

# More Than Conquerors

2 Chronicles 13

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## I. Introduction

- a. Imagine a nation at civil war. Kindred fighting kindred. Battles in your own backyards. A people divided and destroying one another.
- b. “Roughly 1,264,000 American soldiers have died in the nation's wars-620,000 in the Civil War and 644,000 in all other conflicts,” making it this nations bloodiest battle in our history.<sup>1</sup>
- c. Things weren't much better for Israel following the split of the kingdom under Rehoboam. War ensued between the Northern and Southern Kingdom, and as we will see the losses were great.
- d. We need to understand why the kingdom was divided: it was God's judgment on Solomon for turning to other gods. Historically it resulted from Rehoboam's folly and Jeroboam's leading a rebellion, but we read in 2 Chron 10:15 that this was from the LORD.
- e. The LORD's punishment of Solomon and his descendants would not be forever, though: **1 Kings 11:39** **“Thus I will afflict the descendants of David for this, but not always.”**
- f. The LORD promised Jeroboam ten of the twelve tribes to rule over and told him: **“Then it will be, that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.” (1 Kings 11:38)**
- g. But Jeroboam did not remain faithful to the LORD. Instead devoting Himself to the proper worship of the LORD out of thankfulness for all He had given him, he made two golden calves and set one up in Bethel, the southern most city of the Northern Kingdom, and Dan, the northern most kingdom. Using the same phrase as Aaron at mount Sinai Jeroboam sets up idols for the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/faq/>

people to worship instead of the one true living God. These idols became a snare to Israel. They rejected the priesthood of Aaron and the proper worship at the Temple where the holy of holies was and where sacrifices were properly made. Instead Jeroboam set up his own worship center, with his own gods, and with his own priesthood. Rather than trust God with the kingdom that had been given to him, he turned Israel to idols in an attempt to persevere his kingship (1 Kg 12:26-27).

- h. That was in the North. In Judah Solomon's son Rehoboam inherited the throne, as we learned last week he acted foolishly and the kingdom was divided as a result. We learn from the life of Rehoboam that when he obeyed the LORD he prospered, but when he turned from the LORD he suffered great loss. When "he and all Israel with him forsook the law of the LORD" the Lord sent the Egyptians to plunder Judah. A prophet comes to him and declares, "Thus says the Lord, 'You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you'" (2 Chron 12:5). But when the king humbled himself before the LORD, the LORD relented. "The anger of the Lord turned away from him, so as not to destroy *him completely*" (12:12).
- i. So we see the lesson being taught in Chronicles is that when God's people trust in Him and humble themselves before Him He preserves them. But when His people forsake Him and turn to other gods or other nations or to their own pride He forsakes them and disciplines them.
- j. Rehoboam is dead and his son Abijah has taken over the throne. Will Judah and Israel make peace? Will Jeroboam recognize the legitimacy of Abijah's kingship? Will Jeroboam repent of his idolatry and melt down the golden calves he set up for worship?
- k. Abijah in Kings vs Chronicles
  - i. Abijah is portrayed in a more positive light than in Kings. Interestingly the Chronicler gives no evaluation of king Abijah, which is out of the ordinary. We are told that Rehoboam did evil as the final evaluation of his reign and then the king after Abijah, Asa, we are told that he did what was right and good in the sight of God.
- l. The Big Idea of 2 Chron 13 - Those who rely on the Lord will conquer, but those who trust in idols will be humbled.

- i. **Key verse: <sup>18</sup> Thus the men of Israel were subdued at that time, and the men of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the Lord, the God of their fathers.**
- II. Those who conquer submit to the LORD
  - a. Conquers in John
    - i. **Of the twenty-six NT uses, twenty-one are in the Johannine corpus, fifteen in Revelation alone.<sup>2</sup> Grant Osborne**
    - ii. Jesus conquered sin, death, and Satan
      - 1. **John 16:33b - In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”**
      - 2. **Rev 5:5 - <sup>5</sup> And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”**
      - 3. **Rev 17:14 – <sup>14</sup> They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”**
      - 4. **Hebrews 2:14-15 - that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.**
    - iii. The letters to the seven churches in Revelation make the point that it is only those who conquer in Christ who will inherit salvation.<sup>3</sup>
    - iv. The promises to the conquer in the seven letters in Revelation
      - 1. Eat of the Tree of Life in the paradise of God
      - 2. Will not be hurt by the second death
      - 3. Will receive a new name
      - 4. Will rule over the nations with Christ
      - 5. Will be clothed in white garments and never be blotted out of the book of Life
      - 6. Will be a pillar in the temple of God
      - 7. Will be enthroned with Christ

<sup>2</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 122.

<sup>3</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 234.

- v. The overcomers in Revelation are not those who have conquered an earthly foe by force, but those who have remained faithful to Christ to the very end.<sup>4</sup> Mounce
  - vi. Our conquering is participation in Christ's conquering, achieved through perseverance.<sup>5</sup>
  - vii. Revelation 21:5-8 - <sup>5</sup> 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." <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> 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."
  - viii. 1 John 5:4-5 - <sup>4</sup> For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- b. The reason king Abijah and Judah conquer Israel is that they relied on the LORD:
    - i. <sup>18</sup> Thus the men of Israel were subdued at that time, and the men of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the Lord, the God of their fathers.
  - c. Notice that Abijah identifies the kingdom as the LORD's in the hands of the sons of David. David and his sons were not, in God's eyes, considered absolute monarchs – they were stewards of the kingdom that belonged to God. They ruled as God's representative, and as a type of the King to come.
  - d. David and Israel/Judah are types of Christ and the church. David, though imperfect, was a picture of King Jesus. Jesus the son of David and the Son of God is King forever and ever

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<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 72.

<sup>5</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 122.

- III. Those who conquer worship in spirit and truth
- a. *You worship what you know not, we worship what we know.* This is a sentence worthy of being remembered, and teaches us that we ought not to attempt any thing in religion rashly or at random; because, unless there be knowledge, it is not God that we worship, but a phantom or idol. All good intentions, as they are called, are struck by this sentence, as by a thunderbolt; for we learn from it, that men can do nothing but err, when they are guided by their own opinion without the word or command of God.<sup>6</sup> John Calvin
  - b. "Of course God will forgive me; that's His job." Heinrich Heine
  - c. The "Prosperity Gospel" is nothing more than an consumerist American heresy that is not founded in the Scriptures but in the imaginations of man
  - d. Proper worship in any age is critically predicated upon adequate and accurate knowledge of the God worshiped. No matter how ceremonially elaborate, emotionally rousing, or sermonically eloquent, worship that is not offered from a proper understanding of who God is falls short.<sup>7</sup> Andreas Kostenberger
  - e. **Psalm 51:17 - The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**
  - f. **Hebrews 13:15-16 - <sup>15</sup>Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. <sup>16</sup>Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**
- IV. Those who conquer don't trust in idols
- a. The Northern kingdom of Israel had turned away from the LORD God and made idols whom they worshiped in the form of golden calves
  - b. The church is always in danger of subsuming to the idols of the culture. This was true in the early church and is true today.
  - c. Idols often come in the form of worldviews. They are the lenses through which we see the whole world. This is not surprising, given that as John Calvin said, the human heart is an idol making factory.

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<sup>6</sup> John Calvin and William Pringle, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 159.

<sup>7</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 155–156.

- d. There are four prominent cultural idols that I see affecting the church in America today, if not infecting her
  - i. The idol of individualism (collectivism)
    - 1. [Individuality] has nothing to do with *individualism*, which is actually a proud unwillingness to accept a place in a team of peers and to be bound by group consensus. The gospel condemns individualism as disruptive of the life of the divine family, the new community of believers together that God is building in each place where individual Christians have emerged. Harmonious consensus, undergirded by brotherly love, is to be the goal for every church, and individualism is to be overcome by mutual deference. So, at least, says the New Testament.” J.I. Packer
    - 2. Sub-idol of family
    - 3. Sub-idol of feminism
  - ii. The idol of consumerism (c.f. Gnosticism)
    - 1. 1 Timothy 6:17-19 - <sup>17</sup> As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. <sup>18</sup> They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, <sup>19</sup> thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.
  - iii. The idol of celebrityism (c.f. nobodyism)
    - 1. 1 Corinthians 1:11-15 - <sup>11</sup> For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name
  - iv. The idol of nationalism (c.f. anarchism)
    - 1. My country wrong or right

2. Connecting the prosperity and health of the united states with the church's
3. Jeremiah 29:4-7 <sup>4</sup>“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup>Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup>Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup>But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare

V. Those who conquer don't trust in odds

- a. The Church of Christ has been founded by shedding its own blood, not that of others; by enduring outrage, not by inflicting it. Persecutions have made it grow; martyrdoms have crowned it. Jerome
- b. Hebrews 10: 35-11:2 - <sup>35</sup>Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. <sup>36</sup>For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. <sup>37</sup>For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; <sup>38</sup>but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” <sup>39</sup>But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. <sup>2</sup>For by it the people of old received their commendation.
- c. Hebrews 12:1-3 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.
- d. Romans 8:31-39 - <sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own

Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.