
Overcomers: Promise and Fulfillment

Revelation 22:1-8

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Many of you keep personal scrapbooks:

Some of pictures and photos...

Some of small keepsakes, ribbons and pressed flowers...

Some of the exotic creations made possible through scrapbooking supplies...

Some of cards and letters from friends, family and sweethearts...

These scrapbooks do not hold junk. They hold treasures. They hold things we prize. They hold things we want to remember and maybe reflect on. Tonight, this is a scrapbook in that tradition. It is our last talk on the letters to the seven churches. We are not looking at small scraps of useless paper – we are looking at deep, heart moving treasures.

In Revelation 1-3, much is promised to those who overcome. These promises are held out to enable and encourage us when striving, serving, sacrificing and staying are very hard. O, they are not the inducements of wealth or prosperity. They are the promise of entering now into the foretaste of future fulfillments. Here is the consummation of them all.

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters,

and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

To follow well, I want you to think locally and globally. I want you to think about how these letters at the beginning and declarations at the end are local texts that set the global view of the book. In other words:

We will hear the beginning of symmetrical parallelism in the book. Over and over again our expositions are going to have this feel of being in two places in the book at once. Because of the already and not yet, the intrusion of the new into the old, this book will seem to be a blend of both present and future. That is because we have in the fallenness of the present the beginnings of the glories of the future.

We will locate the church in the old creation (promise) and in the new creation (fulfillment). This is where we live: in the old as the new. Here we are, the new creation living with both grief and gladness until the old passes away and the now comes in all its full and final realities.

We will watch as the book uses this "in old creation promises", and "in the new creation fulfillment" as a very important motif. The “between the old and the new” is suffering and death. At the center of the old to the new is the Genesis 3:15 prophecy fulfilled in Revelation 12.

So this book is about how the Lion-Lamb brings His people through to their completion in the new heavens and the new earth. Let’s think about that together from the letters to the churches.

The Tree of Life

Promise

(2:7)

⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Here is the whole story of the Bible: a tree of life from fenced to open through the gate of the cross and grace. Those who conquer by grace are promised to be allowed to eat of the tree of life.

Fulfillment

(22:1-2)

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And we do. The delicious, delectable and desirable fruit is given to those who enter the city from all the nations, all the people groups. Salvation’s healing of sin and suffering will be complete.

Fine White Garments

Promise **(3:5)**

⁵ 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.

White garments – pure, clean, not our own – these are the present promise to those who conquer. What do these white garments mean?

Fulfillment **(21:2, 9ff; cf. 19:7–8)**

⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

⁹ Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

The fulfillment is more than just a white robe or a white suit. It is the glorious whiteness of a bridal gown, of wedding attire. We are granted to be the bride of Christ today. One day, we will be presented to our groom in spotless dress, garments white and bright with the purified linen of righteous deeds.

Eternal Security

Promise **(3:5)**

⁵ 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.

Those who conquer have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life in indelible ink. Not only can our names not be erased but they cannot be blotted out from the Lamb’s Book of Life. Here is the promise of eternal security. We are enrolled and one day our names will be called and we will be known because we have been loved.

Fulfillment **(21:27)**

²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life do enter the city of God. It is not that we can or that we could – we will enter where

sin and sinners are excluded. Our future security rests on a past choice – the loving choice of a sovereign God who put our names in His Book in eternity past (Revelation 13:8).

The Temple of God

Promise

(3:12)

¹² 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.

Those who conquer are part of God's true Temple. We will become because we all ready are living pillars and stones in the church, the Temple.

Fulfillment

(21:22-27)

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

In God's eternal city there is no need of a physical place of worship, a temple. Now and there, we will worship in spirit and in truth as the Temple who are a part of the Temple, all who are in Christ. So the inexplicable union of Christ and His people where from one view we are the Temple and where from another God is the Temple. So here is that magnificent and mysterious reality once again. From heaven's glorious future, our God, our Lord Jesus Christ will be our Temple, our place of worship. Yet now, we, His people, are His dwelling place and the present place of heavenly worship.

Citizenship in the Eternal City

Promise (3:12)

¹² 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.

The ones who conquer will have the name of city of God written on them. This means that they will be identified with God and Mt. Zion. They will be citizens of the New Jerusalem.

Fulfillment (21:2, 10)

² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

And so it is. The new Jerusalem is simply the church, the bride, the gathered people of God in heaven. Yes, it may well be a “somewhere, something” now and then – but we are to understand the Mt. Zion, the new Jerusalem as being the bride of Christ.

A Great Name

Promise (3:12)

¹² 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***.

Those who conquer will have written on them the name of God and the new name of Christ. This is a symbol of ownership. Here is the promise that we will be God’s and that He will claim us for His name is graven on us.

Fulfillment (22:4)

⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

Now we see dimly, but one day face to face. We are being transformed into Christ’s character by beholding Him by faith. But there will be a day where we will see Him face to face with glorified eyes. Then, the name of God, the character of Christ, will be fully formed in us and on us.

A White Stone and Bright Star

Promise

(2:17, 28)

¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. 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.'

²⁸ And I will give him the morning star.

What a dazzling promise. Overcomers will have inward sustenance, a token of acquittal from judgment and a stone with a private name between each of us and Christ. This is what is promised. But its fulfillment is greater than you can imagine.

Fulfillment

(21:11, 18–21, 23; 22:5, 16)

21:¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

¹⁸ The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

22:⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

We are given the city and the King. We will receive the church and Christ. The new Jerusalem, the church, is described here in all her bejeweled finery. And Christ is the bright and morning star.

A Share in Christ's Kingly Power:

Promise **(2:26–27; 3:21)**

2:²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ 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.

3:²¹ 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.

If we overcome, we will reign with Christ. We will be given to sit on the throne and reign over all the people groups. What is really being promised here? That God's people win the war because Christ has won the war. The nations may rage against God and persecute His people. But, O, one day...

Fulfillment **(22:5)**

⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

What more is there to say. There will be a day and a place, an eternal day and a new heavens and earth where God's kingdom reaches its climatic fullness.

Exclusion from the Second Death

Promise **(2:11)**

¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

Overcomers will not be harmed by the second death. This simply means we will be protected from and kept out of the lake of fire. We will not even be harmed by its licking flames as they reach up to receive the unrepentant unbelievers.

Fulfillment **(21:7–8)**

⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

How is this to be fulfilled? By being given our inheritance as God's sons. What a great privilege. Jesus, our heavenly Father's beloved son bore the second death for us. We will receive the cosmos wide inheritance the Father has given the Son. We will not receive eternal judgment in hell. We will abide in the eternal bliss and joy of God's happy presence.

This is just a small foretaste of the riches and the wonders of the book of Revelation. May God so open the spiritual eyes of hearts so that we will be able to see by faith the beginning now of what will be completed then.

Soli Deo Gloria.