ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have for a long time been fascinated by the book of Revelation. I am constantly encouraged to examine and understand the meaning of its message.

I owe much to the many people who have helped me with my research in different ways. I would like to give special thanks to my promoter and mentor, Prof. J.G. van der Watt for his tireless encouragement and advice. Without his support, I couldn’t have finished my research.

I should like to express my special thanks to my parents and mother-in-law who supported me while I studied in South Africa. I would especially like to acknowledge my father, Reverend Young-Kweon Shin, who passed away on 19 July 2006. For me, he was more than a father. He was my physical and spiritual teacher who taught me the love of God and Jesus.

I also express my thanks to Dr. W.F. Harding and Mr. L.D.A. Shee who helped me correct my English. Other colleagues and friends, too, have supported me in various ways: missionary Jin-Ho Park; Won-Bin Im; Sang-Bok Kim; Jeong-Keun Seo; Rev. Young-Jin Kim; deacon Gun-Young Yoon, who allowed me to use his computer; Seong-Joo Cho; the Pretoria Korean church; and the Kanana New Sprout church for their spiritual support.

Above all, I thank my wife, Young-Soon Hwang, for her love, endurance and support; my children, Eum-Jeong and Peter for keeping all of us smiling.

I dedicate this dissertation to my late father Reverend Young-Kweon Shin.

Pretoria, October 2006.
SUMMARY

Title: More Than Conquerors: The Conqueror (Nικήτων) Motif in the Book of Revelation

Researcher: Eun-Chul Shin

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. J.G. van der Watt

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

This dissertation intends to reveal the theme of the conqueror, which is spread throughout the book of Revelation. I try to determine the identity and function of the conquerors who were faced with various problems in their present situations. Various present situations such as the political, economical, social, and religious phenomena that the first Christians confronted must be considered. Thus, the main aim of Revelation is to persuade compromising Christians to disengage from pagan idolatry and to sustain those who resist. One must remember the fact that the designated conquerors were absolutely embedded in their historical and sociological situation. We should recognize why John wanted to send his prophetic message through various symbolic references and universes, providing a different heavenly perspective in contrast with an earthly point of view.

In general, the conquest can be linked with both a military and political meaning, such as Messiah and the son of David in Jewish literature and the Old Testament. But the conqueror figure in Revelation can be understood from a different angle. The characteristic of the conqueror is explained through the symbolic transformation of redemptive death and victory. It means that the idea of conquering has been changed. Conquering doesn’t depend on a military or political power that is the interpretation of the traditional messianic expectation, but self-sacrifice of the Lamb on the cross. The characteristic of the Lamb as conqueror is closely linked with the image of an atoning, sacrificial victim.

The theme of suffering and death in Revelation is linked with the victory of the conquerors. That is, the conquerors can be defined as those who endure suffering, slander, poverty and tribulation unto death as Jesus has done. From a worldly
perspective, Satan looks like the almighty figure as the conqueror that persecuted the people of God, but in terms of the heavenly perspective, he is defeated and conquered by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of God in 12:11. Therefore, conquering is provided from the heavenly perspective to encourage the conquerors as seeing the present reality. Just as the Lamb has conquered the evil ones by his blood, the conquerors should conquer the evil ones by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Thus, the victory of the conquerors can be attained by means of witness and death. The idea that the conquerors are the victims might provide the people of God with a powerful symbolic transformation as a marginalized group in a hostile world.

The conquerors are provided with a heavenly perspective, implying an eschatological fulfillment and God’s presence in the New Jerusalem. The image of the New Jerusalem provides a rhetorical effect that the people of God as conquerors will experience salvation in the future. Whereas the city of Babylon was drunk with the blood of the conquerors, the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven will dwell with God as the completion of the fulfillment God promised (cf. 21:1-22:5).
KEY WORDS

- The Conquerors
- The promise statement given to the conquerors
- The fulfillment statement given to the conquerors
- The One like a Son of man
- The Lamb
- The Divine Warrior
- The people of God as the conquerors
- The word of God and the testimony of Christ
- The heavenly and the earthly perspectives
- The symbolic transformation
ABBREVIATIONS

A. General abbreviations

AD. Anno Domini
Ant. Antiquities
J.W. Wars of the Jews
BD. Before Christ
Cf. Compare, confer
Ch (s). Chapter (s)
Ed (s). Editor (s), edited by
E.g. For example
Etc. Et cetera
I.e. That is
LXX. Septuagint
N.d. No date
NT New Testament
OT Old Testament
Trans. Translator, translated, translation
V (s) Verse (s)
Vol. Volume

B. Abbreviations for books of the Bible

OLD TESTAMENT (OT)

Genesis Ge. Ecclesiastes Ecc.
Exodus Ex. Song of Songs SS.
Leviticus Lev. Isaiah Isa.
Numbers Nu. Jeremiah Jer.
Deuteronomy Dt. Lamentations La.
Joshua Jos. Ezekiel Ezk.
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