
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What is an "overcomer" in the Book of Revelation?**

Seventeen times in the Book of Revelation the apostle John speaks about those who "*overcome*." For example:

Revelation 2:7

⁷ "... To **him who overcomes** I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

These three words, "*he who overcomes*," are being translated from one verb in the original Greek New Testament—the verb **νικάω**. The root of this verb is **νικη** from which we get the name of the athletic shoe "*Nike*"—which means "*victory*." This word is translated with three different English words in the NKJV:

- One time it's translated "to prevail" (Revelation 5:5).
- One time it's translated "to have victory" (Revelation 15:2).
- The rest of the time it's translated "overcome."

So an "*overcomer*" in the Book of Revelation is someone who has victory, or has prevailed over Satan and victory over temptation, and fear, and sin.

When?

This brings up the question of "*when*"—when is a person considered an "*overcomer*"? Is a person an overcomer if he resists temptation one time? Is he an overcomer if he successfully resists temptation ten times or a hundred times? The answer is none of these. A person is not an overcomer until he has finished all temptation hurled at him from the Devil.

When do temptations from the Devil end? They end when a person dies. As long as a person is alive, they have not yet overcome—because it's possible that at the last moment that person could fail.

To illustrate, the Atlanta Braves baseball team has 162 regular-season games scheduled for this year. During the season, the Braves will lose some of their games, but they will hopefully win more than they lose. At the end of the regular season, if they are fortunate, they will go into the post-season games: the National League Series. If they win the National League Series, they finally advance into the World Series. But they are still not overcomers until they win the last game of the world series. If they do not win the last game, they did not overcome—they fell short.

The same is true in our lives. As long as we are alive we are being tested and tempted by Satan. We could live to be eighty years old, and we could, perhaps, successfully resist temptations of Satan for all those years, but in the end, if we give in to temptation and we refuse to repent and refuse to seek forgiveness from God on His terms, we have failed. This would be equivalent to the Atlanta Braves having a perfect season of 162 games, winning all the games of the National League Series, and then losing the final

game of the World Series. It doesn't matter how many times the Braves won before that final game, if they lose the final game, they did not overcome. Someone else is the world champion—but not them. They have to return home in hopes of winning next season—but because they lost the last game, they are not the champions. They didn't win. The same is true for us. If we do not stay faithful to God all the way to the very end, we are not yet overcomers.

The Reward?

And what is the reward for overcomers? What does the Lord promise those who were faithful all the way till they die?

Revelation 2:10-11

¹⁰ "... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹ "... **He who overcomes** shall not be hurt by the second death."

Revelation 3:5

⁵ "**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.

Eternal life in the presence of the Lord and of all the heavenly host is promised to those who die faithfully. But if someone gives up and refuses to live faithfully all the way to the end, that person loses his life.

Ezekiel 18:24

²⁴ "[When] a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? **All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.**

Let us all take warning and seek forgiveness from God every single time we fall short of His righteous law. And after we have done everything that is commanded to us, let us humbly say, "*We are unprofitable servants. We have only done what was our duty to do*" (Luke 17:10).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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