



## BOMB HITS FOR JESUS

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Everyone has a healthy respect for bombs. Whether it's hand grenades, nuclear weapons, nitro-glycerin, or even the little explosives that run around in Super Mario Bros., everyone knows a bomb means wide-scale destruction. The damage done by a bomb is more than physical – it's psychological as well. Mortar shells are just as effective at disorienting an enemy as they are at blasting away positions. The atomic bombs dropped during World War II broke the fighting spirit of the Japanese and destroyed the sense of confidence they had in their nearly impregnable island and massive army. Even just the threat of a bombing can send people into hysteria, creating widespread panic that can demoralize even the staunchest of nations.

But sometimes a bombing can have a positive effect on the victim, despite the carnage it brings. Bombs can reveal weak-points in defenses. Dropping a bomb on an enemy can scatter his army, but they may regroup elsewhere and come back even stronger than before. Shelling an enemy's position may force him to circle around and attack you from a different direction. Terrorist bombings may unify a divided nation, causing it to strike back with ten times the determination. A bombing can be fatal, but in its wake it can also sow seeds of greater strength.

Sometimes the world can hit you like a bombshell. You arrive at your college campus as an energetic freshman, Bible in one hand and a notebook in the other, excited mind wide open in anticipation of gaining all the knowledge that is right at your fingertips. Then the bombshell drops. You start to hear things like "God is dead," "The earth wasn't made in seven days," "Spiritual experiences are a product of your psyche," or "The world needs reality, not morality." Your child-like faith becomes Ground Zero for a relentless assault of "modern thinking," "scientific principles," and "tolerance." If that weren't enough, your weakened mind must now endure this onslaught in the outside world as well. This constant diet of religious discrimination, social bullying, and ethical hypocrisy in your new job, your new textbooks, and even your new friends smothers any attempt you make to fight back. The things you learn in school now become apparent outside of school. The world you once knew has been forever destroyed. Welcome to "the real world."

This is the time when demoralization sets in. The weakness and disorientation caused by the enemy's shelling has halted your forward march and sent your army into disarray. You don't know where to turn, whether to attack or defend, how to continue or even if you should continue. All your strongly held convictions (at least you *thought* they were strongly held) have come into question. You're not even sure if they are worth fighting for anymore.

When you get to this point – *and you will get there* – there is an important truth you must remember. Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NKJV). Jesus overcame a long time ago everything you are facing now. The battle has already been won; we are just playing out a few details. The world you see now hasn't changed, only your perception of it has, and that doesn't have to be a bad thing. Jesus foresaw everything you are facing, and He is allowing you to face it. Instead of letting these trials weaken you, use them as an opportunity to grow stronger. Let them strengthen your faith in God as you search the Scriptures to combat the doctrines of the world. Let the haters toughen



your skin instead of getting under it. Use the pressure to strengthen your backbone instead of letting it break you in two.

Let me give a personal bombshell example. I received my undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences with a concentration in Zoology. That means I had to face the theory of evolution every day of my life. The basic premises of my field of study essentially mandated that I believe the Bible to be at least partially inaccurate. I had to write papers and give answers on tests that I knew to be false when compared with the Word of God. Going into the program, I knew I would face this kind of onslaught, but I never dreamed it would be as hard to face as it was. I questioned lots of things I had never even thought to question. But this forced me to reevaluate my beliefs and adjust them where necessary. In the end, I came out stronger than I was going in. I knew what I believed and why I believed it. I truly understood things I had previously accepted at face value. Sure, my understanding of the world was different, but I had *grown*, not just changed. The bomb that could have destroyed me instead left me stronger than I ever could have been before.

We need to be bombed every now and then. How else are we to grow? It is by passing through the fires of tribulation that we are cleansed and purified. The fire helps shape us into a clearer image of Christ. You can let the fiery holocaust burn you up, or you can let it strengthen and refine you into what God wants you to be. Your education doesn't have to wreck you. You don't have to let the college campus overwhelm you. You don't have to lose your soul to keep your job. You can have vibrant relationships and still be the same person you are today. Many students have let the college/career years of their life steal away their faith, but you don't have to be one of those people. Just remember who your redeemer is and the plan He has for your life. If we are truly going to be Hyphens and bridge the gap between the world and Jesus, we will need to be able to handle the bombings of the enemy. Let him attack us. With the help of Jesus it will only make us grow stronger.