

# OVERCOMING THE DRAGON

## Rev 12:10-11

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In the last year there has been renewed interest in dinosaurs, largely because of the movie Jurassic Park. If you've seen the movie, you'll recall that several dinosaurs are cloned and then proceed to wreak havoc on those humans unlucky to get too near. Some of the most frightening moments occur as the humans try to protect themselves and overcome the terror of the T-Rex and three ferocious velociraptors! While Michael Crichton and Steven Spielberg have brought an entertaining story to the big screen, it is interesting to note that nearly 2000 years ago John spoke of a similar situation. Only, it wasn't a dinosaur he wrote about, but a Dragon!

Revelation 12:3 vividly describes a red Dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven diadems (more hideous and frightening than even a T-Rex!) This Dragon, identified as the Devil and Satan (v.9) wages war in heaven with Michael and his angels until he is finally "thrown down" to earth where he begins to "accuse" the brethren "day and night" (v. 10).

Now, there is much about the book of Revelation that I do not know. I'm not an advocate of an early or late date (though I do recall from my college days having several of each!) So, while there are many things I cannot affirm about the symbology of Revelation 12, the message of verse 11 is clear and unmistakable: Christians overcame the Dragon because of:

### STEP 1: THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

Blood is an important substance in our society. We frequently hear pleas for blood donations and despite man's ingenuity, he has not been able to replicate the life-giving qualities of blood. The Jews were also familiar with the power of blood and the sacrifices for consecration (Ex 29:10-14). But, in verse 11, we are not talking about the blood of bullocks, but of Christ himself! And the message is clear: overcoming the Dragon depends on the blood of the Lamb!

Note Peter's assertion of that very fact in 1 Pet. 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

## STEP 2: THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY

The second step in overcoming the dragon seems a bit puzzling. Of whose testimony is John speaking? We get some insight from the word itself when we consider that "testimony" is second cousin to the words "testify" and "test." Witnesses are called to testify in court. They provide testimony. Similarly, all of us have taken tests, which are designed to determine whether we pass or fail. But, the Greek word itself provides even greater insight. The word "testimony" comes from the Greek "marturia" from whence we get the word "martyr."

John is telling us that we can overcome the Dragon by heeding the testimony of the faithful. Note Rev 6:9 and 12:17 as it relates to the testimony of "our fathers." John's message echoes the idea expressed in Heb 12:1-2: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

## STEP 3: DID NOT LOVE LIFE, EVEN TO DEATH

God has programmed us for survival. Yet John indicates that one of the ways to overcome the Dragon is to willingly put aside our "survival instinct." We must be willing to die for God's cause! Need proof? Examples exist everywhere: Daniel and his three friends "did not love life, even to death." They were willing to put aside the "survival instinct" for a higher calling. Peter died

in service to Christ because "he did not love life, even to death." He loved Someone else more than life itself! The same idea is expressed by Jesus himself in Mark 8:35 - "...whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Satan still is at work and we are still in danger. How do we overcome the evil one? The same way John instructed the seven churches of Asia: "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Rev 12:11.

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