

REMNANT OVERCOMERS AT THE END OF THE AGE

Throughout the history of Israel and the Church, God has always prepared a faithful remnant of overcomers so that whenever the whole body fails, He can call on these relatively few to fulfil His purposes.

WHAT IS AN OVERCOMER?

“Strong’s,” and “Thayers” lexicons provide us with these alternative meanings of the Greek word ‘*nikao*’ (NT:3528) - ‘to subdue,’ ‘conquer,’ ‘overcome,’ ‘prevail,’ ‘get the victory,’ ‘to carry off the victory,’ and ‘to come off victorious.’

Here are some examples of the way it was used in the New Testament.

Jesus said, “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33.

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Rom 12:21.

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.” 1 John 5:4.

“But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed (3528) to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” Rev 5:5.

“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering (3528), and to conquer.” Rev 6:2.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Rev 12:11.

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory (3528) over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God...” Rev 15:2.

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” Rev 17:14.

In the *second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation*, Christ directs letters to seven Churches operating in Asia at that time. At the end of each of the seven letters, He addresses a special message to a group in their midst whom He addresses as “**To him who overcomes.**” Rev 2:7.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

“And it was granted to him (Antichrist) to make war with the saints and to overcome (3528) them. And authority was given to him over every tribe, tongue and nation.” Revelation 13:7.

The general condition of the church is that it has been overcome. Antichrist has been able to create a false worldly religion that has infiltrated the true church and contaminated it. As in the parable of the wheat and the tares, (Mat 13:20-30) the tares or apostasies of the false religion, have been nurtured in the midst of the true Church. Many churchgoers have been overcome and polluted with the image of Antichrist.

When the Wider Body Fails, Overcomers Fulfil God’s Purposes

To understand who will bear the responsibility as Christ’s overcomers at the close of the age, we must understand the principle of the remnant. From a biblical point of view, the remnant

is that part of the community of God's children who remain faithful, when the majority rebel in disobedience, and is drawn into idolatry.

As part of God's providential care of His children, He has always ensured that there would be a faithful remnant, through which He could accomplish His purposes. The overcomers and the faithful remnant are synonymous in that they are a smaller group within the wider body, anointed with the Lord's authority and power to fulfil His purposes when the wider body has become faithless.

When Elijah fled from Jezebel, he complained to God that he was the last faithful one in Israel. **“And he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”**

However God assured Elijah that He had preserved a remnant in Israel. **“Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”** 1 Kings 19:14&18. Notice that God said, **“I have reserved.”** He Himself has ensured that down through the ages there would always be a faithful remnant. His purposes are fulfilled through the remnant; and His victory over the powers of darkness is accomplished through the remnant of overcomers.

The apostle Paul proclaimed God's declaration to Elijah to be a promise to all ages. Even though the nation of Israel had rejected Jesus as their Messiah, God would ensure that there would always be a faithful remnant. **“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”** Rom 11:1-6. And in this present age God has reserved for Himself a faithful remnant that has not bowed the knee to Antichrist and his spirit, and has not partaken of idolatrous worship or lying signs and wonders.

Examples of the Remnant in the Scriptures

The Holy Seed

“Then I said, “Lord, how long?”

And He answered:

“Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant,

The houses are without a man,

The land is utterly desolate,

The LORD has removed men far away,

And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

“But yet a tenth will be in it,

And will return and be for consuming,

As a terebinth tree or as an oak,

Whose stump remains when it is cut down.

So the holy seed shall be its stump.” Isa 6:11-13.

How long, Isaiah asked, would the wretched condition of the nation of Israel (a type of the apostate church), last? The reply was until **“the land (was) utterly desolate.”** However Isaiah was assured that God would leave a tenth as a remnant. But even then God would visit the remnant

to severely prune away the corruption from their midst, so that they would be left as the stump of an oak tree. What was left He called “the holy seed,” because it was the refined remnant that would be used by Him to consume His enemies.

Zechariah’s One Third

“And it shall come to pass in all the land,”
Says the LORD,
“That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die,
But one-third shall be left in it:
I will bring the one-third through the fire,
Will refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them.
I will say, 'This is My people';
And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.’” Zech 13:8-9.

The Sons of Zadok

“And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity” “And they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priest, nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy Place; but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. Nevertheless I will make them keep charge of the temple, (the earthly church) for all its work, and for all that has to be done in it. But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me (personally); and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood,” says the Lord GOD. “They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge.” Ezek 44:10 & 13-16.

The Levites who went astray and entered into idolatry are a picture of those who are of the worldly church. Instead of following the true doctrine of Christ, they have become tarnished with worldly apostasy, or sought fulfilment in the lying signs and wonders of the spirit of Antichrist. They have forfeited their right to a personal relationship with God; nevertheless they are not completely divorced from church work. They are still allowed to take charge of the organization and conducting of the affairs and ministry of the worldly church.

The “sons of Zadok” present a picture of a remnant who have divorced themselves from the image of Antichrist, and have an enduring faithfulness to God and the ministries entrusted to them. As a reward for their faithfulness, God draws them into a close personal relationship with Himself. They hear His voice, and follow His commands. In this respect they are said to minister to Him and keep the charge, or sanctity of the true Church. They offer to God “the fat,” (i.e. they forsake the luxuries of the world), “and the blood (they are a living sacrifice to Him).

The One Hundred and Forty Four Thousand

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to

God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Rev 14:1-5.

The 144,000 are renowned for their purity and sanctity. Their virginity is not physical, but speaks of total consecration and separation to God (compared to the ‘harlotry’ of the Israelites). Because they are totally consecrated to God, His seal of ownership is on their foreheads. That they follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and that there is no guile in their mouths, speaks of doing only those things that the Lord initiates, and speaking only His words. Because they are perfected vessels, products of God’s workmanship, they are called, “first-fruits,” highly prized by God and His Lord.

Those Who Grieve Over the State of the Church

The sealing of the one hundred and forty four thousand has its counterpart in a reading from Ezekiel, which is another parallel prophecy relating to Israel and the worldly church.

“Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand." And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-axe in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar. Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill (alternative meanings -‘strike severely,’ ‘chasten,’ ‘punish,’ ‘smite’); do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay (alternative meanings -‘wound,’ ‘beat,’ ‘strike’) old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the temple. Then He said to them, "Defile the temple (worldly church), and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city.” Ezek 9:1-7.

Israel had become idolatrous and corrupt, and the glory of God had departed from the temple. Similarly, the church has become corrupted with apostasy, idolatry, and worldliness, and the glory of Christ as her Head has departed from her. Later, Ezekiel pictures the glory of the Lord returning to the temple, just as it will return to the Church - but not before she is judged and refined, as Peter forecast - **“the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God...”** 1 Peter 4:17. Judgment has started on the worldly church, and as Ezekiel prophesied, it has started with the leaders, as in the exposure of the apostasy of some with worldwide ministries, and the immorality of others in trusted ministries. But notice that God has reserved a faithful remnant to be engaged in restoration. They are marked with the seal of God’s ownership so that, like the one hundred and forty four thousand, they are exempted from God’s judgment.

Those who Have the Testimony of Jesus Christ

In the Book of Revelation, the “dragon,” or Satan, made war with the Church, but was unable to destroy her because she was dispersed among the nations of the world, where God protected her. Being enraged that he could not destroy the Church, Satan directly attacked a small group within the Church, described as those who are obedient to God, and **“have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”**

“And the dragon was enraged with the woman (the Church), and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Rev 12:17.

The “testimony of Jesus Christ” is the manifestation of Christ Himself. He is the testimony. We can talk or write about Jesus Christ, but unless our flesh has been dealt with to the degree that it does not intrude on Christ’s words, then it is not the true testimony of Jesus Christ. When people have been refined to the degree that Christ can present His testimony through them, they speak HIS words and do HIS works. Because they have the testimony of Christ within them, they are more of a threat to Satan and his works, and that is why they are singled out as special targets in spiritual warfare.

The apostle John was completely obedient and bore the “testimony of Jesus Christ,” and so suffered continual persecution, eventually being exiled to the island of Patmos. **“I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”** Rev 1:9.

The Two Witnesses

In the eleventh Chapter of the Book of Revelation, immediately after John was given an instruction to measure the church to ascertain its corruption, we find a figurative account of **“two witnesses.”**

“And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees (symbols taken from Zechariah 4:5, showing them being continually filled with the Holy Spirit) **and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire (pronounced judgment) proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed (or rendered harmless) in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.”** Rev 11: 3-6.

The clues to the identity of the two witnesses are the references to stopping rain, (Elijah, who is used as a symbol of prophecy) and “to strike the earth with plagues,” (Moses, used as a symbol of the word of God). Together they refer to the spirit of prophecy, or prophetic revelation of the Word of God. The **“one thousand two hundred and sixty days,”** is not a literal period, but the Church age, and because the Church has been overcome by the spirit of Antichrist, they are **“clothed in sackcloth.”**

“When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.” Rev 11:7. This corresponds to the prophesied, “period of falling away.” **“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed...”** 2 Thess 2:3. The falling away occurs after the Holy Spirit’s restraint on the activity of Antichrist is withdrawn, so that his lying signs and wonders become apparent to all. **“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed...”** 2 Thess 2:7-8.

At first there is celebration because the stern warnings of the two witnesses have been a thorn in the sides of those who have been engaged in disobedience, liberality, and lawlessness. **“And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.”** Rev 11:10.

Their jubilation is short lived, for at the time God is ready to enter into judgment against the church, the two witnesses are revived, and told to **“Come up here.”** They are not physically transported to heaven, but invested with authority and power from heaven, so that they could continue their ministries in the power of God.

“Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. Rev 11:11-12.

The ministry of the two witnesses, or the prophetic revelation of the word, will be of major importance at the end of the age in the unmasking and overthrowing of Antichrist.

The Bride of Christ

Throughout the Scriptures, the bride of Christ is presented as a smaller group within the church, prepared by God and presented to the Lord.

“...Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” Rev 19:6-9.

In this reading there is the Lamb’s wife, and those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is consistent with Christ’s parables of the king and the marriage of his son. Again we see the wedding party, and the invited guests. **“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding;...”** Matt 22:2-3.

The Song of Songs is an allegory of the preparation of the bride of Christ. The Shulamite is a type of the bride of Christ, accompanied throughout by “the daughters of Jerusalem, who represent the rest of the church.

**“Go forth, O daughters of Zion,
And see King Solomon with the crown
With which his mother crowned him
On the day of his wedding,
The day of the gladness of his heart.”** Song 3:11.

There have been people down through the church age who have been prepared and refined by God, and who have reached the status of the bride. Because of their purity and devotion to Christ’s will, they have been entrusted to wield His authority and power.

THE REMNANT ARE OVERCOMERS

It was on the cross that Christ accomplished His work of redemption, and His victory over Satan and the world. He then called on His disciples to be His instruments in the world in manifesting His victory over the powers of darkness. Knowing this, Satan persecuted the Church, and when this failed he used the spirit of Antichrist to undermine it with false prophets and teachers, heresies and lying signs and wonders, deceptions and the enticements and the allurements of the world. At first the history of the church is one of victory over Satan.

The Book of Acts is an account of the Church triumphing over all of the assaults of Satan. Unfortunately the Church gradually failed, and throughout the centuries fell more and more under the power of the power of Antichrist. However, when the Church in general fails, God always prepares a few in the Church to take the responsibility as overcomers to manifest Christ's victory over Satan. The principle of the overcomers is this -

1. Whenever the Body as a whole fails, God has always reserved a remnant, to stand for the whole in manifesting Christ's victory over Satan.
2. God calls on these few to carry out His commands, so that through them, He may later reach the many who were disobedient. The principle of the overcomers is God calling a few to do the work for the blessing of many. A few are called into death, that many may receive life. **“For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is working in us but life in you.”** 2 Cor 4:11-12.

This principle is illustrated figuratively in the children of Israel crossing the Jordan to enter Canaan. (Joshua 3:6- 4:18). The Jordan River is a figurative type of death. When Joshua miraculously parted the water of the Jordan, he selected a small number of the Levite priests (the few) to bear the Ark of God's presence, and stand in the bed of the Jordan until the twelve tribes crossed over into the Promised Land.

The priests could stand in that perilous position because they bore the Ark, which is also a type of Christ. This signifies that the overcomers must do all things through Christ - by His initiation and by His life. The fact that the priests had to stand in the river bed of death until the last of the Israelites reached Canaan, points to the fact that the overcomers must walk in death to self until the overcoming work is completed, and ultimately until the kingdom of Christ is established.

The reason that the church has so few overcomers is not that the children of God are totally disobedient, but that they are not fully obedient to the command to take up their cross daily in order to become Christ's disciples. Before the overcomers are qualified to bring life to others, they must have stood in the bed of Jordan. Their flesh must have been put to death by their willingness to partake of Christ's cup of suffering. Like Christ, they must have learned obedience through the things they suffered. **“...though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.”** Heb 5:8-9.

The Overcomers in Christ's Letters to the Churches in Revelation

Because there has always been a faithful remnant amongst God's people, so there have always been overcomers in the Churches' history. There were overcomers in every one of the periods of the church, (presented in the seven churches in Revelation, Chapters 2&3). Christ addressed seven churches existing at the time of John's writing, which are generally considered as historic types of future churches. He chastised, commended, or encouraged each one according to their spiritual condition. At the end of each letter He addressed the overcomers in their midst, encouraging them by outlining the rewards they would receive through their steadfast commitment. The rewards listed during the progress of the letters are commensurate with their growing maturity as overcomers.

To the Overcomers at Ephesus

“To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” Rev 2:7.

The **‘tree of life’...in the midst of the Paradise of God** is the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all the blessings of eternal life are imparted. The more the Overcomers are emptied of their own fleshly

natures, the more they are filled with the presence and life of the Lord, experiencing His victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

To the Overcomers at Smyrna

“He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” Rev 2:11.

The ‘second death’ is the judgment of the damned. **“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”** Rev 21:8.

The condemned will face eternal damnation in “the lake of fire,” but the Overcomers are assured that they will be spared from this judgment. Also they will not be found wanting in facing the judgment seat of Christ, where our judgment is not concerning salvation but according to our works on earth. **“For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”** Rom 14:10.

“Now if anyone builds on this foundation (Paul’s gospel teaching) with gold, silver, precious stones, (spiritual truth) wood, hay, straw, (apostasy and deception) each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” 1 Cor 3:12-15.

To the Overcomers at Pergamos

“To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no man knows except he who receives it.” Rev 2:17.

The manna is a symbol of Jesus Christ, “the living bread,” or “bread of life” that came down from heaven. Eating the manna is usually associated with receiving the life of Jesus, but also receiving within oneself Christ’s words of truth. Jesus said of Himself, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”** John 14:6. The connection between manna, the Lord, the word and life, is illustrated in this reading. **“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”** Deut 8:3-4.

The hidden manna speaks of the hidden revelations and truths in the Scriptures. They are revealed to the Overcomers by the Lord, being counted as trustworthy custodians of His inner truths that are to be revealed to His Body in accordance with His will and time.

The symbology of the white stone may have been taken from the practice of giving the winner in the Grecian games a white stone on which was inscribed a name that only he knew. The white stone and secret name shared by the Overcomer and the Lord indicate the intimacy of their relationship, where the Lord reveals Himself and what He is doing, just as God revealed to the Lord what He was doing during Christ’s ministry on earth.

To the Overcomers at Thyatira

“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power (authority) over the nations – ‘He shall rule (shepherd with uncompromising authority) them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ -- as I also have received 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.” Rev 2:26-29.

In the Book of Revelation, the peoples of the world are generally divided into the church and the nations - or everyone else. Whilst the true church is subjected to Christ as her Head, the nations are the tool of Antichrist in opposing the church. However, it is important to see that the “**harlot**,” or the false worldly “**church**” is a part of the nations. The spirit of Antichrist is controlling it. In fact, most opposition to the true Church does not come from the world, but those whose religion is imprinted with “**the image of the beast**.”

This blessing to the Overcomers indicates that they will be the Lord’s instruments, or spiritual battle warriors, who will be entrusted with the authority of His name in casting down the strongholds of Satan. The words spoken to them are almost identical to those spoken by God to the Lord in Psalm 2, indicating the presence of the power of Almighty God in upholding their authority.

“... I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.” Ps 2:8-9.

The “**morning star**,” is one of the names of Jesus Christ, indicating that the Overcomers shall receive the fullness of the Lord’s presence. The morning star also points to the end of darkness and the beginning of light, or the end of Antichrist’s dispensation of darkness, and the beginning of Christ’s reign of light. This indicates that the Overcomers will have a prominent role in restoring the church by breaking the chains of darkness now holding her in bondage.

To the Overcomers at Sardis

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” Rev 3:5.

The Overcomers are clothed with white garments, having a righteousness beyond the imputed righteousness we all have as Christians through the blood of Jesus. This is the righteousness described in Revelation 19:7. **“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”** Rev 19:6-8.

Overcomers have laid their carnal natures on the cross, and having been emptied of self, they are now filled with the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is now their righteousness. They are clothed in the righteousness of the Lord, and the works they do are of the Lord, and being righteous works, they are called “**the righteous acts of the saints**.”

It is granted to the Overcomers that Jesus will confess their names before God and His angels. They will be in God’s protective care, and as Jesus said, **“...I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.”** John 10:28-29. The angels are God’s instruments of protective care.

To the Overcomers at Philadelphia

“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. 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 out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.” Rev 3:12.

A pillar is a symbol of strength. Throughout the history of the church, its foundational strength has rested on those who have consigned their carnal fleshly natures and self-dependence to the cross, allowing Christ to reign through them. Since God and His Christ are the true strength of the church, and their strength is directed through the Overcomers, they are declared to be pillars in the temple of God.

Our spiritual pilgrimage leads us to lose our lives so that Christ can become our life, and as our High Priest He leads us through the rent veil of His sacrificed body, sanctified through His shed blood,

to shelter in Almighty God who abides in our spirits. In God we enter a state of complete rest and stillness, trusting Him to be our protection, our provision, our wellbeing - the governor and upholder of our whole lives. Before being completed as an Overcomer we have learned to retreat into God in times of trouble, and when the crisis has passed we have resumed our normal lives. But at this stage the Overcomer enters into God and remains there, making Him their permanent habitation. They **“shall go out no more.”**

Next Jesus says that He will write on the completed Overcomer the name of New Jerusalem. In Revelation, New Jerusalem is called “the bride,” and “the wife of the Lamb.”

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Rev 21:1-3.

When the overcomers in the letter to the Philadelphians receive the name of New Jerusalem, they are being accredited with the status of the perfected state of the bride of Christ. The perfected Overcomer, or Bride of Christ, will be invested with Christ’s new name, given by Christ Himself as an eternal commitment by the Lamb to His wife.

To the Overcomers at Laodicia

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” Rev 3:21.

The completed Overcomers are granted to sit with Christ on His throne. They are given the responsibility of exercising the authority of Christ, but only as they “sit.” To sit is to enter into a complete state of rest and dependence on Christ, not acting on their own authority, but doing and saying only those things initiated by Christ. Notice that even the Holy Spirit as Christ’s representative had that same restraint.

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” John 16:13-15.

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

The Overcomers are the Lord’s Battle Warriors on Earth

The battle of Armageddon is basically a battle between Christ and Antichrist, which will reinstate the Lord Jesus Christ as **“...head of all things to the church.”** Eph 1:22. Casting out the pollution of Antichrist from the Church and restoring Christ’s headship, will not only restore the Church, it will be the beginning of Christ’s everlasting kingdom. This battle is not a physical war, but a spiritual conflict using spiritual weapons like the authority of the name of Jesus, and the word of God.

Two Battle Fronts—Heaven and Earth

The battle is waged on two fronts. In the heavenlies the adversaries are Christ and His angelic hosts, against Antichrist and his **“principalities...powers... and the rulers of the darkness of this age...in the heavenly places.”** Eph 6:12.

On earth the Overcomers wage war on the spirit of Antichrist and his **“spiritual hosts of wickedness...”** (Eph 6:12) who have deceived and overcome those in the apostate church, and the kingdom of Antichrist that now holds the world in captivity.

The Army in Heaven

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS...” Rev 19:11-16.

The army accompanying the Lord in heaven is said to be “clothed in fine linen, white and clean,” not the attire of angels, but the same as attributed to the bride of Christ (another type of the Overcomers - perfected in their preparation). **“And to her (the bride of Christ) it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”** Rev 19:8. The fact that they are said to be in heaven with the Lord should not be regarded as a literal geographical position. Spiritually they are raised to heaven, sharing the authority of His throne.

The “two witnesses” are also raised to a heavenly status and entrusted with the ministry of expounding the prophetic word of God. They will have the major role in unmasking and disarming Antichrist. It is said of the heavenly Christ, **“out of His mouth goes a sharp sword.”** Obviously this is not a literal sword, but a symbol of the word of God. **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...”** Heb 4:12. Jesus is the initiator of the word that is imparted to the two witnesses. Their prophetic expositions received from Christ expose the lying signs and wonders of Antichrist, and reveal his true identity and nature. Antichrist’s control over people will be broken by the truth.

The Armies on the Earth

The second battlefront is the worldly kingdom of Antichrist, through which he has brought the whole world under his control. The battle on earth and its outcome is described briefly in the following passage,

“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.” Rev 19:19-21.

Antichrist’s worldly kingdom has been established by using those bound under his influence to control the bastions of trade and commerce. He has been able to bring all people under his control by the influence that money exerts on their lives, to the extent that **“no one can buy or sell”** (Rev 13:17) without being contaminated by the mark of his character. It is important to see that these people may also be part of the worldly church, for in the area of money, Antichrist’s influence pervades all. The ten kings under Antichrist’s control in the next reading are the money controllers of the world.

“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast (Antichrist). These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.” Rev 17:12-14.

“The kings of the earth” should not be regarded as literal kings, but people on earth with positions of so much worldly authority (for one hour, or a short period), that they can govern the lives of all the inhabitants of the earth. They control the world economy, and dominate the fields of commerce, politics, and even religion. Their own personal ambition is to wield such authority and power as to control the whole earth. However they are dupes of Antichrist, who is using them in attempting to destroy the earth. But they will fail because **“the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”** The **“called, chosen, and faithful”** are a remnant of overcomers who will wield the spiritual authority entrusted to them by their Lord and Commander in casting down their worldly empire. David calls them the Lord’s volunteers in the day of His power, when God makes Christ’s enemies His footstool.

**“The LORD said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."
The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!
Your people shall be volunteers
In the day of Your power...” Ps 110:1-3.**

Antichrist’s worldly kingdom will be cast down by the LORD in “one hour,” (or a very short time), never to rise again. **“The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, (the kingdom of Antichrist) that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.”** Rev 18:9-10.

The judging and overthrowing Antichrist’s worldly kingdom, or “Babylon the Great,” is the responsibility of Almighty God. The responsibility of ministering truth to the bewildered and disillusioned ones previously under Antichrist’s control, and turning their hearts to the Lord, belongs to the overcomers, or “volunteers.” It is through their ministry that the kingdom of the Lord will be re-established.

Overcomers Have the Responsibility of Annulling Antichrist’s Legitimate Authority

Even though Almighty God is invincible, and no one can stand against Him, He is also a God of justice and righteousness. **“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne...”** Ps 89:14. Whilst people on earth willingly subject themselves to the deceptions and temptations of Antichrist, he has legitimate authority on the earth, and a legitimate claim on their lives. But when the deceptions of Antichrist are exposed by the Lord’s spiritual army on earth, his power and control over people will be rejected, and his legitimate authority annulled. The authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as “Head of all things to the Church” will be reinstated, and His glory will re-enter the Church.

The outcome of the battle between Christ and Antichrist in heaven is decided here on earth. As Antichrist loses his legitimate authority on earth, the weight of God’s just judgment will fall on his head in the heavenlies. **“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.”**