

FROM DANIEL TO REVELATION

The main purpose of this independent website is to interpret Daniel and Revelation.

2019-07-06 BY ANDRIES VAN NIEKERK

They overcame Satan by the word of their testimony. Revelation 12:11

This is an article in [the series on Revelation 12](#). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes are from the NASB.

SUMMARY

[Revelation 12:7-10](#) describes the victory that Michael and his angels gained over Satan and his angels in the war in heaven. But then [Revelation 12:11](#) continues:

*"And **they** overcame him because of the **blood of the Lamb** and because of the word of **their testimony** ... even when faced with death."*

Since this also refers to a victory over Satan, it may seem as if "they" refer to angels. However, for the following reasons, "they" refer to God's people on earth:

- **Death** – Angels are not "faced with death" ([Rev 12:11](#)). In Revelation, it is always people that are killed for their testimony.
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- **Brethren** – The immediate antecedent of "they" is "our brethren" who were accused by Satan ([Rev 12:10](#)). In Revelation, "brethren" always

refer to God's people.

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- **Overcome** – “*They overcame*” and in Revelation, it is God's people who “*overcome*” (e.g. [Rev 3:12](#)).

This creates an apparent contradiction, for it might imply that the victory in the war in heaven ([Rev 12:7-10](#)) was actually won on earth by God's people ([Rev 12:11](#)). To solve this, it is proposed that these are two different victories:

- [Revelation 12:11](#) refers to the everyday experience of God's people as they overcome Satan's accusations.
- The victory in the war in heaven, as described in [Rev 12:7-10](#), was a specific event after Christ's ascension in which Satan was defeated.

OVERCOME THE ACCUSER BY THEIR TESTIMONY

According to [Revelation 12:11](#), two things are required for “*our brethren*” to overcome:

- The blood of the Lamb and
- The word of their testimony.

Why is the “*testimony*” of God's people, “*even when faced with death*” required to overcome Satan's accusations? Why is the blood of the Lamb not sufficient? This is addressed by the series on the seven seals. In Revelation 5, Christ died to gain the right to open the book of God's judgments ([Rev 5:5](#) – see, [Book of Life](#)), but the book remains sealed. A process is required to open the book. This process involves “*the word of their testimony ... even when faced with death.*”

– END OF SUMMARY –

WHO ARE THEY?

[Revelation 12:7-10](#) describes the victory that Michael and his angels gained over Satan and his angels in the war in heaven. As argued in a [previous article](#),

Christ's victory on earth enabled Michael to gain victory in heaven. [Rev 12:10](#) describes the outcome of that victory:

*"The accuser of **our brethren** has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night."*

[Revelation 12:11](#) continues:

*"And **they** overcame him because of the **blood of the Lamb** and because of the word of **their testimony**, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."*

The first question in this article is: Who are "they?" Are "they" people or angels?

THEY ARE ANGELS.

The following may indicate that "they" could refer to angels:

- **Immediate context** – [Revelation 12:11](#) refers to some victory when it says, "they overcame him." "Him," in the context, refers to Satan. Since "they" overcame Satan, and since Michael's angels defeated Satan in the immediate context ([Rev 12:7-10](#)), this may imply that "our brethren" refers to Michael and his angels.
- **Blood of the Lamb** – As previously argued, the angels gained the victory "because of the blood of the Lamb." Now [Rev 12:11](#) says the same of "our brethren."

THEY ARE PEOPLE.

The following indicates that "they" are God's people on earth:

- **Death** – As far as we know, angels are not "faced with death" ([Rev 12:11](#)). In Revelation, it is always people that are killed for their

testimony; never angels, for example:

- “Those who had been **slain** ... because of the **testimony** which they had maintained” (Rev 6:9; cf. 12:17).
- “Those who had been **beheaded** because of their **testimony** of Jesus” (Rev 20:4).

- **Brethren** – The immediate antecedent of “they” is “our brethren” who were accused by Satan (Rev 12:10). It is in Satan’s nature to deceive and accuse (Rev 12:9-10). He certainly must have attempted at least to deceive and accuse Michael and his angels “before our God.” For that reason, “our brethren” arguably include angels. However, elsewhere in Revelation, “brethren” always refer to God’s people (Rev 6:11; 19:10; 22:9).
- **Overcome** – “They overcame” and in Revelation, it is God’s people who “overcome” (e.g. Rev 3:12).

APPARENT CONTRADICTION

The evidence seems stronger that verse 11 describes God’s people on earth, but this creates an apparent contradiction, for it might imply that the victory in the war in heaven (Rev 12:7-10), in which Michael’s angels won the victory, was actually won on earth and by God’s people (Rev 12:11).

To solve this apparent contradiction, it is proposed that these are two different but related victories:

- Revelation 12:11 refers to the everyday experience of God’s people as they overcome Satan’s accusations.
- The victory in the war in heaven, as described in verses 7-10, was a specific event after Christ’s ascension in which Satan was defeated.

Christ’s victory on the earth (that He remained faithful to God to the end, even under the most excruciating torment – “*even when faced with death*”) forms

the foundation of both these victories.

OVERCOME THE ACCUSER BY THEIR TESTIMONY

However, according to 12:11, two things are required for “our brethren” to overcome:

*“They overcame him
because of the blood of the Lamb and
because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life
even when faced with death.”*

The Lamb is Jesus (e.g. [Rev 5:6](#)). Both “*the blood of the Lamb*” and “*the word of their testimony*” are required for God’s people to overcome Satan. Their willingness to die for what they believe is not a third requirement but indicates the strength of their testimony. The testimony that overcomes Satan is a testimony that is proven real when one’s life is in danger. Satan said to the LORD, “*all that a man has he will give for his life*” ([Job 2:4](#)), but these people prove him wrong, for they are willing to die for their faith.

BLOOD OF THE LAMB

The first requirement is “*the blood of the Lamb.*” How the blood of Christ purchased men for God has been discussed in the series on the seven seals. (See, [The book which not even God can open.](#))

THEIR TESTIMONY

But the question is: Why is the “*testimony*” of God’s people, “*even when faced with death*” required to overcome Satan’s accusations ([Rev 12:10-11](#))? Why is the blood of the Lamb not sufficient? This is also addressed by the series on the seven seals. Revelation 5 and 12 are parallel in the sense that both describe the consequence of Christ’s victory on earth:

- Revelation 5 shows that Christ was accepted as the true witness and, therefore, received the right to open the book of God's judgments ([the book of life](#)).
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- Revelation 12 shows that Satan was proven to be a liar and he was thrown out of heaven in his capacity as "*the accuser of our brethren*" ([Rev 12:10](#)).

To come back to the question: Why is the "*testimony*" of God's people, required to overcome Satan's accusation; Christ died to gain the right to open the book of God's judgments ([Rev 5:5](#)), but the book remains sealed. A process is required to open the book. This process involves "*the word of their testimony ... even when faced with death.*" Please see the article series on the seals for further discussion.

ARTICLES IN THE SERIES ON REVELATION 12

- [The woman, the dragon, the child, and the war in heaven](#)
- [WHEN did the war in heaven begin and WHEN did it end?](#)
- [HOW did Christ's death win the victory in the war in heaven?](#)
- [They overcame Satan by the word of their testimony. \(Rev 12:11\)](#)
- [Why did God not make an end to evil after the Cross?](#)

OTHER RELEVANT ARTICLES

- [The identity of the seven-headed beasts of Revelation.](#)
- [The beast in Revelation is the mainstream church.](#)
- [The seven seals \(Rev 4:1-8:1\)](#)
- [List of all articles on this website](#)

📁 **REVELATION 12**

BLOOD OF THE LAMB, SATAN, THE ACCUSER OF OUR BRETHREN, THEIR TESTIMONY, WAR IN HEAVEN

4 Replies to “They overcame Satan by the word of their testimony. Revelation 12:11”



Nelson

2019-07-09 AT 12:38 PM

Being blessed by such a detailed and well put sharing. Thanks much for this word.

ONE QUESTION

Is it right to say therefore that the THEIR TESTIMONY here denotes obedience and total faith in the truth proclaimed about the eligibility of the blood and the sacrifice on the cross to save mankind and set them free and that that freedom gives access to the power that helps believers overcome?



Andries van Niekerk

2019-08-21 AT 6:27 PM

Hi Nelson

Knowledge will not help us: “If I ... **know all mysteries and all knowledge**; and if I have all **faith**, so as to remove mountains, but do not have **love**, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13). I myself study the Bible much, but uneducated people that love will be far ahead of me on judgment day. Would it not be wonderful when the most loving people are our leaders?



Ray E. Daly

2019-07-07 AT 12:31 AM

Greetings,

Does it not seem that those who “have the testimony” is referring to the 144000 of [Rev. 7](#)? For they are shown to make it to “Zion” in the promised land, and will be those to whom the Son of Man (the Lamb) will come when he finally sets his feet down on the earth. And it shows that it is these whom will be protected when the rest of the Israelites will have to flee or will be persecuted.

Also, as to the one giving birth in Ch. 12. All seem to think this refers to Jesus Christ himself, while it can as easily be referring to his “CHURCH”. Which again can refer to the 144000. Through whom the Son of Man will work, when he begins to put his message out.

Ray



Andries van Niekerk

2019-07-07 AT 3:14 PM

Hi Ray

I do not find in the text links between the 144000 and “our brethren” of 12:10-11. But I do agree that “our brethren” include the 144000. The 144000, as I see it, represents the end-time people, while “our brethren,” refer to all God’s people in all ages.

But the 144000 will be prime examples of those people that “did not love their life even when faced with death” (12:11), for the 144000 will be killed by the image of the beast (13:15).

You wrote: As to the one giving birth in Ch. 12. All seem to think this is referring to Jesus Christ himself.

Do you mean the one born in Ch. 12? In my view His mother is the CHURCH, if by church we mean God’s people of all ages. The 144000 is an end-time subset of the church, when “His bride has made herself ready” (19:7).

Andries