

A study of a New Testament word group that focuses on

VICTORY and OVERCOMING

- DEFINITIONS of the words, and the verses where they are found.

[NOTE: When these words occur in the following outlines, they are in *underlined italics*.]

- GOD / JESUS CHRIST AND VICTORY
- THE TEMPORARY, PARTIAL VICTORY OF EVIL
- GOD'S PEOPLE AND THEIR VICTORY

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Definitions of the words, and the verses where they are found.

The Greek N.T. word	The way it is often translated (most common ways listed first)	Verses where found
<i>nike</i> - noun	victory	1 John 5:4
<i>nikos</i> - noun	victory; victorious; triumph	Matthew 12:20 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, 57
<i>nikao</i> - verb	<p><i>When used as a verb:</i> overcome; overpower; conquer; prevail; win the victory; win one's case (in court); defeat; win (the) battle/fight</p> <hr/> <p><i>When used as a noun:</i> he who overcomes; the victor; he who wins the victory; the conqueror</p>	<p>Luke 11:22</p> <p>John 16:33</p> <p>Romans 3:4; 12:21</p> <p>1 John 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:4-5</p> <p>Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 5:5; 6:2; 11:7; 12:11; 13:7; 15:2; 17:14; 21:7</p>
<i>hupernikao</i> - verb	more than conquerors; overwhelmingly conquer; overwhelming victory; full victory; triumphantly victorious	Romans 8:37

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Note that over 2/3 of the references are from the writings of John - and the majority of these (half of the total number of references) are from the book of Revelation. Most of the others (all but two) are from the writings of Paul.

GOD / JESUS CHRIST AND VICTORY

The victories described here impact all of reality. Because of them, the victory of God's people, and the defeat of God's enemies, is guaranteed. Nothing can change these facts.

GOD AND VICTORY

A. *God has victory over all challenges of his integrity*

1. He overcomes / has victory over all accusations people make against him; they are always proven false - Romans 3:4.
 - o He is proved right in what he does; they are proved to be liars, when they try to "judge" (condemn) him.
 - o We should consider this fact, when we're tempted to accuse God of wrongdoing!

JESUS CHRIST AND VICTORY

A. *He has (and will have) victory over this sinful world, over the Devil, etc.*

1. Over this sinful world: He has overcome / had victory over the present world system - John 16:33.
2. Over the kingdoms ruled by the "beast" (a reference to the evil powers which will be ruling over the world at the end of this age): He will overcome / have victory over them - Revelation 17:14.
3. Over the devil, illustrated by a parable: A strong (and fully armed) man can keep his possessions safe, until someone who is stronger attacks and overpowers / has victory over him. Then the stronger man can take away all the possessions and armor that the first man had - Luke 17:21-22.
 - o CONTEXT: Jesus casting demons out of a person. MEANING: The Devil may be strong, but Jesus is stronger. Jesus has overpowered the Devil and taken away his "possession" (the person who was formerly demon-possessed).

B *About his victory*

1. He is the victor - Revelation 5:5.
 - o He, the conquering *lion* (5:5), became worthy by becoming a sacrificial *lamb* (5:6)!
2. He will be victor because he is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords - Revelation 17:14.
 - o (He has *earned* the right to this title - see Revelation 5.)

3. Because of his victory, he can take for himself people who originally belonged to the devil (illustrated by a parable): He overpowers / has victory over the devil - Luke 17:21-22.
 - o See Section A3, for further explanation.
4. Through him, justice will have victory over injustice. Jesus is the "chosen instrument" who will bring the "victory of justice" - Matthew 12:20.
 - o See v. 18-20 - He will build up (rather than tear down) those who are hurt or weak.

C. What his victory means for him

1. He now sits on the throne of God and rules with his Father, because he has overcome / had victory - Revelation 3:21b.
2. He alone has the right to open the sealed book (scroll); he alone is worthy. He has overcome all obstacles, by becoming a sacrificial lamb (see section B1) - Revelation 5:5 and context.
 - o NOTE: This scroll contains the events which will bring this present evil age to an end. Because of his death and resurrection, Jesus has earned the right to open this scroll.

D. What his victory means for us

1. We can have peace and can take courage when we are in the midst of trials, because he (our leader and master) has had the victory - John 16:33.
 - o See the context for other verses of encouragement.
2. We will sit with Jesus and will rule with him, *if* we are willing to overcome / have victory, as he did - Revelation 3:21.
 - o Through him, we have the ability to do this.
3. We who are the "chosen and faithful followers" will share in Jesus' victory over the kingdoms ruled by the "beast" (a reference to the evil powers which will be ruling over the world at the end of this age) - Revelation 17:14.
 - o NOTE: Some interpret this verse as focusing on a specific group of Jesus' followers - those who have died and are now in Jesus' presence, and who will return with him. Others see it as a more general statement about *all* who belong to Jesus.

Jesus' victory is a reality *now*. However, the loser (the devil) is still on the run, creating havoc until the time that he, and all who choose to follow him, are permanently removed from the scene. In the meantime, Jesus is using the devil's havoc to bring people to *himself*.

The devil is described as a "strong man," who Jesus has become the victor over (Luke 11:21-22). This fact can be a great source of encouragement for us. It shows us that, if we have yielded our lives to Jesus, he has the power to keep us. We do not have to be afraid that the devil will capture us back. [Those who "clean up" their lives, but who *don't* become disciples (followers and learners) of Jesus have plenty of reasons to fear. There is nothing to prevent the devil (or his demons) from returning in even greater numbers - Luke 11:24-26.]

THE TEMPORARY, PARTIAL VICTORY OF EVIL

**Don't be surprised when evil seems (for a while) to be stronger than what is good.
The key word, when examining these "victories" is the word "TEMPORARY."**

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The Temporary Victory of EVIL RULERS AND CONQUERORS (Main Focus: the End Times)

The events that will occur during the *end* times are intended to encourage God's people of *all* times. They show us that, even in the *worst* of situations, evil's "victory" will only be temporary! The following verses focus on certain end-time events.

These same types of things have occurred throughout the ages - only not to the extent that they will in the future. Down through the ages, there have often been evil people, who have destroyed nations, and who have killed vast numbers of people. Sometimes they even claim to be "Christian" - even though they persecute and kill those who truly *are* the followers of Jesus! Such "victorious conquerors" may seem to be invincible, and they may even claim that God is on their side. But in the end, they are the losers. Jesus Christ will be the final victor and the judge over all. He, the righteous judge, will pay them back for all the evil they have done.

In this present evil age, God's people may be defeated - perhaps even put to death - by evil forces. But in the end, God's people will be brought back to life and will rule with Jesus for all eternity. Thus, their "defeat" is only temporary. Ultimately, they are the victors.

A. *The rider on the white horse* (at the beginning of these final days)

1. He will go out conquering / overcoming, with the intent of total conquest / victory over all - Revelation 6:2.
 - o Who is this rider? Some people mistakenly identify this rider with Jesus Christ, who is described as riding on a white horse in 19:11-16. However, (1) there is nothing else in common between the description of *this* rider and the description of Christ in chapter 19; (2) the appearance of this rider is associated with judgments which are *incompatible* with Christ's return (including the death of righteous people - Revelation 6:9-11); and (3) the context of Revelation 6:2 shows that Christ is doing *something else* - namely, opening the seal which allows this rider to do his conquering. More likely, this seal represents an event similar to what is described in Matthew 24:4-5, in which a false leader (or leaders) claims to have the answers to the world's problems.

B. The "beast"

1. He will fight against the two "witnesses" and overcome / have victory over them - Revelation 11:7.
 - o He will kill them, but after 3½ days, they will come to life again, and will go up to God. Then the "beast" will have no more power over them.
2. He will be given power to fight against God's people and to overcome / have victory over them - Revelation 13:7.
 - o During this time, he will gain authority over everyone. All who do *not* belong to God will worship him - verses 13:7-8. In contrast, God's people will be persecuted and killed; they are told to have patient endurance and faithfulness - verses 13:9-10.
 - o NOTE: This "beast" may conquer the world and overpower God's people, but his victory is short-lived. Ultimately, God's people will be the victors - Revelation 15:2. The kingdoms controlled by the "beast" - those who worship him - will be destroyed by Jesus, the King of Kings - Revelation 17:14. In the end, God's people will be "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37).

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The Temporary Victory of DEATH [implied]

In this passage, the focus is on the time death *loses* its power over Jesus's people. This will occur at the resurrection, when what is mortal is replaced by what is *immortal* (see the context).

A. For God's people, death and its effects are temporary

1. Death will ultimately lose its power over God's people: Death will be "swallowed up" in victory (v. 54). Its present-day "sting" and victory will be gone forever (v. 55). This victory is a gift from God, available only through Jesus Christ (v.57) - 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55, 57.

Sin and evil have already been overcome by Jesus. Those who belong to Jesus have been guaranteed ultimate victory - and in some respects, that victory has already occurred. The "losers" (the devil and everything that is evil) still put up a struggle in their losing battle, but we have the power (and the duty) to resist them. We are *not* to allow evil to overcome us.

We must remember that, no matter how difficult the way may be, God's people can already be described as "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37). It can be no other way!

Throughout the centuries, people have been willing to die for Christ, rather than deny him. (This number is increasing each year.) Of such people, God says many praiseworthy things. Though the world hated them, the world is actually not worthy of them (Hebrews 11:38a). In the end, they will stand in God's presence as victorious over death. The others - those who persecuted them - will be the ultimate losers.

GOD'S PEOPLE AND THEIR VICTORY

God's people may experience temporary defeats; they may experience recurring attacks and temptations. However, these verses demonstrate that the genuine child of God will have active resistance against those trials, empowered by the life that Christ has placed within him. He won't passively allow trials - or even failures - to rule his life.

We need to remember that, if Christ's life is present in a person, it *will* express itself. This victory is both a *fact* and an *obligation*. It is absurd to think of victory as merely optional - as though we had no obligation to strive for it!

VICTORY AS A FACT

A. *Victory over the evil one, the Devil, the "accuser"*

1. It is already accomplished: The "young men" have overcome / had victory over the evil one, because the Word of God is *living* in them - 1 John 2:13-14.
 - o The "young men" are those who are strong and active in living-out their lives in Christ. Their lives are based on God's Word. [This *fact* of victory is emphasized twice in the passage.]
2. It is already accomplished: "Our brothers" overcame / had victory over the devil, because of: 1) what Jesus did (his blood), and 2) their willingness to testify to the truth, even to the point of death - Revelation 12:11.
 - o CONTEXT: This proclamation is being given at the time that the accuser (the devil) is being permanently cast out of heaven - and thus will no longer be able to accuse those who belong to God. The "voice from heaven" (which calls out this proclamation) is not identified, but may be one of the heavenly beings described previously.
 - o "Our brothers" may be a reference to *all* Christians. We have victory because of what Jesus did, and because of our willingness to acknowledge him in the presence of other people. Though this proclamation may be a future event, the victory is due to past and present realities - *past* referring to what Jesus did and *present* referring to what his followers do during their lives.

B. *Victory over those empowered by a false spirit (examples: false prophets and teachers)*

1. It is a present fact: We have overcome / had victory over them, because of the Holy Spirit's power within us - 1 John 4:4.
 - o The one who is in us (and who empowers us - the Spirit of God - v. 1-2) is greater (more powerful) than the one who is in them (and empowers them - the false spirit, also called the spirit of "antichrist" and the spirit of error - v. 3, 5). We are from God (who is the source of our power); they aren't from God.

C. *Victory over the world system*

1. This victory is an ongoing reality: We who are "born of God" do overcome / have victory over the world, because of our trust in Jesus (and all that such a trust implies) - 1 John 5:4-5.
 - o We have victory, just as Jesus did - John 16:33.
 - o The context shows us that, because of this faith (trust) in God, we *do* love God and his "children" (v. 1-2) and we *are* willing to obey God (v. 2-3). These are both present tense actions. (Genuine belief in the truth about Jesus will impact the way we live. We will choose to live in a way that is compatible with the "light" - the truth - and all that it signifies. If this does not characterize our lives, we need to reconsider our claim to be "born of God.")
 - o This victory applies to (and is a description of) *everyone* who: 1) truly believes what the Bible says about *who* Jesus Christ is (v. 1, 5), and 2) trusts him because of who he is. Such people are described as being "born of God."
2. What makes this victory / overcoming possible? Our trust in Jesus (and all the implications of that trust) is what enables us to have this victory - 1 John 5:4.
 - o Note that genuine victory, if it truly exists in us, will make its presence visible by what we do. [If our trust is fake, it won't enable us to have this victory.]

D. *The ultimate victory of God's people over the "beast"*

1. Those who overcome / have victory over the beast (and his image and the number of his name) will one day sing praises to God - Revelation 15:2. (See also v. 3-4.)
 - o The "beast" represents the world system and its representative leader. He will have temporary "victory" over God's people (Revelation 13:7) - but we must remember that it is *only* temporary!
 - o Though the immediate focus is on end-time events, when world conditions will be at their worst, these words are intended to encourage God's people of *all* ages. *All* of God's people will have ultimate victory over the powers that rise up against them.
 - o Even if evil powers were to succeed in killing us, they would immediately lose their power over us, and they could do us no more harm. Then, at the resurrection, death itself would lose its power over us... and our victory would be complete! (See additional comments in Sections C and E.)

E. *Victory over death*

1. We will have victory over death and death's "sting": Death itself will be "swallowed up" in victory (v. 54). Its present-day "sting" and its momentary victory will be gone forever (v. 55) - 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55.
 - o This will occur at the resurrection, when what is mortal (a physical body that is capable of dying) is replaced by what is *immortal* (a physical body that is *not* capable of dying). (See the context.)
2. How our victory is made possible: God gives us the victory through Jesus Christ - 1 Corinthians 15:57.
 - o Our victory over death is a gift from God, and is available only through Jesus Christ.

Many of the above victories are described as *present day* facts. If they are *not* present in our lives, we need to do some serious reflecting on our spiritual condition. If we fail to obtain the *present-day* victories, which are available through Christ, we will fail to obtain the *future* victories, as well.

VICTORY AS AN OBLIGATION

A. *Victory over evil is necessary*

1. We must overcome / have victory over evil, rather than allowing evil to continue overcoming / having victory over us - Romans 12:21.
 - o Many people claim to be "Christians." However, only the genuine Christians will be victors; the others - those who are only superficially "Christian" - will themselves be conquered. Evil will continue to have victory over them, just as it did before they claimed to become "Christian." (This evil may be obvious - such as murder or lying - or it may be hidden - such as doing good things for reasons that do not honor God.)

Fight back! Don't surrender to evil! How? By doing what is good!

PROMISES TO THOSE WHO HAVE VICTORY

Each of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3 is given a promise that is applicable to *all* who are willing to pay attention to Jesus' instructions (all who have "ears" that can hear). There is an additional promise given at the end of Revelation.

These verses are addressed to people who *claimed* to be followers of Jesus - which would have included both genuine Christians, as well as counterfeits. The difference can ultimately be seen in the way each group responds to the commands given in the passages. Only the genuine disciples would be willing to pay attention to the obligations found in these verses (and in the context surrounding them). Only genuine disciples would overcome (as they are commanded) and receive the blessings promised. In a sense, these verses can be seen as both an encouragement (to those who have repented, trusted Jesus, and are now obeying him), as well as a warning (to those who haven't done those things).

Two additional notes about the verses in Revelation 2 and 3: First, the context (verses prior to the promise) describe the way we become victorious. There is a connection between what we are willing to do *now* and what Jesus will do *later*. Second, these promises are for *all* who capable of hearing - referring to the type of hearing that results in obedience and trust. This refers to a hearing of the *heart*, rather than just an ability to hear sounds and voices.

A. *The promise given to EPHESUS - for ALL who are willing to be overcomers / victors - Revelation 2:7*

1. How they overcome / have victory: They are willing to maintain a *living* love (all the while remaining faithful to the truth) - Revelation 2:1-6.
2. The promise given to them: Jesus will give them the right to eat from the Tree of Life - an expression of God's love.

B. The promise given to SMYRNA - for ALL who are willing to be overcomers / victors - Revelation 2:11

1. How they overcome / have victory: They are willing to remain faithful and true, even while being hurt by persecution and death - Revelation 2:8-10.
2. The promise given to them: Jesus promises them they will not be hurt by a second death.

C. The promise given to PERGAMUM - for ALL who are willing to be overcomers / victors - Revelation 2:17

1. How they overcome / have victory: They refuse to compromise in their faithfulness to Christ, and look only to him for their spiritual nourishment - Revelation 2:12-16.
2. The promise given to them: Jesus promises to give them a spiritual food ("hidden manna") available only for his people. He also promises each of them a special relationship of approval and acceptance by him (a "white stone" of special significance).

D. The promise given to THYATIRA - for ALL who are willing to be overcomers / victors - Revelation 2:26-29

1. How they overcome / have victory: They are willing to continue in doing God's will (a love expressed in their actions). They are also willing to judge (rather than ignore) sin in their midst - Revelation 2:18-25.
2. The promise given to them: Jesus will give them the right to judge nations (just as the Father gave *him* authority to judge the nations). Jesus himself will be their guide and their example (the "morning star" - compare to Revelation 22:16).

E. The promise given to SARDIS - for ALL who are willing to be overcomers / victors - Revelation 3:5-6

1. How they overcome / have victory: They are willing to live lives *now* (in the world's presence) - lives that reflect the presence of salvation in them - Revelation 3:1-4.
2. The promise given to them: Jesus will guarantee them the opportunity to do so (live lives that reflect salvation) for *eternity* (in God's presence). Jesus will clothe them in righteousness ("white"). They will be guaranteed a place in God's presence. And since they were eager to acknowledge God, Jesus himself will be eager to acknowledge them.

F. *The promise given to PHILADELPHIA - for ALL who are willing to be overcomers / victors - Revelation 3:12-13*

1. How they overcome / have victory: They are willing to keep standing firm in Christ, in spite of weakness, in a world of meaninglessness and instability (trials) - Revelation 3:7-11.
2. The promise given to them: Jesus promises to give them a permanence and a special significance in the presence of God - the place where they will forever belong (a place they can call "home").

G. *The promise given to LAODICEA - for ALL who are willing to be overcomers / victors - Revelation 3:21-22*

1. How they overcome / have victory: They are willing to reject the riches that the world offers, in favor of developing a friendship with Jesus - Revelation 3:14-20.
2. The promise given to them: Jesus promises to give them everything that *he* can offer. Their friendship with Jesus will continue for all eternity. Instead of having control over a few of the world's "toys" (riches), he will give them control over vast realms of creation - they will be co-rulers with Christ!

H. *The final promise given to ALL - for ALL who are willing to be overcomers / victors - Revelation 21:7*

1. The promise given to them: Those who are willing to be overcomers / victors will forever be considered God's own children (by adoption - Ephesians 1:5). Because of that, they will inherit all that God has to offer in eternity (the new heaven and new earth).

God is wonderful! Should we live for the pleasures and pastimes offered to us by the world? It's just not worth it!

THE FINAL CONCLUSION:

A. *There is a glorious "End Result" for all of God's People, the Overcomers*

1. Those who choose to live for God are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37)! Said another way, we have overwhelming victory!

NO matter what happens, there is a promise for those who are willing to be (and to live as) followers of Jesus: *We cannot lose!*