

Stand

402 We live in a battlefield of war!

Andrew Murray, in his book The Power of The Blood of Jesus , makes a powerful statement regarding our warfare. His comments reveal the reality of the spiritual world, and the reality of our victory. He also shows the reality of Satan's schemes to deceive Christians.¹

The following is a quote from chapter 9 of his book:

Victory through the Blood

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death Revelation 12:11

For thousands of years there had been a mighty conflict for the possession of mankind, between the old serpent, who led man astray, and 'the seed of the woman.' Often it seemed as though the kingdom of God had come in power; then at other times the might of evil obtained such supremacy that the strife appeared to be hopeless.

It was thus also in the life of our Lord Jesus. By His coming and His wonderful words and works, the most glorious expectations of a speedy redemption were awakened. How terrible was the disappointment which the death of Jesus brought to all who had believed in Him! It seemed, indeed, as if the powers of darkness had conquered and had established their kingdom forever.

But, behold! Jesus is risen from the dead, an apparent victory proved to be the terrible downfall of the prince of darkness. By bringing about the death of 'the Lord of life, - Satan permitted Him, who alone was able to break open the gates of death, to enter his kingdom. 'Through death he has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. - In that holy moment when our Lord shed His blood in death, and it seemed as if Satan were victorious, the adversary was robbed of the authority he had hitherto possessed.

Our text gives a very grand representation of these memorable events. The best commentators, notwithstanding differences in details of exposition, are united in thinking that we have here a vision of the casting out of Satan from heaven as a result of the ascension of Christ.

We read in Revelation 12:5-9: "And she brought forth a man child, who ... was caught up unto heaven and to his throne ... And there was war in heaven; and Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not,' neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which giveth the whole world- he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Then follows the song from which the text is taken: now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 'And they

¹ The Power of the Blood of Jesus - Andrew Murray - chapter 9 - Whitaker House
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overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell therein.' (Revelation 12:10-11)

The point which deserves our special attention is that, while the conquest of Satan and his being cast out of heaven, is first represented as the result of the ascension of Jesus and the war in heaven which followed, yet in the song of triumph which was heard in heaven, victory is ascribed chiefly to the blood of the Lamb; this was the power by which the victory was gained.

Through the whole book of Revelation, we see the Lamb on the throne. It is as the slain Lamb that He has gained that position: the victory over Satan and all his authority is by the blood of the Lamb.

We have spoken about the blood in its manifold effects; it is fitting that we should seek to understand how it is that victory is always ascribed to the blood of the Lamb. We shall consider:

**First, victory as gained once for all;
Second, victory as being ever carried on; and
Third, victory as one in which we have a share.**

The victory which was gained once for all: In the exalted representation given in our text, we see what a high position was once occupied by Satan, the great enemy of the human race. He had entrance into heaven and appeared there as the accuser of the brethren and as the opponent of whatever was done in the interests of God's people.

We know how this is taught in the Old Testament. In the book of Job, we see Satan coming with the Sons of God to present himself before the Lord and to obtain permission from Him to tempt His servant Job (Job 2). In the book of Zechariah, we read that he saw 'Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him for, be his adversary (RV) ' (3:1-2). Then there is the statement of our Lord, recorded in Luke 10:18, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.' Later on, in His agony of soul, as He felt beforehand His approaching sufferings, He said, 'Now is the judgment Of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out' (John 12:31).

It may, at first thought, seem strange that the Scriptures should represent Satan as being in heaven. But to understand this aright, it is necessary to remember that heaven is not a small, circumscribed dwelling place where God and Satan had relationship as neighbors. No! Heaven is a limitless sphere, with very many different divisions, filled with innumerable hosts of angels who carry out God's will in nature. Among them, Satan also still held a place. Then remember, he is not represented in Scripture to be the black, grisly figure in outward appearance as he is generally pictured, but as 'an angel of light.' He was a prince with ten thousands of servants.

When he had brought about the fall of man, and had also transferred the world to himself and became its prince, he had real authority over all that was in it. Man had been destined to be king of this world, for God he said, 'Have thou authority.' When Satan had conquered the king, he took his entire kingdom under his authority; and this authority was recognized by God. God, in His holy will, had ordained that if man listened to Satan, he must suffer the consequences and become subject to his tyranny. God never in this matter

used His power or exercised force, but always took the way of law and right; and so Satan retained his authority until it was taken from him in a lawful manner.

This is the reason why he could appear before God in heaven, as accuser of the brethren and in Opposition to them for the 4,000 years of the Old Covenant. He had obtained authority over all flesh, and only after he was conquered in flesh, as the sphere of his authority, could he be cast out forever, as accuser, from the court of heaven.

So the Son of God also had to come in the flesh, in order to fight and conquer Satan, on his own ground.

For this reason also at the commencement of His public life, our Lord, after His anointing, being thus as openly recognized as the Son of God, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Victory over Satan could be gained only after He (Jesus) had personally endured and resisted his temptations.

But even this victory was not sufficient. Christ came in order that 'through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.' The devil had that power of death because of the law of God. That law had installed him as jailer of its prisoners. Scripture says, 'The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.' Victory over and the casting out of Satan could not take place till the righteous demands of the law were perfectly fulfilled. The sinner must be delivered from the power of the law, before he could be delivered from the authority of Satan.

It was through His death and the shedding of His blood that the Lord Jesus fulfilled the law's demands. Ceaselessly, the law had been declaring that 'the wages of sin is death, and the soul that sinneth it shall die.- By the typical ministry of the temple, by the sacrifices with the shedding of blood and sprinkling of blood ' the law had foretold that reconciliation and redemption could take place only by the shedding of blood. As our surety, the Son of God was born under the law. He obeyed it perfectly. He resisted the temptations of Satan to withdraw Himself from under its authority. He willingly gave Himself up to bear the punishment of sin. He gave no ear to the temptation of Satan to refuse the cup of suffering. When He shed His blood, He had devoted His whole life, to its very end, to the fulfilling of the law. When the law had been thus perfectly fulfilled, the authority of sin and Satan was brought to an end. Therefore death could not hold Him. 'Through the blood of the everlasting covenants God brought Him 'again from the dead-' So also He 'entered heaven by his own blood' to make His reconciliation effective for us.

The text gives us a striking description of the glorious result of the appearing of our Lord in heaven. We read concerning the mystic woman:

She brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught Up unto God, and to his throne ... There was war in heaven: Michael and his, angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: and he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.'(Revelation 12:5, 7-9)

Then follows the song of victory in which the words of our text occur: -'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.'

In the book of Daniel we read of a previous conflict between this Michael, who stood on the side of God's people Israel, and the opposing world powers. But only now

can Satan be cast out, because of the blood of the Lamb. Reconciliation for sin and the fulfillment of the law have taken from him all his authority and right. The blood, as we have already seen, that had done such wonderful things in heaven with God in blotting out sin and bringing it to naught, had a similar power over Satan. He has now no longer any right to accuse. 'Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down ... And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.

Victory As Being Ever Carried On: There is a progressive victory which follows on this first victory. Satan having been cast down to earth, the heavenly victory must now be carried out here. This is indicated in the words of the song of victory, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.' This was primarily spoken concerning 'the brethren' mentioned, but it refers also to the victory of the angels. The victory in heaven and on earth progresses simultaneously, resting on the same ground. We know from the portion in Daniel already mentioned (Daniel 10:12-13) what fellowship there exists between heaven and earth in carrying on the work of God. As soon as Daniel prayed, the angel became active, and the three weeks' strife in the heavenlies were three weeks of prayer and fasting on earth. The conflict here on earth is the result of a conflict in the invisible region of the heavenlies. Michael and his angels, as well as the brethren on earth, gained the victory 'by the blood of the Lamb.'

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation we are clearly taught how the conflict was removed from heaven to earth. 'Woe to the inhabitants of the earth-exclaimed the voice in heaven, 'for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time ... And when the dragon saw that he was cast down unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. The woman signifies nothing else than the church of God, out of which Jesus was born: when the devil could not harm Him any more, he persecutes His church. The disciples of our Lord and the church in the first three centuries had experience of this. In the bloody persecutions in which hundreds of thousands of Christians perished as martyrs, Satan did his utmost to lead the church into apostasy or to root it out altogether; but in its full sense, the statement that "they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives even unto death" applies to the martyrs.

After the centuries of persecution, there came to the church centuries of rest and worldly prosperity. Satan had tried force in vain. By the favor of the world, he might have better success. In the church conformed to the world, everything became darker and darker, till in the Middle Ages the Romish apostasy reached its climax. Nevertheless during all these ages there were not a few who in the midst of surrounding misery fought the fight of faith, and by the piety of their lives and witness for the Lord, the statement was often established: They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives even unto death.-

This was no less the secret power by which, through the blessed Reformation, the mighty authority which Satan had gained in the church was broken down. 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.' It was the discovery, and experience, and preaching of the glorious truth that we are 'Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood' that gave to the Reformers such wonderful power and such a glorious

victory.

Since the days of the Reformation, it is still apparent that in proportion as the blood of the Lamb is gloried in, the church is constantly inspired by a new life to obtain the victory over deadness or error. Yes, even in the midst of the wildest heathen, where the throne of Satan has been undisturbed for thousands of years, this is still the weapon by which its power must be destroyed. The preaching of 'the blood of the cross' as the reconciliation for the sin of the world and the ground of God's free, forgiving love is the power by which the most darkened heart is opened and softened, and, from being a dwelling place of Satan, is changed into a temple of the Most High.

What avails for the church is available also for each Christian. In 'the blood of the Lamb', he always has victory. It is when the soul is convinced of the power which that blood has with God in heaven to effect a perfect reconciliation by the blotting out of sin; to rob the devil of his authority over us completely and for ever, to work out in our hearts a full assurance of the favor of God; and to destroy the power of sin it is, I say, when the soul lives in the power of the blood that the temptations of Satan cease to ensnare.

Where the holy blood of the Lamb is sprinkled, there God dwells, and Satan is put to flight. In heaven, on earth, and in our hearts, that word as the announcement of a progressive victory is valid: they overcame progress him by the blood of the Lamb.

Our Share in This Victory: We also have a share in this victory if we are reckoned among those who have been cleansed 'by the blood of the Lamb.' To have the full enjoyment of this, we must pay attention to the following facts.

No Victory without Conflict: We must recognize that we dwell in an enemy's territory. What was revealed to the apostle in his heavenly vision must hold good in our daily lives. Satan has been cast down into the earth; he has great wrath because he has but a short time. He cannot now reach the glorified Jesus, but seeks to reach Him by attacking His people. We must live always under the holy consciousness that we are watched, every moment, by an enemy of unimaginable cunning and power who is unwearied in his endeavor to bring us entirely, or even partially-however little it may be under his authority. He is literally 'the prince of this world.' All that is in the world is ready to serve him, and he knows how to make use of it in his attempts to lead the church to be unfaithful to her Lord, and to inspire her with his spirit, the spirit of the world.

He makes use not only of temptations to what is commonly esteemed to be sin, but he knows how to gain an entrance into our earthly engagements and businesses-in the seeking for our daily bread and necessary money, in our politics, in our commercial combinations, in our literature and science, in our knowledge, and all things-so to make all that is lawful in itself into a tool to forward his devilish deceptions.

The believer who desires to share in the victory over Satan 'through the blood of the Lamb' must be a fighter. He must take pains to understand the character of his enemy. He must allow himself to be taught by the Spirit through the Word what the secret cunning of Satan is, which is called in Scripture 'the depths of Satan,' by which he so often blinds and deceives men. He must know that this strife is 'not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places'(Ephesians 6:12). He must devote himself, in every way, and at all costs, to carry on the strife till death. Then only will he be able to join in

the song of victory, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives even unto death-'

Victory through Faith: This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?- (1 John 5:4-5). "Be of good cheer,- said our Lord Jesus, -I have overcome the world." Satan is an already conquered enemy. He has nothing, absolutely nothing by right, to say to one who belongs to the Lord Jesus. By unbelief, by ignorance of, or by letting go my hold of the fact that I have a participation in the victory of Jesus, I may give Satan again an authority over me which otherwise he does not possess. But when I know, by a living faith, that I am one with the Lord Jesus, that the Lord Himself lives in me, and that He maintains and carries on in me that victory which He gained, then Satan has no power over me. Victory -through the 'blood of the Lamb' is the power of my life-only this faith can inspire courage and joy in the strife. By thinking of the terrible power of the enemy, of his never-sleeping watchfulness, of the way in which he has taken possession of everything on earth by which to tempt us, it might well be said-as some Christians think-that the strife is too severe, that it is not possible to live always under such tension that life would be impossible. This is perfectly true, if we in our weakness had to meet the enemy or gain the victory by our own might But that is not what we are called upon to do.

Jesus is the victor; so we need only to have our souls filled with the heavenly vision of Satan being cast out of heaven by Jesus, filled with faith in the blood by which Jesus Himself conquered, and filled with faith that He Himself is with us to maintain the Power and victory of His blood. Then we also 'are more than conquerors through him that loved us.'

Victory in Fellowship with the Blood of the Lamb: Faith is not merely a thought of which I lay hold, a conviction that possesses me it is a life. Faith brings the soul into direct contact with God and the unseen things of heaven, but above all, with the blood of Jesus. it is not possible to believe in victory over Satan by the blood without being myself brought entirely under its power.

Belief in the power of the blood awakens in me a desire for an experience of its power in myself; each experience of its Power makes belief in victory more glorious.

Seek to enter more deeply into the perfect reconciliation with God which is yours. Live, constantly, exercising faith in the assurance that 'the blood cleanseth from all sin' yield yourself to be sanctified and brought nigh to God through the blood; let it be your life-giving nourishment and power. You will thus have an unbroken experience of victory over Satan and his temptations. He who, as a consecrated priest, walks with God, will rule as a conquering king of Satan.

Believers, our Lord Jesus by His blood has made us not only priests but kings unto God, that we may draw near to God not only in priestly purity and ministry, but that also in kingly power we may rule for God. A kingly spirit must inspire us, a kingly courage to rule over our enemies. The blood of the Lamb must increasingly be a token and seal, not only of reconciliation for all guilt, but of victory over all the power of sin.

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the casting out of Satan were the results of the shedding of His blood. In you also, the sprinkling of the blood will open the way

for the full enjoyment of resurrection with Jesus, and of being seated with Him in the heavenly places.

I once more, therefore, beseech you to open your entire being to the incoming of the power of the blood of Jesus. Your life will become a continual observance of the resurrection and ascension of our Lord and a continual victory over all the powers of hell. Your heart, too, will constantly unite with the song of heaven, 'Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ for the accuser of the brethren is cast down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb(Revelation 12:10-11).

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