

# Revelation 3:12-13

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rev/rev-3/revelation-312-13/>

*The letter to the church in Philadelphia ends with the promise of closeness with God.*

The letter to the church in Philadelphia ends with a section written to *he who overcomes*, as does each of the letters to the seven churches, which outlines the blessings to be received in heaven for those who are faithful witnesses on earth:

*He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore.*

The first promise is that *he who overcomes* will be a *pillar in the temple of My God*. Later in Revelation we learn that there is no physical temple in the new earth, and that God Himself will be the temple (Revelation 21:22). Therefore, this is likely a metaphor. Perhaps it is insinuating that if you are living by faith, you will get so close to Jesus that it will be as if you are a *pillar* in His *temple*.

Another possibility is that the *pillar in the temple* represents being part of Jesus's administration in ruling the new earth (Revelation 3:21). A *pillar* holds up the temple. It is the essential framework of support that allows a physical temple to stand erect. Perhaps Jesus is saying that the one who *overcomes* will be made to rule His realm and cause it to stand, to function well. This could fit together with the idea of intimacy with Jesus. It could represent the basic idea represented in the Parable of the Talents, when the master (representing Jesus) tells the faithful servants that they have done well with a small stewardship, so Jesus will put them "in charge of many things." Jesus adds to this expansion of responsibility "...enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21, 23).

The second half of the promise—*and he will not go out from it* (the temple) *anymore*—is especially significant when you consider the role of the *temple* in the Old Testament. The *temple* was the place where a special presence of *God* resided. So you had to go to the *temple* to be near to the presence of *God*. However, you could not go into the innermost part of the *temple*, which was separated by a curtain or veil, where the presence of *God* dwelled.

Anyone who went into this presence unauthorized would die. This veil illustrated that humans were barred from the presence of God in heaven. When Jesus died, the veil that separated humanity from *God's* presence was torn in two (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). This signified that the way into God's presence is now made possible through the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19-22). By being a *pillar* in the *temple*, *he who overcomes* is an integral part of the *temple*, and he remains continually in *God's* presence.

The promise of reward continues:

*I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.*

Additional rewards are added as a promised benefit to be given to the one who overcomes by enduring as a faithful witness, in spite of difficulty and opposition. The first promised reward is the promise to *write on him* a number of names. This could be literal or metaphorical, but in either case would seem to indicate honor. We see that Jesus is honored by having names written upon Him:

- Jesus has “a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself” that would indicate a special intimacy with His Father (Revelation 19:12).
  - This appears to be similar to *My new name* that is promised to the one *who*
  - This may indicate a special intimacy with Jesus, perhaps in connection with the special responsibilities that will be assigned by Jesus to the overcomers (Revelation 3:21).
- Jesus is shown as having a name written on His thigh that is “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” (Revelation 19:16).
  - This name represents a title of positional authority.

The *name of My God* being written on the overcomers might be seen as a title of authority. When we attend a theme park, those in authority wear a uniform bearing the name of the theme park.

The *name of the city of My God* might also represent authority. In this case it could represent authority within the city.

The *name of the city of My God* could also indicate a privilege to have the right of passage in and out of the city—like a passport. We are told later in Revelation that only certain people will be allowed access into the city, the *New Jerusalem* (Revelation 21:2, 22:14).

This *New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven from God*. This city will be deposited onto the new earth, and will descend from heaven (Revelation 21:1-2). Perhaps God has had this *New Jerusalem* under construction for many millennia, and will unveil its glory for all to see as a part of constructing and populating the new earth.

Finally, the letter ends with the invocation for *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*. This refers back to the instructions in Revelation 1 to read, hear, and heed Jesus’ message to them. Those who read, hear, and heed (or do) the things Jesus exhorts them to do are promised a special blessing. All seven letters to the churches in the Roman province of Asia exhort believers to continue being faithful witnesses in spite of temptation and difficulty. It is those who overcome such temptation and difficulty that will gain the promised blessing. Jesus desires the best for His servants and is here laying out how His people can gain the greatest blessings from life.

## **Biblical Text**

**<sup>12</sup> He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. <sup>13</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'**