

The Prospect of God's Overcomers

Revelation 12:1-17

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

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Introduction: The seventh trumpet was sounded in Revelation 11:15, which eventually leads to the pouring out of the vial (or 'bowl') judgments (Rev. 15 & 16). But before those judgments are revealed, John introduces another parenthetical section, including chapters 12, 13, & 14. Chapter 12 is quite comprehensive in its scope, as Henry Morris points out, "The remarkable vision seen by John in this chapter looks back first of all to the very beginning of earth history, then races forward to the time of Christ & finally to the events still to be consummated in this final period. This review was necessary for John (& for us) to comprehend the full significance of the great sign about to be unveiled." Because of its wide range of time & subjects, we will consider this chapter in light of verse 11, as we see the prospect of God's overcomers. Note with me their conquest, their conditions, & their conviction.

I. The **conquest** of God's Overcomers (:1-11)

A. The **promise** of overcoming (:10-11) - for those in that day & us today.

1. **Who?** - I John 5:4-5 (& cf. I John 2:12-14).
 - a. The one *born* of God. / b. The one *believing* on Jesus.
2. **What?** - I Corinthians 15:54-58.
 - a. Victory over sin's *penalty*. / b. ...over sin's *power*. / c. ...one day, over sin's *presence*.
3. **Why?** - I John 4:4.
 - a. Because of He that is in us. / b. Compare Philippians 2:13 & 4:13.

B. The **pattern** of overcoming (:1-10)

1. God's **protection** of His Son (:1-6) - Introduction of 3 "Personages."

"Wonder" (:1 & :3) - not that which excites 'wonder', but a sign or symbol of important truth (Used 7 times in Revelation).

- a. The woman >
 - (1) "*Clothed with the sun, & the moon under her feet*" - Gen. 37:9-11.
 - (2) "*Crown of twelve stars*" - the 12 sons of Israel (12 tribes).
 - (3) Most commentators see this woman as depicting the nation of Israel.
 - (4) Henry Morris (p. 214) suggests she includes Israel but goes back to Eve - Gen. 3:15.
 - (5) Her travail: that of Eve, of Israel, of Mary.
- b. The great red dragon (:3-4) >
 - (1) Satan, cf. 12:9; "*red*" - his murderous characteristics & final destination.
 - (2) "*Seven heads & ten horns*" (Dan. 7:8 & Rev. 17:10 & :12) - revived Roman Empire.
 - (3) "*1/3 part of the stars*" (:7-9), fallen angels in Satan's initial rebellion - see Isaiah 14:12-15 & Ezekiel 28:16-17.
 - (4) "*To devour her child*" - Satan's continuous efforts to prevent Christ's birth & later attempts to kill Him
 - (5) Trace Satan's efforts from Cain, to Abraham, Judah, Moses, David, Esther, & Herod.
- c. The Man child (:5-6) >
 - (1) His destiny: "*to rule all nations*" ('rule' - to shepherd; absolute authority, Ps. 2:9).
 - (2) His ascension - caught up to God (Acts 1:9 & Luke 24:51).
 - (3) His life, death, & resurrection are taken as understood (or implied). The important thing here is Satan's inability to destroy Christ. cf. Hebrews 2:14.
 - (4) His "mother" - Israel -- Satan's attacks (vengeance) upon her, unable to destroy Christ
 - (5) Her protection by God for 1260 days (3 & 1/2 years) see vs. 13-17, the godly Jewish remnant during the second half of the Tribulation period - cf. Isa. 26:20-21 & Mt. 24:

2. Michael's **prevailing** over Satan (:7-10).

a. The *defeat* of Satan (:7-8).

- (1) The event described in Dan. 12:1 (beginning of Great Tribulation).
- (2) The enemy defeated - Satan expelled, no more place found for him.

b. The *description* of Satan (:9).

(1) His names:

- (a) "*The great dragon*" cf. :3 - also applies to his world empire.
- (b) "*That old serpent*" cf. Gen. 3:1 - Garden of Eden, temptation of Eve.
- (c) "*The Devil*" - *diabolos* - 'defamer' or 'slanderer.'
- (d) "*Satan*" - 'adversary' cf. I Peter 5:8.

(2) His nature:

- (a) He accuses & slanders believers (cf. Job 1:).
- (b) He deceives the whole world (H. Morris quotes).

"The saint of this present dispensation, who is now the object of satanic attack & misrepresentation, can rest assured of the ultimate downfall of Satan & the cessation of his ability to afflict the saints of God" (Walvoord).

c. The *declaration* of the saints (:10).

- (1) The shout of triumph by the martyred Tribulation saints (cf. 12:11).
- (2) The salvation of deliverance & the completion of God's plan.
- (3) The strength & kingdom of God - Christ's millennial reign.
- (4) The subjugation of Satan - the accuser is 'thrown out.'

(Prior to this, we had an Intercessor, an Advocate - Heb. 7:25 & I John 2:1 to answer Satan's charges against us.)

II. The **conditions** of God's Overcomers (:11)

A. They overcame because of the **blood** of the Lamb.

-- Trace the blood of the Lamb in Revelation:

1. Its **power** - 1:5 > We are *forgiven* by God >
 - a. He *loved* us ("is loving us").
 - b. He *washed* us ("loosed us").
2. Its **praise** - 5:9 > We are *redeemed* to God >
 - a. We are *purchased* by His blood - Acts 20:28.
 - b. We are *justified* by His blood - Romans 5:9.
3. Its **purity** - 7:14 > We are *cleansed* for God (prepared to serve) >
 - a. The *paradox* - "*made them white in the blood*" (:14)
 - b. The *principle* - cleansing makes us prepared to serve God (:15).

B. They overcame because of the **boldness** of their testimony:

1. The **private** confession in their heart - Romans 10:9-10 >
 - a. That Jesus is Lord.
 - b. That Jesus is living.
2. The **public** confession before man - Matthew 10:32-33 (Rom. 10:10) >
 - a. By lip - their talk -- Psalm 119:46.
 - b. By life - their walk -- Matthew 5:16.

III. The **conviction** of God's Overcomers (:11-17)

A. Their **willingness**: love for God causes them to **serve** (cf. II Tim. 3:2-4).

1. Heaven's **proclamation** (:12) >
 - a. The believers in heaven rejoice (their victory is complete).
 - b. The believers on earth beware (Satan's wrath is continuing).

"Though many of the judgments of God inflicted on the earth during the great tribulation originate in Divine power rather than satanic influence, the afflictions of the inhabitants of the earth spring largely from the activities of Satan, resulting in the martyrdom of countless saints & in widespread human suffering of every kind" (Walvoord).

2. Satan's **persecution** (:13 & :15) >
 - a. Israel is hated by Satan because she is chosen of God & "...essential to the overall purpose of God for time & eternity" (Walvoord).
 - b. Satan seeks Israel's complete & final destruction (cf. Jewish history).
 - c. Satan's *"flood"* - a vast army, cf. Jeremiah 46:8.
3. God's **protection** (:14 & :16) >
 - a. Carried on 'eagles' wings - God's faithfulness, Ex. 19:4 & Deut. 32:11-12.
 - b. The Jewish remnant (both believers & potential believers) are kept secure in a prepared place.
 - c. Earth swallows the flood: (1) Israel able to find refuge in the terrain??
(2) God's divine intervention to overcome the enemy, Isa. 59:19.

B. Their witness: love for God causes them to sacrifice.

See verse 11, *"...they loved not their lives unto the death."*

1. Satan's **rage** > *"went to make war."*
 - a. Since unable to destroy Israel in their land, Satan seeks Jews elsewhere.
 - b. Walvoord suggests this is the godly Jewish remnant (believing Israel) in contrast to the nation as a whole (the woman).
2. God's **remnant** > *"remnant of her seed."*
 - a. They keep the commandments of God; they are obedient (speaks of conduct).
 - b. They have the testimony of Jesus Christ; they are radiant (speaks of compassion & character).

Closing illustration: Jim Elliot & the Auca Indians of Ecuador

Conclusion: Revelation 12:9 marks the very middle verse of the Book of Revelation. This also seems to coincide with the middle of the Tribulation period, or the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This chapter foretells the ultimate defeat of Satan, but reminds us of his unique deception. He, as the *"god of this world"* & *"the prince of the power of the air"* is now deceiving the whole world. Satan's first deception when he tempted Eve was, *"Yea, hath God said...?"* That has been his tactic ever since and now today. "If he can persuade men to question, to doubt, to modify, to allegorize, to compromise God's Word, & then finally to disobey, reject, & destroy God's Word, he will thereby defeat God's purposes in creation, & God Himself will then be no more God" (Henry Morris). His means, particularly seen in our day, is the grand deception of evolutionism. Chapter 12 has introduced us to 5 'personages'. We see the woman (Israel), the great red dragon (Satan), the man-child (Christ), Michael the archangel, & the godly remnant. This sets the stage for chapter 13, which will introduce the "human" actors, the beast out of the sea (Antichrist) & the beast out of the earth (the False Prophet). These are the two instruments Satan uses to vent his rage & wrath on the earth in his continuing opposition to God & God's plan. Chapter 12 has shown us the prospect of God's overcomers. Their **conquest** is seen here both in the promise & pattern of overcoming in verses 1-11. That pattern is seen by God's protecting of His Son & Michael's prevailing over Satan. Do you meet the **conditions** as being one of His overcomers? Have you experienced the power of the blood of the Lamb? Are you expressing your faith by the boldness of your testimony? God's overcomers have **conviction**, which causes them to be willing to serve & even sacrifice unto the death. Is that your testimony here this morning? Are you obedient to God's Word & radiant as God's witness?

We who know Christ should give praise & thanksgiving to God for that day when our blinded eyes were opened, our sins were forgiven, & a new nature was received. Is that your testimony here today? Are you here today as an overcomer?