

Revelation 12:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.... This verse from Revelation's vision of woman, child, and dragon - cosmic conflict, satan's defeat, messiah's victory employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

Historical Context

John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 12:11 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?
2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?

3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

Interlinear Text

καὶ αὐτῶν ἐνίκησαν αὐτῶν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ
And him they overcame him by the blood G3588
G2532 G846 G3528 G846 G1223 G129 G3588
ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν καὶ
of the Lamb And by the word testimony him And
G721 G2532 G1223 G3588 G3056 G3588 G3141 G846 G2532
οὐκ ἤγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι θανάτου
not they loved lives him unto the death
G3756 G25 G3588 G5590 G846 G891 G2288

Additional Cross-References

John 16:33 (Parallel theme): These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

1 John 5:5 (Parallel theme): Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 Corinthians 15:57 (Parallel theme): But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 2:26 (Parallel theme): And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Romans 16:20 (Parallel theme): And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Acts 20:24 (Witness): But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Revelation 3:5 (Parallel theme): He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

1 John 4:4 (Parallel theme): Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Revelation 20:4 (Word): And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 3:21 (Parallel theme): To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.