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

Paul makes it so clear that Christians are not to judge sinners in this world whether they are fornicators, extortioners, idolaters and so on. If we think we are so holy and spiritual and cannot live with sinners in this world, we have to live in outer space. We are to live among these sinners and be a shining living testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ to them. But Paul told Christians that we are to judge sinning Christians: **But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. (1 Corinthians 5:11)**

Christians must leave sinners in this world alone and it is God's prerogative to judge them and not us at this point in time. We are told to judge sinning Christians instead. So this wicked fornicating member in the church of Corinth is a Christian. Otherwise, Paul would not insist that the church judge him. He was delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. He was handed over to Satan to deal with him for his very serious unrepentant sin.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world is not going to prevent Satan from taking possession of this wicked sinning child of God. Now, the purpose of such extreme form of church discipline is to restore such an erring one should he repent and return to the Lord. The apostle Paul wrote a second letter to them concerning this episode of church discipline.

But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any

have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. (2 Corinthians 2:1-11)

So church discipline by delivering this sinning child of God to Satan is to achieve the objective of restoring him in the future. When a Christian is under such form of chastisement, it is no use quoting 1 John 4:4 to him. Greater is he that is in him than he that is in the world is not going to help him resolve his problem. If he is repentant in godly sorrows, we should always forgive him, comfort him and confirm our love towards him. We must never glee in self-righteousness just because we have not committed this kind of sin like this erring Christian. We must not be ignorant of Satan's devices and let Satan take advantage of us. Satan is just an instrument used by God to correct a sinning child of God. During that period of chastisement, that Christian will be very miserable and could even lose his mind. If this sinning child of God repents we must always give him our support and bring him back into the fold.

There is another case where Paul delivered people to Satan so that they may learn not to blaspheme. **Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. (1 Timothy 1:19&20)**

Putting away one's faith and stumbling other Christians is a very serious offence before God because it will lead to ungodliness. Paul explains further in his second letter to Timothy. **But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. (2 Timothy 2:16-18)**

The action of Hymenaeus in particular had caused some to fall from their faith. All he did was just to say that the resurrection was past already. This is a very serious allegation and the impact on Christians being told that the resurrection is past has very serious implication. Causing other Christians to fall from their faith to live a godless life is a very serious offence before God. These people must be delivered to Satan so that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world is not a magical verse that offers immunity to Christians from Satanic possession. If it does, Paul must be out of his mind for delivering Christians to Satan when it is impossible to do so. Paul must be insane to recommend such drastic measure to Christians if greater is he that is in you overwrites his delivery of a Christian to Satan.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world is not for the purpose curing any Christian in distress or trouble. The apostle John who wrote this verse also wrote something very frightening in the following chapter. **And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. (1 John 5:14-17)**

So there is this real possibility of a Christian sinning a sin onto death. Under such circumstances, Christians are even told not to pray for the sinning child of God. This is frightening when you consider a Christian could sin a sin unto death. There is a point where a Christian crosses the boundary of transgression and that is the end of him. This though does not mean he loses his salvation in Christ. He is going to end up in the hand of Satan where his flesh which includes his body and mind are to be destroyed.

So do you still think greater is he that is you in than he that is in the world offer a Christian blanket cover over everything in this life? Do you think this part of the verse offers Christian protection and immunity from whatever he chooses to do in this life with no consequences whatsoever? Does this part of the verse give a Christian a sense of invincibility and he can do what he wants without regard to the faith he professes to uphold? Personally, I have come across some people who made shipwreck of their faith.

One such person is a former missionary to one of the African countries and a wonderful defender of the King James Bible. He used to be a person we look to for friendship and fellowship. But he had a very mean spirit with regard to defending the King James Bible and his utter hatred for Catholicism got him into a lot of trouble. At every opportunity, he would whack the Catholics over their false doctrines. He was so anti-Catholic till he went mad. He suggested that Peter was the first Pope and that Peter ordered Ananias and his wife to be murdered in Acts 5 when they failed to give him all their money. Can you imagine how ridiculous it can get for someone who has gone off on a tangent in dealing with sinners in this world?

Now he is no longer doing anything for the Lord. In fact, he is casting doubts on the very words of God that he defended in the past. His fall caused quite a jittery to the King James Bible believing folks in many parts of the world. So how is greater is he that is in you any protection for preventing this man from going into lunacy? How come greater is he than is in a Christian cannot stop him in his folly?

I used to have a friend who came back from Bible College having been taught and raised on the King James Bible. He experienced some suffering and I think he became bitter. He eventually renounced his faith in Christ, changed his name and consulted a Chinese medium just like king Saul who went to consult a familiar spirit. When I visited him at his home, he told me all kinds of tall tales. He always imagined there were people trying to harm him. He claimed that on occasions, some Christians tried to poison him. When I asked him whether the Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh by trying the spirit, he did not answer me the first time. When I continued to press for an answer, he finally answered, "No, Christ did not come in the flesh." All these while when we talked, he would not look me in the eyes. He had gotten a very different spirit.

So how come greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world cannot stop him from departing from the faith? I believe this is a clear-cut case of sinning unto death. I no longer pray for him and I left him. I think I saw him recently in a shopping mall collecting trash and with his present countenance he is not someone you would want to befriend with.

There is another case where I was told of this King James Bible believer in Sydney who believed so much about the King James Bible that

he believes a person can only get saved from the King James Bible. Guess what happened to him? He sealed up his whole house last year, put up a warning sign in his house and turned on the gas and committed suicide. How come greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world cannot prevent this staunch King James Bible believer from committing suicide?

There are also those who have gone mad by spending too much time on the Internet researching on Satanism and conspiracy theories. When these people become mentally unstable and emotionally upset, quoting 1 John 4:4 is of no use to them at all. Telling them a Christian cannot be possessed by the Devil was not useful either. So those who have a special interest in conspiracies and Satanism better sit up and take note.

Why do you want to know so much about Satan? Do you desire to be delivered to Satan? Writing to the church in Thyatira, the Lord warned: **But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. (Revelation 2:24)**

Knowing too much about Satan can get you into big trouble. We are told to resist the Devil and he will flee from us. You do not have to look for Satan. Satan and his cohort will come looking for you. **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (1 Peter 5:8)** There is no need to know more about the Devil other than what is already revealed in the scriptures. Why do you want to know so much about the Devil? Are you going to spend eternity with him? Instead of getting to know the Devil better, we better get to know more about our Saviour. This is what Paul claims: **That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (Philippians 3:10)**

If we get to know more about our Saviour, the Lover of our souls, we will become less interested about the Devil. The Devil did not do anything for us other than causing the fall of man plunging the whole world into darkness. If we have our mind always tuned towards the Devil and all the evil things in this world, we are not living according to Scriptural admonition. **Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good**

report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. (Philippians 4:8&9)

I believe in positive thinking according to the Bible and not some cheap get-rich-quick moneymaking schemes kind of positive thinking churned out by the world. If we set our mind right and be tuned into the spiritual truths revealed in the Holy Bible, we will save ourselves from a lot of trouble in this life. **For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. (Proverbs 23:7 & 4:23)** If we are not diligent in keeping our heart and committing all our thoughts on Christ so that our way may be established, we are living in great danger of getting into big trouble.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:1-4)

The context of 1 John 4:4 is concerning spirits and trying those spirits whether they are of God. Christians must have the courage to try the spirits. 1 John 4:4 is a promise of protection for those who try the spirits whether they are of God. If the spirit that does not confess that Christ is come in the flesh, that is the spirit of the antichrist. This spirit of the antichrist is already in the world during Paul's time and a child of God is not to fear such spirits. This is because we have overcome them for greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world. We are guaranteed victory over them. We are not to fear such spirits. This spirit of the antichrist is running rampant in our times.

Do you know who are those who deny that the Lord Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? Those who pervert the Holy Bible in 1 Timothy 3:16: **And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.**

Our Bible tells us that God was manifest in the flesh. This God who manifests in the flesh is the Lord Jesus Christ and Christ is our God. The perverted bibles tell us that he was manifest in the flesh. They changed the word "God" to "he" in those perverted bibles. That personal pronoun he is Jesus but this Jesus is not equivalent with God. They do not believe that Christ Jesus is God manifest in the flesh and we are told not to be afraid of such spirits that pervert our Bible because greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world that produces those fake bibles.

1 John 4:4 is not a remedy for Christians who are in distress for one reason or another. When we see a brother or a sister in Christ who is troubled for whatever reason, we must never quote this part of the verse out of context hoping to make him or her feel better. It is not going to help.

There are many underlying reasons why a Christian is troubled and we must try to find out why and then offer him a biblical solution to his trouble.

Christians are overcomers in Christ and should never constantly live in fear. This is very unnatural and unscriptural. **For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (1 Timothy 1:7)** If you are always living in fear, this fear is not from God. You better find out where this fear is coming from. Whatever trouble a child of God is facing, he has to confront the Lord and seek to resolve his problem with the Lord whether it is disobedient to scriptures or infirmities of the flesh.

When we see a brother in trouble this is the commandment we have to obey. **Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)** God will hold us accountable for not helping a Christian coming to us for help. We are warned: **If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works? (Proverbs 24:11&12)**

If we do not help a brother in times of need and we pretend not to know it, do not be surprised if we find ourselves in his position sometime in the future. God is not mocked. Whatsoever we sow, we will surely reap. Let us never fail to help a Christian when he asks for help. Let us never quote 1 John 4:4 out of context even if we cannot or refuse to help this person. Let us also never become so spiritual and refuse to ask for help and pretend that we are waiting upon the Lord. It is nothing shameful at all to ask for help. The Lord uses occasions to prove His people whether they are obedient to Scriptures in showing Christian charity one to another.

May the Lord help us to live biblically and stay away from unnecessary trouble! May the Lord help us to watch out for one another and help one another in times of need! Surely the Lord will deliver us from every evil and trouble when we look to Him in faith trusting in His bountiful care for us. **What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)** Quoting 1 John 4:4 is not a solution to any who are in distress at all. Let us offer concrete help to those who are in dire

need whether of comfort or encouragement or spiritual support through prayers. So let us do what is right and wait upon the Lord to see us through all our trials and tribulations. **But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57) For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:7)**

If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kiv-asia.com.