

Positional Overcoming from John's Perspective

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Exegetical Facts

- The overcoming passages deal with positional overcoming through one's identification with Christ as introduced by John in 1 John 5:4-5. Through faith in Christ and their subsequent position in His death and resurrection victory, all the saints have overcome Satan and the world system.
- The mention of experiencing salvation, Heaven, and the eternal state are promises given to the overcomers based upon grace. They are not commands or warnings designed to threaten the saints to keep overcoming in order to receive these blessings. The overcomers are challenged to live victoriously in this life in view of their position in Christ and the eternal rewards that await them for faithful service (Rev. 2:10; 3:11). They are not challenged to live victoriously in order to merit Heaven, keep their name in the Book of Life, or escape the second death, since they already have these blessings based upon their grace-relationship with Christ.
- The overcomers are not a special class of saints that possess victory and as a result get into Heaven because of their overcoming legalistic works (Titus 3:5). Their position and eternal blessings never change because of their union with Christ and position before God's throne (Eph. 1:3; Rom. 5:2; 1 Pet. 5:12).
- The overcomers rewards (Rev. 2:10, 23, 25; 3:11) are separated from the overcoming promises, which means that overcomers (all saints) will be rewarded in direct proportion to how they have lived out their overcoming position.
- Good works (*practicing one's overcoming position*) is additional and separate from being an overcomer (*the positional victory that all believers possess in Christ*).

- The overcomers (Rev. 12:11; 15:2; 17:14) are set in contrast to the unsaved (Rev. 21:6-8, 27; 22:14-15). This is another confirmation that the overcomers are not a special, elite group of Christians, but all believers who have overcome through faith in Christ, in contrast to those who have not overcome through faith in Christ (unbelievers).
- The overcoming promises serve as encouragement for the saints in each church to be faithful to God in view of what lies ahead for all of God's redeemed saints. Their overcoming position and promises should motivate them or give them incentive to carry on and hold fast (Rev. 2:25; 3:11).
- The overcoming passages are not presenting the WAY of salvation but the CONFIRMATION of the saint's salvation through their positional salvation and victory in Christ (1 John 5:4-5; Rom. 8:17), as well as their transformation of living (Rev. 2:26), which is an additional sign that they are overcomers in Christ (1 John 3:8-10).
- The *promises* given to the overcomers are not based on their good works but the degree of a Christian's *reward*, honor, and recognition in the Millennium is conditioned upon his good works and faithfulness (Rev. 2:10, 26-27; 3:11). The promises must remain separated from the rewards.
- The promises to the overcomers are based on their grace-relationship with Christ and not a legal relationship of any kind (Eph. 2:8-9).

Exegesis of the Passages

1 John 5:4-5

“For whatsoever (*a reference to the human spirit*) **is born of God overcometh the world** (*positional victory through the new birth whereby our spirit is given new life and the new nature or disposition*): **and this is the victory that overcometh the world** (*a positional victory over the blindness and power of Satan that occurs at salvation*), **even our faith** (*our faith placed in Christ at the time of salvation*). **Who is he that overcometh the world** (*a positional victory over the world system headed*

up by Satan), but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (which results in the believing overcomer being identified in Christ’s victory).

Revelation 2:7

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (*where believers were present*); **To him that overcometh** (*positional victory through believing in Christ as initially introduced and revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 with the emphasis on positional overcoming or victory through Christ*) **will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God”** (*promise given to all believers who are positional overcomers*).

Revelation 2:11

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (*where believers were present*); **He that overcometh** (*positional victory through believing in Christ as first introduced in revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and now restated with the same positional emphasis in Rev. 2:7*) **shall not be hurt of the second death”** (*promise given to all believers who are positional overcomers*).

Revelation 2:17

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (*where believers were present*); **To him that overcometh** (*positional victory through believing in Christ as previously revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and now restated in Rev. 2:7, 11*) **will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it”** (*promises given to all believers who are positional overcomers*).

Revelation 2:26

“And he that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and similarly restated Rev. 2:7, 11, 17*), **and keepeth my works unto the end** (*practice of the overcoming position – perseverance in Christian truth and living in varying degrees and ways which is separate from the actual position – an added proof of one’s salvation and promise of future reward and recognition*), **to him will I give power over the nations”** (*personal reigning privileges in the Millennium which all saints will have - Rev. 5:10 - howbeit in varying degrees, according to their service and living for Christ – 2 Pet. 1:11; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 12:28; Matt. 5:19; 18:4; 25:21, 23; 2 Cor. 5:10*).

Revelation 3:5

“He that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and restated in Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26*), **the same shall be clothed in white raiment** (*the righteousness of Christ, whom they have believed in, which is a blessing for all overcomers*); **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**” (*promises given to all the overcomers that have believed in Christ*).

Revelation 3:12

“Him that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as introduced and revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and restated in Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5*) **will I make a pillar in the temple of my God** (*permanent residency in Heaven*), **and he shall go no more out** (*individual security*): **and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God** (*special identity*), **which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name**” (*personal intimacy with God*).

Revelation 3:21

“To him that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as previously introduced and stated in 1 John 5:4-5 and restated in Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12*) **will I grant to sit with me in my throne** (*promised reigning privileges in Millennium*), **even as I also overcame** (*providing our salvation through His victorious death and resurrection*), **and am set down with my Father in his throne**” (*PROVING our salvation is complete as He sits upon the throne of Heaven – Heb. 1:3: 12:2*).

Revelation 21:7

“He that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as introduced in 1 John 5:4-5 and restated in Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21*) **shall inherit all things** (*promise of Heaven and the eternal as stated in Rev. 21:1-5*); **and I will be his God, and he shall be my son**” (*promise of eternal fellowship with God in contrast to unbelievers as in Rev. 21:8*).

Revelation 12:11 is an additional note that follows the same line of positional victory for all overcomers: **“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb** (*their positional victory through the blood of Christ*), **and by the word of their**

testimony (*their confession of this positional victory*); **and they loved not their lives unto the death**" (*the ultimate sacrifice when clinging to this victory*).