

Introduction:

Let me ask you a question. Do you ever wonder if it is worth it? Don't misunderstand. I know we should live God's way because God deserves it. I know that our number one goal is the glory of God and what we get out of it in the end is really not the point. However, I also know it is hard to stay self-motivated. I know it is hard to be completely altruistic. It is hard in the midst of the fight, the battle, the suffering, the trauma, the tragedy, the trial, the temptation to hang on. It helps to be able to look ahead, to look forward, to see a glorious end that makes it all worth it. **Romans 8:18** says the suffering we experience now is not worth being compared with the glory that will be revealed to us and in us. Do you ever wonder about that? If so, allow Jesus's letters to the seven churches of Asia in **Revelation 2-3** to set your mind at ease.

Discussion:

I. To him who conquers.

- A. "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**, ESV).
 1. The paradise that Adam and Eve lost is regained in us if we overcome and conquer. God established a guardian cherubim to keep man away from the tree of life in **Genesis 3:24**, but He will remove the cherubim and let us pass.
 2. All but one of these statements has a parallel in the final vision of **Revelation**. **Revelation 22:2** shows us the tree of life with its fruit for each month. The leaves of that tree are for the healing of the nations. We will be healed, filled with life. We will be like trees planted by living waters because we will have access to this tree and will live forever.
- B. "The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death" (**Revelation 2:11**, ESV).
 1. So says the one who died and came to life (**Revelation 2:8**). So says the one who has the keys to Death and Hades (**Revelation 1:18**). If anyone can promise a victory over any death, it is the one who defeated death Himself.
 2. Again, this is revisited in **Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15**. The second death is the lake of fire. The punishment of the devil and his angels and all those who serve him. The conquerors escape that punishment and instead have life eternal.
- C. "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**, ESV).
 1. If they avoid eating the food offered to idols, God will give them manna as He had done with our ancient spiritual ancestors to sustain them in the wilderness. Perhaps this is merely an indication that no one has access to this manna except God. But then again, perhaps it is a reference to the manna that was hidden in the Ark of the Covenant (**Hebrews 9:4**). In **Revelation 11:19**, the Ark is seen in the heavenly temple of God. No one except priests were allowed to touch the Ark, and we will have access to that manna.
 2. The white stone seems to have reference to a common method of casting a judgment for or against someone. In **Acts 26:10**, this same word is used when Paul talks about casting his vote against Christians in order to have them condemned. Apparently this word came to also mean the vote because these kinds of stones were often used to indicate one's vote in this situation. A black stone indicated guilt and condemnation; a white stone indicated justification and life. The one with the two-edged sword, that is the judge who is able to slice asunder even the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow, and the thoughts and intentions (**Hebrews 4:12**), will cast the white stone vote.
 3. But it will have a name on it. A new name. As God renamed Abram and Jacob, He will rename us with a name no one else knows. The concept of knowing a name often refers to having some power over the one named. At this point, we sometimes feel like our enemy knows our name, but not in eternity. In eternity, no one knows our name. Of course, the exception would be the one who gives us the name.
- D. "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" (**Revelation 2:26-28**, ESV).

1. In **Revelation 12:5**, we see the cosmic sign of Jesus's birth described as the one born to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Further, we see Him conquering and ruling in **Revelation 19:15**. All of this harkens back to **Psalms 2:7-9**. Jesus is God's Son. What is Jesus promising us? He is promising that we will be sons of God. Each of us as Christians, whether male or female, will fulfill **Psalms 2**. God will see us as His children. We are His begotten. Those in the world must learn to make peace with us lest they be judged by God our Father.
 2. Additionally, He will give us the morning star. **Revelation 22:16** explains Jesus Himself is the root and descendant of David, the bright morning star. He is promising us Himself. He has already given Himself for us in order that He might give Himself to us.
- E. "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" (**Revelation 3:5**, ESV).
1. In **Revelation 6:9-11**, we see the martyrs receiving a white robe. In **Revelation 20:4**, we see these same martyrs reigning with Jesus Christ. Before that, in **Revelation 19:14**, we see the white robed following behind Jesus on white horses in the army of the Lord that conquers the enemy.
 2. He will never blot our names out of the book of life. According to **Revelation 20:12**, everyone will be judged according to what is written in God's books, including that book of life. Having our name in the book of life and the promise that it will never be blotted out is a promise to be judged favorably in that last great day.
 3. Finally, Jesus will confess us before His Father and the holy angels. This reminds us of Jesus's promise in **Matthew 10:32** and **Luke 12:8**. When we acknowledge Him before men, Jesus will testify on our behalf before His Father and before the angels. When we overcome, He stands as our advocate in the judgment and speaks on our behalf.
- F. "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" (**Revelation 3:12**, ESV).
1. There is no stronger terminology Jesus could use to say that when we overcome, He will mark us as His own. We are not marked by the devil, the beast, the false prophet. We are marked by Jesus Himself. We bear His name, the name of the Father, the name of His city. We see that city coming down from the Father in **Revelation 21-22**. What a beautiful city! What a victory that is all in its own right! Not only are we given a name that only He and we know, but we know His new name. Not that that gives us power over Him, but it gives us connection.
 2. On top of that, we are made permanent pillars in the eternal temple of God. Of course this is a figure. It doesn't mean we are turned into stationary stone. Note **Revelation 21:22**. The great city of God no longer has a temple, because God Himself is its temple. We aren't a stationary stone in a heavenly building, we are a permanent resident in God Himself. He abides in us and we in Him for eternity. What a blessing?
- G. "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" (**Revelation 3:21**, ESV).
1. In **Mark 10:35-40**, the author of **Revelation** asked Jesus for the right to sit on His right or left hand in glory. Jesus said that was an honor that was not His to give. However, here in the letter to the Laodiceans, Jesus promises that spot to each of us. He is not simply promising that we will all sit on our thrones, but that we will all sit with Him on His throne. This is a picture of that right and left hand blessing. It is the picture of our eternal seat being on the royal dais alongside Jesus who is alongside the Father.
 2. As **Revelation 22:5** says, we who conquer with Jesus will reign forever and ever.
- H. I ask you again. Is it worth it? You better believe it. You have laying out before you two choices. You can either hang on to Jesus and have all of this, or you can abandon this and lose it all. Which do you want?
- II. The path to conquering.
- A. This, of course, leaves us with the question of how do we conquer. I want the white stone, the new name, the place in the eternal temple of God, the seat at Jesus's side. I want it. I would even claim that I would give anything for it. So then, how do we conquer?
 - B. Smack in the middle of **Revelation** a loud voice from heaven provides the threefold answer (cf. **Revelation 12:11**).
 1. *They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb*: And this is the surprising part. What we actually learn is we can't conquer. We can't overcome. We can't be victorious. But Jesus has already conquered. He has already overcome. He has already been victorious. By His blood we can conquer. Apart from His blood we stand no chance. In **Revelation 1:5-6**, we learn that by Jesus's blood we are set free from our sins and

made into a kingdom of priests. In **Revelation 5:9-10** we see the same point repeated. In **Revelation 7:14**, we know that our garments can be made white by being washed in the blood of the Lamb. That is how we, like the Laodiceans, can purchase white garments from Jesus Christ (cf. **Revelation 3:18**), by surrendering to His death and His blood. No matter what we do, if we are not washed and redeemed by His blood we cannot conquer.

2. *They have conquered by the word of their testimony*: We cannot conquer apart from Jesus but this does not mean Jesus will conquer apart from us. We know John is exiled to Patmos because of the word of his testimony (**Revelation 1:9**). Additionally, we know those slain saints underneath the altar are there because of the word of their testimony (**Revelation 6:9**). This statement in **Revelation 12** is on the heels of the vision of the two witnesses, whose testifying ended with their own deaths (**Revelation 11:7**). In just a few verses, we learn the dragon will make war on all those who hold to the testimony of Jesus (**Revelation 12:17**). If we wish to win the victory, if we wish to conquer by the blood of the Lamb, we must be willing to testify to our faith in Jesus by our words and our lives. This is no words-only testimony. Our lives must show our testimony that we belong to Jesus.
3. *They have conquered for they have not loved their lives even unto death*: Jesus said whoever saves his own life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Jesus's sake will find it (**Matthew 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24**). This shows the extent to which the conquerors are willing to testify. If it costs them jobs, they will testify. If it costs their houses, they will testify. If it costs their family, they will testify. If it costs their living, they will testify. If it costs even their lives, they will testify. Why? Because they love Jesus more than they love life itself. They find Jesus so valuable, they would rather die than turn away from Him. The dragon can wage war. The beast can scream blasphemies. The false prophet can attack and bring persecution, but the conquerors would rather die than leave Jesus's side. By the way, this doesn't mean they have not loved their lives their whole life long until they finally die of old age. Rather, it means they have not loved life even though doing so causes their death. As Jesus told the Smyrnans, be faithful even if it means death, and He will give us the crown of life. What are you living for?

Conclusion:

Let's face it. If you read **Revelation**, you will see the enemy has a full bag of tricks. He will attack in numerous and varied ways. He will attack from within and without. He will hit our pocketbooks, our churches, our relationships, everything. Sometimes the onslaught may seem unbearable. Sometimes it will even look like he will win. Sometimes those who side with him appear to be reigning and winning. Sometimes it won't seem worth it to hang on. But, believe me, it is worth it. Be certain your worst day of reigning with Jesus through eternity, will far outweigh your best day of reigning with Satan for just a short while. So let me ask you, are you conquering? Have you been washed in the blood? Can we help you with that today?