

# The End

Christus Victor

## Introduction

When talking about the sacrifice of Jesus, there are a number of different theological concepts that are put forward. One of them, called *Christus Victor*, emphasizes God's victory over the evil forces of the world through the rescuing of His people from sin and its consequences.

Throughout the Revelation, the people of God are shown to be in persecution, and yet, they are not described as victims or told to live in fear, but rather that they are "conquerors" through the blood of Jesus and the sharing of His testimony.

Today, we'll pursue the word "conquer" in the book of Revelation to see exactly how the people of God becomes victorious in Jesus.

## Conquering Christians

In the opening few chapters of Revelation, John writes to seven churches of Asia. His letters consist of warnings (to 5 of the churches), and encouragement (to all 7). The end of each of these letters provides the same two refrains:

"He who has an ear, let him hear..." and

"The one who conquers..."

Let's observe the closing remarks below:

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who **conquers** I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7)

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who **conquers** will not be hurt by the second death." (Revelation 2:11)

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who **conquers** I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it." (Revelation 2:17)

"The one who **conquers** and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 2:26-29)

"The one who **conquers** will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 3:5-6)

"The one who **conquers**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 3:12-13)

“The one who **conquers**, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also **conquered** and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:21-22)

**Q:** How might this word relate to “martyr” (our word “witness”) from last week?

### The Martyrs of Revelation

Revelation provides us with repeated reminders of the Christians that have suffered and died under the power of the Roman Empire (Revelation 2:13; 6:11; 11:3, 7; 12:11; 12:17; 17:6; 20:4-5). These martyred Christians would not have been some distant memory for the first-century reader of Revelation. The first-century reader would have visualized their friends and family members that have gone on before them. For them, persecution was not an idea, it was a reality. The deathly effects of persecution had touched their lives and would continue to come upon them as they sought to live a life for God. Jesus, through John, encourages the Christians to “conquer”. This does not mean that they will not face death, but rather that they are victorious even in death, if they hold to the testimony of Jesus.

### Old Testament “Remnant”

Before we continue, it’s worth noting that this idea is not a new one, but rather one that bears incredible similarity to the “remnant” teachings of the Old Testament (Ezra 9:15; Isaiah 10:20; Jeremiah 23:3; Ezekiel 9:8, 11:13; Amos 5:15; Micah 2:12, 4:7; Haggai 1:12-14; Zechariah 8:11-13). The “remnant” were those left after attacks and exile. They were those that continued in faithfulness to God, faced the trial of exile, and emerged on the other side in a position to, in a sense, “conquer” (i.e. they would come to a place of peace and prosperity as God’s people in the Promised Land).

### Section Summary

Throughout the Biblical narrative, the people of God are shown regularly to be in a place of suffering, sometimes because of their own choices, and always because of the effects of sin and the spiritual warfare they were engaged in. It is God’s desire that His people not view themselves in the position of victim, but rather to trust the God that goes before them, and live knowing that they will be victorious because, as the final “conquer” verse in Revelation 3 says: “The one who **conquers**, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I [Jesus] also **conquered** and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (3:21)

The Christians are told they will “conquer” because their Savior is one who has “conquered” the powers of the world through His death. They are to identify with the conquering Christ. Before we speak of their connection to Jesus though, we need to observe some of the other conquering forces in the Revelation...

### **Conquering Evil**

It only happens twice, but the word “conquer” is used in relation to two different beasts in Revelation (11:7; 13:7). Once we add in the various references to other beasts and, as we’ve seen, the “martyrs” it becomes clear that the spiritual forces of evil aren’t just going to roll over and give up their attempt at dominion in the world.

What I find most fascinating about the conquering of evil is not how it seeks to conquer, through power, pride, coercion, and deception (see Revelation 13), but rather how it is conquered. The “weapon”, if we can call it that, of the Christian is not sword and shield, but faith (again see Revelation 13:10).

This is how we “conquer”, through the holding of faith and keeping of the commands of God. It is through these things that we bring about God’s Kingdom to the world. In other words, when we “love not our lives even unto death” (12:11) we empty the efforts of the spiritual forces of evil of its attempts to conquer this world, by showing them that we are inhabitants of another Kingdom, the Kingdom of Christ, already...

## Conquering Christ

There are a handful of occurrences, specifically with the word “conquer”, that are used of Christ’s victory over the spiritual forces of evil:

“And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has **conquered**, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” (Revelation 5:5-6)

“And they have **conquered** him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!” (Revelation 12:11-12)

“And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had **conquered** the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb...” (Revelation 15:2-3)

“They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will **conquer** them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” (Revelation 17:14)

**Q:** What stands out to you about these passages?

## The Conclusion of Christ

The final usage of “conquer” comes toward the end of Revelation. The usage of the phrase bears striking similarity to the first occurrences to the churches:

“And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who **conquers** will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:5-8)

**Q:** In this context, what does it mean to “conquer?”

## **Summary**

The words of Jesus in Luke's gospel continue to ring true: "do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do." (Luke 12:4). The Christians of the Revelation conquer because they know that they are a part of a different Kingdom, and they know that there is something beyond this life that cannot be touched by the enemy.

As a result, Christians then, and now, ought to live in faithfulness in conduct and in sharing the testimony of God to others. Through the living out and sharing of His Kingdom, we conquer the forces of evil that seek to keep us trapped in theirs.

## **Take Home**

We spent a good bit of time discussing the evil spiritual forces in the book of Revelation. What references are there to "bad guys" in the book of Revelation? Write down who they are and where they are found below: