

## THE OVERCOMERS – Revelation 12

During the seven-year tribulation period we find believers, *despite the severe persecution they will suffer, overcoming the evil one!* Their testimony serves as an example for the church today. My hope is that, *in the anti-Christ culture of our day*, their example will inspire us to live as victors, rather than victims, *by faith in Christ.*

In (v.1-6) In these verses John sees a vision of fulfilled and future prophecy. Two primary signs are seen here: the woman and the dragon (v.1, 3). (Read: v.1-6). The first sign is a Woman – (v.1, 2) represents the nation of Israel. In the Old Testament Israel is often portrayed as a woman, for example **Isaiah 54:5; 66:7** – *“Your Maker is Your husband.”* The garland of twelve stars represents the twelve tribes of Israel.

The **sun** and **moon** mentioned here are often associated in scripture with God’s divine favor - Psalm 84:11; or “signs” and “seasons,” Genesis 1:14-16. The woman stands here in a *position* of divine favor. She is ready to give *birth* and cries out! The Child she brings forth is Christ. (Read: v.5) *Only Jesus will rule the nations with a rod of iron, when He returns; and has ascended and is now enthroned at the right-hand of God!* **Hebrews 8:1; Ephesians 4:9, 10.**

In (v.3, 4) we see the second sign, a Dragon – (v. 9) makes it *perfectly* clear that the *fiery red dragon* is satan. The color red here may symbolize his *murderous* nature. This hideous creature has **seven heads**, with **seven crowns** (*diadems*), sitting on *each* head, and **ten horns** – this description is symbolic of satan’s dominion as prince (influencer) of this world. **Ephesians 2:2b** – *“prince of the power of the air.”* These “10 horns” – represent world

**rulers (Daniel 7:24)** – a one-world government, ten-nation confederation led by the anti-Christ, seen as the “**little horn**” (Daniel 7:7, 8) – we’ll discuss the meaning of these horns further in **Revelation 13**. “**A third of the stars of heaven**” (v.4) refers to a **third** of the angels, which rebelled with satan. The dragon is poised to **devour** the child at its birth (v.4). **Note: It’s no secret where the inspiration for late term and after-birth abortions comes from!**

**Verse 5 – this is an absolute miracle!** The preservation of the Christ Child, under the devil’s raging *determination* to devour Him! **What power, what love, that the Child was not devoured, that He might destroy the works of the devil! (1 John 3:8b) For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.** Those who seek to *destroy* Christ will be destroyed!

Between (v.5, 6) there is a prophetic gap. In (v.1-5) we were looking back at *fulfilled* prophecy. In (v.6 - Read) we are *now* looking forward – to God’s *future* preservation of *both* Jewish and Gentile believers during the tribulation. God will preserve them for “**one thousand-two hundred and sixty days**” (3 ½ years), the exact period of time for the second-half of the seven-year tribulation.

(v.7-12) After the safe *sequester* of *believers* who inhabit Israel, a war **breaks out!** This war *actually* represents a series of *demonic* conflicts related to Israel, *coming to a climax here*. Due to the severe persecution that follows this war, it is believed this conflict will occur **mid-way** through the seven-year tribulation period. Here *satan* is decisively *defeated in battle and is cast down*, no longer the “prince of the air!” (Ephesians 2:2). The word **heaven** –

**ouranos: sky; vaulted expanse of the sky.** According to **Job 1:6**, at one time satan had limited *access* to all the heavens.

Many biblical scholars, such as **Dr. Lehman Strauss**, cite **2 Thessalonians 2:7-12** as *evidence* that this war will occur after the rapture. There Paul reminds us, “He who *hinders*” the anti-Christ from coming to power, must be taken out of the way! He who hinders is the **Holy Spirit, who dwells within the Church!** Does this mean, after the rapture, the Holy Spirit will cease working in the earth? **No!** We know that after the rapture *many will come to faith in Christ during the tribulation.*

**Daniel actually prophesied about this future supernatural war - (Daniel 12:1-2) “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.”**

**Michael, one of the chief princes of God, and his army of angels, stands up to the devil, that great bully of the air, and soundly defeats him!** Michael plays several important roles in scripture; one of those roles is mentioned in the **Book of Jude: (Jude 9) Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”** In regard to spiritual warfare, we should follow Michael’s example. Rather than telling the devil, “I rebuke you,” for the devil is stronger than “I,” say, **“The Lord Rebuke you!”** Don’t be like the **seven sons of Sceva** – **“Jesus I know, and Paul”**

*I know; but who are you?!” (Acts 19). (1 John 4:4) You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. Greater is He, and not me!*

The woe (v.12) here is in *conjunction* with the third woe, announced with the blowing of the seventh trumpet judgment (11:15). *Woe, because the world will not only suffer under the wrath of God’s just judgement, but also under satan’s tyrannical wrath! (Read: v.13-17) Verse 14 continues the narrative, interrupted in (v.6). “Eagles’ wings” (v.14) – refer to the swiftness by which the **Jewish believers** will escape the wrath of the anti-Christ; this expression, eagles’ wings, is used in (Exodus 19:4).*

(v.15, 16) Some have taken the flood here to mean a literal flood; but more than likely, it’s a flood of demonic rhetoric, spewed forth by the anti-Christ! Seeing he is running out of time (v.12b) satan moves, the anti-Christ intensifies his evil rhetoric against God’s people. Isaiah 54:17 - “*No weapon formed against you shall prosper and every tongue which rises against us in judgement God will condemn!*” (Isaiah 59:19) **When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.**

*As in the wilderness during the time of Moses, God will protect and provide for His people (v.17), for a “time and times and half a time” (three and a-half years). The earth “helping” the woman, may refer to the terrain of the wilderness being so difficult that the anti-Christ simply gives up his pursuit of these Jewish believers. In Christ, we are preserved from satan’s *demonic flood* – *there is no condemnation in Christ (Romans 8:1).**

**APPLICATION:** The devil rages on today; by means of one of his of his favorite tools of deception – accusations! (v.10b) – *he’s the accuser of the brethren!*

It is demonic accusations which have been the culprit behind many wars, manifested through *racism, divorce, assaults, hatred, murder, etc.* **The devil knows we are a lazy lot, and that mankind, rather than take the time to relate to one another, finds it far easier and more natural to hate!**

**The good news is, *salvation, strength, the Kingdom of our God, and the power of Christ have come! (v.10a).* Sadly, however, accusations rule the day in many churches! The accuser has turned many believers into abusers of the brethren! In our text we find, *in the lives of these future believers, three essential aspects of faith, which enable us to overcome, rather than succumb, to the satanic rhetoric of our day! (v.10b).***

**First** – they were *overcomers* because they **Believed in the “power” of the blood.** (v.11a). The blood of Jesus both cleanses the church and provides for community. It cleanses our conscience that we might serve the living God – (Hebrews 10:22-23) – provides for **Community - (1 John 1:7) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

The blood is what we have in common; it's what binds us together! *Spiritually speaking, as a believer, when you send off your 23 and me DNA test, it should come back “Jesus!”* If Christ is not the unifying component of the church, we will continue to divide over music, color of carpet, style, rather than substance, and race! **(John 17:21) “...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”** Practical application of the blood: counter every accusation (of the enemy) with a declaration (prayer) of

*blessing and favor over the life of the accused! When we bless, only then are we able to rest.*

**Secondly** – they were *overcomers* because they Kept their testimony. There is power in your story. **(Psalm 107:2) Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy.** Share your **testimony**, not a “brag-imony” – A testimony always glorifies God; a brag-imony glorifies us! We never know how God will use our story! Jim Cymbala – *Fresh Faith*. Asked a young man to share his testimony – addiction to cocaine – man called, related how his son was saved as a result. **Dare to share your story!** You never know. It may be a lifeline for someone who *desperately* needs to hear it!

**Lastly** – they were *overcomers* because they Loved Jesus more than their lives. **(v.11b)** Narcissism, the worship of self, is the *norm* today. **Article**: 27-year-old in India suing his parents because they conceived him without his consent! Therefore, he believes they are obligated to pay all of his expenses for the duration of his life! **Sounds ridiculous!** Yet, the faith of many believers reflects the same mentality. God owes me!

**(Luke 9:23, 24)** “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.” If we love our lives *more* than Jesus, we will *succumb*, rather than *overcome*! **(John 16:33)** “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

**CONCLUSION:** These *future* saints are teaching us today, *in order to be overcomers*, to live as victors, rather than victims, we must believe Christ is our victory! **(Romans 8:35-37) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**