

More than Conquerors

Romans 8: 37

G. Davison.

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The phrase "more than conquerors" used by the apostle Paul with such supreme confidence is but one word in the Greek, and is used only in this verse. The word conqueror is the word translated in other places as "overcomer," or more literally "to gain the victory." But what does the apostle mean by "more than conquerors"? Not only do the saints pass through these various conflicts, whether caused by men or demons, and emerge victoriously, but they are also stronger after the conflict than they were before entering into it. Time after time God allows His people to be in conflict only to cause them to feel their need of His grace and power in going through it, and with the help of God they emerge from the trial stronger than they were before they entered into it. We add, going through it *with the help of God*, for we shall never be victorious without the help which God alone can give. History records many severe trials through which men have passed, and who by supreme efforts have emerged victorious, but it does not record that they were stronger after the conflict than they were before. Only in the spiritual realm can this be experienced. In demonstration of this we have in mind to call the attention of the reader to two passages in Scripture, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament where this encouraging fact is recorded. We hope thereby to encourage all to stand fast in the conflict, and hence not only to emerge victorious, but to have gained more strength as the result of the trial we have sustained. There are two statements in the New Testament which ought to be ever in the hearts of those who desire to be characterized as "overcomers." They are "stand fast" (2 Thess. 2: 15), and "hold fast" (2 Tim. 1: 13). If we "stand fast" we do not give way, and if we "hold fast" we do not give anything up.

In the history of Job as given to us in the book which bears his name, we see something of the tremendous conflict which rages ceaselessly between the powers of light and of darkness. God draws aside the veil which separates the unseen spiritual world from the material world, and graciously allows us to listen to a conversation between Himself and Satan, the arch enemy of the saints. This conversation mainly concerns Job, and gives the setting for the further events outlined for us in the rest of the book. We have not far to look before we discover that Job, though the most righteous man on earth at that time, was in danger of being puffed up as a consequence. He said himself, "I shall die in my nest," Job 29: 18; and it is again recorded, "he was righteous in his own eyes," Job 32: 1. In the first statement Job was in danger of putting his confidence in the substance which God had blessed him with, and in the second he was assured he deserved it. But it was God and not the nest who was his safeguard, and his righteousness was according to divine estimation and not according to his own. Job needed to learn these two things, and for his own safety and blessing God was about to teach him regarding them.

It is just here that Satan comes into the picture. It is well to notice that God Himself raises the matter of Job's righteousness with Satan, and not Satan with God. God saw that Job needed a lesson for *his own safety*, and He used Satan to teach him this lesson. The enemy, ever ready to attack the saints, takes advantage of the liberty given him by God, and sets about to destroy everything in which Job had placed his confidence, whether his family, his wealth, or his health; but the one thing he could not destroy was his *faith*. Praise God for that! Stripped of all that in which his confidence lay, his wife unsympathetic and his three friends scornfully giving him up as one who would not listen to wisdom, he is left with only his faith in God. It is then that God begins to rebuild him on a much safer

foundation, till at the end we read, "So the LORD blessed the *latter end* of Job more than his *beginning*", Job 43: 12. Could Job not have said, with twice the possessions and once again a family surrounding him, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us?"

The New Testament reference is to the apostle Peter. He was the most outstanding of the apostles, always named first in the lists of the apostles, yet with a weakness well known to our Lord, and in view of the great service he would ultimately render, this needed to be dealt with. Once again we see Satan used in the matter, and the Lord allowing him to attack His servant. We read, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," Luke 22: 31, 32. May we ever remember that no matter what Satan desires, not one hair of our heads can he touch without divine permission. Both Job and Simon are seen in the hands of Satan for a time, but in each case Satan could go only as far as divine wisdom allowed him. So whilst Satan was allowed to lead Simon into a temptation, and caused him to fail in it, all he really succeeded in doing was to destroy Simon's *self-confidence*; he could not destroy his *faith*. Thank God he never will be able to destroy the faith of any saint of God, however severe the trial may be through which he may be allowed to pass.

What chagrin must have filled the heart of Satan as he discovered that his attack upon Simon had made him a stronger man than he had been before. Did ever a man more fearlessly declare his attachment to the Lord than the disciple who before had denied that he knew Him? Moreover, Peter *did* give his life for the Lord at the end of his service, and we can be assured when that moment came he would face death in the true confidence which faith alone can give, and not in some fancied strength which as men in the flesh we do not possess. Peter surely could also have said, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

May we then face the future with this confidence, determined to "stand fast" and to "hold fast." What may yet lie ahead for any one of us so far as our earthly path is concerned we cannot tell. God knoweth our hearts, and if He detects something there which is a hindrance to our growth or our service for Him, He may allow Satan to buffet us as he did with yet another servant — Paul. Yet, if we face this trial with God, and go through it with the strength which faith in God alone can give, we too shall emerge stronger than we were before, and we shall be able to say, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."