

## CHAPTER V. THE CONQUEROR MOTIF IN TERMS OF THE HEAVENLY AND EARTHLY PERSPECTIVES: FOCUSING ON CHAPTERS 12-13

### V.1. Introduction

As I have noted in the previous section, nowadays it has become an agreeable statement that Revelation consisted of apocalypse, letter and prophecy (cf. Bauckham, 1993b:1-17). It means that the book of Revelation is structured to reveal its rhetorical situation, prophetic message and the true reality of the heavenly aspect. One must remember that it is a unified literary work that has a consistent plot. For example, it is a well-structured prophetic message that has a prologue (Rev. 1:1-8), an epilogue (Rev. 22:6-21), conflict (6:1-20:10) and resolution (20:11-21:22:5) according to the intention of the author (cf. Charles, 1975:1.xvii-xxviii; Ford, 1975:55-56).<sup>160</sup>

In contrast to the view of source or redaction criticism, Revelation must be regarded as a unified literary work (cf. Du Rand, 1993a:257) that shows the intention of the author. As Lambrecht (1980:103) pointed out, the visionary work of Revelation is not a patchwork of unconnected materials, but an impressive coherent whole, consisting of Apocalypse, letter, and prophecy. Barr (1984:43) is also of the opinion that whereas one might be interested in dividing the book, John's main concern in Revelation is to bind it together as a whole. The structure of Revelation consisting of a letter-form, symbols, imagery, and visions could be expressed through the passages of the literary, theological, and historical backgrounds. Whereas the famous Apocalypse definition of Collins (1979:9) deals with the apocalyptic definition in terms of form and content, which are also inseparable from each other, a functional structure of Revelation must also be dealt with (cf. Du Rand, 1993a:261-262;

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<sup>160</sup> Ford (1975:3; 26-37; 50-56) divides Revelation into three parts: 1. chaps. 4-11 produced from the circle of John the Baptist 2. chaps. 12-22 is of a later date but still originates from the disciples of John the Baptist who may or may not have converted to Christianity 3. chaps. 1-3 are collected together with some interpolations that were added later by Jewish Christian disciples. For this theory, she connects several similarities between Revelation and John the Baptist's teachings; for example, the Lamb, He that cometh, baptism by fire, the bridegroom and minor similarities- divine wrath, adultery, corrupt Jerusalem, trees as metaphors for leaders, and priestly knowledge. Because Ford's theory that divides Revelation into three parts is too arbitrary to accept, this theory could not be accepted (contra Collins, 1984:31). In contrast to Ford's theory, Revelation should be read as a unified literary work with an intentional purpose.

Jang, 2001:29) as a book that evokes special rhetorical and communicative effect.

The book of Revelation is full of stories, consisting of visions, images, metaphors, hymns and liturgical elements. It is the story of Jesus who died, rose and conquered death and sin, and of a human being who must choose the way between God and Satan. In the case of Revelation, this story is told in a narrative form, and from the beginning to the end it has a God-centered and Christ-centered point of view (see Rotz & Du Rand, 1999:91-111). As Du Rand (1997a:213) pointed out, Revelation is “a dramatic narrative within a letter framework.”<sup>161</sup> However, I do not think that it is enough to label it as “a dramatic narrative within a letter framework”, because one distinguishes Revelation according to genre. As I noted above, the book of Revelation could be divided into the Apocalypse, letter, and prophecy.

Even though various methodological approaches for interpreting the book of Revelation are tried, three dimensions such as literature, theology, and history must be emphasized as being of great importance in order to interpret the book of Revelation. In Boring’s opinion (1992:702-723), Revelation should be understood in the light of a narrative point of view, even though he agrees that Revelation is a visionary document to communicate by means of image or vision. According to Du Rand (1997b:59-68), the book of Revelation is called a narrative theology. In contrast to the emphasis of the historical criticism (in fact, they complement each other in some parts) to rebuild the original context of the text and historical background, his emphasis about the Bible as narrative story is based on the real power of Revelation, on a communicative label. It does not only lie in its symbolism, composition or historical perspective, but in its theologically evocative power.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> According to Du Rand (1997b:60-66), the narrative analysis of Revelation could be divided into three levels: 1. Narrative level 1  $\Rightarrow$  it can be called “John and the churches’ story” (Rev. 1-3) 2. Narrative level 2  $\Rightarrow$  it can be called “the divine and cosmic story” (Rev. 4-11) 3. Narrative level 3  $\Rightarrow$  it can be called “the theological or God’s story” (Rev. 12-22). Even though his analysis is quite good, it is not easy to distinguish the content of Revelation into three levels because they are intertwined or intermingled with each other. In other words, from the first, one can easily recognize that the book of Revelation is God’s story (Rev. 1:1; 5-6), the divine and cosmic story (Rev. 12:1-12; 19:11-21) as well as John’s and church’s story (Rev. 11:3-4; 14:1-5; 21:1-22:5) that are mixed from the first to the end. Therefore, it is suitable to see the book of Revelation as a work having a consistent theme.

<sup>162</sup> On the basis of the historical criticism, narrative criticism is often criticized as being anti-historical or non-historical. Powell (1993:91-98) describes the objection of narrative criticism as follows: 1. Narrative criticism treats the Gospels as coherent narratives when they are actually collections of disparate material 2.

By using the narrative approach, Resseguie (1998) suggests a U-shaped structure that begins with a stable condition, moves downward owing to a series of threatening conditions and instabilities, and at the end moves upward to a new stable condition (:166) on the basis of the theory of Frye (cf. 1982:169-198).<sup>163</sup> This structure gives us dynamic power by means of literary analysis. Although these approaches are used for the book of Revelation, John's symbolic world could not be understood in terms of its doctrinal principles, historical problems or grotesque visions, but as voices of the Bible to be remembered, heard, and interpreted within their textual form.

For Barr (1984:39-50), Revelation provides symbolic transformation in order to change the way or the life his audience experienced. Through this symbolic transformation, he suggests that Revelation reverses the value of certain symbols of power and conquest by transforming them into images of suffering and weakness. According to Barr, this symbolic transformation in Revelation can be related to the literature of catharsis. Therefore, one can say that the symbolic transformation and analysis of language opened the new horizons for the understanding of Revelation.

Revelation, having a powerful rhetorical effect through various structural-framework, creates a symbolic transformation and participation of the world, which the first century Christian faced. Historical, literature, and theological points of view through various images, metaphors, and contrasted pictures between heavenly and earthly dimensions provide the prophetic message to discern who the real 'conquerors and defeated' in this world are. This 'above or heavenly point of view' modifies and corrects the 'below or earthly point of view' in which the people of earth try to follow (Resseguie, 1998:43).

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Narrative criticism imposes on ancient literature concepts drawn from the study of modern literature 3. Narrative criticism seeks to interpret the Gospels through methods that were devised for the study of fiction 4. Narrative criticism lacks objective criteria for the analysis of texts 5. Narrative criticism rejects or ignores the historical witness of the Gospels. In terms of historical criticism that rebuilt the life and teaching of Jesus and the tradition of early Christianity, narrative criticism is not an appropriate method to rebuild historical origin or situation. But, narrative criticism emphasizes another literary perspective to reveal the texts, which were given (cf. Stamps, 1997:221). Therefore, we must regard both the historical and literary perspectives in the Bible together in order to understand the text itself and to communicate more (cf. Egger, 1996:113-120). Otherwise, one will miss the important meaning of the text (cf. Bailey, 1995:211).

<sup>163</sup> According to Frye (1982:169), the U-shaped narrative structure recurs in literature as the standard shape of comedy. Thus, when he applies this structure for the entire Bible, viewed as a 'divine comedy', the losing of the tree and water of life at the beginning of Genesis and restoration at the end of Revelation can be regarded as a low point for misfortunes and misunderstandings, happily concluded in the end.

According to Beasley-Murray (1992:191), chapters 12-13 are a central part of the book of Revelation. Kistemaker (2001:351) also explains these chapters as a central section. In order to reveal the theological message about the conqueror motif within this section, the interaction of different historical and literary aspects like heaven and earth or above and below should be surveyed. Whereas in 11:15-19, the kingdom of God given to the conquerors is proclaimed in the light of a heavenly (above) aspect, chapters 12-13 introduce the defeat of Satan and the two beasts, highlighted by the verb cast out (ἐβλήθη). The heavenly (above) and earthly (below) perspectives in chapters 12-13 reveal the heavenly reality of who the conquerors are (cf. De Jonge, 1980:272). Through the heavenly perspective of chapters 12-13, the author of Revelation wanted to reveal the ultimate sovereignty of God and the real identity of the conquerors (Gilbertson, 2003:83). By providing the contrasting image of heaven and earth, Bauckham (1993b:90-91) gives us the real identity of conquerors and the defeated, that is the rhetorical power unmasking the heavenly and earthly reality in its many forms.

The book of Revelation can be understood as revealing hidden dimensions of the world and transcendent realities of the universe (Thompson, 1990:31). The interplay of the heavenly and earthly points of views is used as rhetorical communication by John to deliver his prophetic message through the contrasted image. The point of view provides a new perspective that guarantees the victory of God's people during their present crisis. In terms of spatial and temporal horizon, Gilbertson (2003:84) comments on the heavenly perspective as follows:

This heavenly perspective enables him to discern the true nature of earthly events. ... The expansion of spatial horizons has the effect of unmasking reality, of revealing the divine hand at work and exposing the nature of evil in its many forms.

Bauckham (1993b:88-94) also suggests that the heavenly perspective answers the question of who the real conquerors are, because the heavenly perspective breaks the earth-bound delusion of the evil trinity, namely the Dragon, the sea beast, and the earth beast. Therefore, the heavenly perspective reveals that the everyday reality of people should be considered

in order to understand John's narrative world that he wanted to present to his audiences.

## **V.2. Apocalyptic symbols in chapters 12-13**

Many scholars agree that the book of Revelation can be divided into two parts: chapters 1-11 and 12-22 (Hendriksen, 2000:134). The characteristic of the One like the son of man in chapter 1:12-20 permeates chapter 1 to chapter 11 from the perspective of church and worldly kingdom. But, in order to understand chapters 12-22 as a whole, chapters 12-13 are introduced in terms of deeper spiritual conflict between God and Satan through the images of the heavenly and earthly aspects. In other words, it explains how, after the proclamation of God's kingdom in 11:15 and of the destruction of Satan's kingdom in 11:18, God's kingdom is established in chapters 12-13.

Revelation 12-13 is full of various war stories, which are not easy to understand. The images in these stories include: the appearances of a woman clothed with the sun (Rev. 12:1), an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads (12:3), the battle between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels in heaven (12:7-9), the fleeing of the woman to the desert (12:13-16), a beast coming out of the sea (13:1), and a beast coming out of the earth. These are grotesque pictures whose meanings are not easy to understand. One agrees that Revelation is not a compilation of various sources, minor displacement and interpolations, and redactional material. Thus, it would be a much better understanding to view a text as having a special intention rather than to understand it through a literal interpretation within the structure of the Revelation as a whole (Boring, 1992:711-713). When one considers chapters 12-13 within the structure of Revelation, chapters 12-13 show us a great cosmic conflict between God and Satan that evokes a powerful symbolic image through a dynamic framework (Beasley-Murray, 1992:191-197).

It is accepted that Revelation 12-13 is one of the most important chapters (Collins, 1976:231) in revealing the motif of victory and judgment through the contrasting image of a heavenly and earthly framework. That is why the hymn of victory in 12:10-12, forming the central verses in this section, is proclaimed to praise God and Christ as the main

characters. In terms of micro and macro structure, this section demonstrates the final victory of God and the conquerors as a future perspective that will be accomplished in 20:1-15, as well as the detailed interpretation of the previous section in chapter 11:15-19. This is accomplished through the unified combination of the smaller unit within a narrative framework. Collins (1979:80) rightly points out that:

The links between the cycles of chapters 12-22 also show that these chapters form a literary unity, just as chapters 1-11 do. These two major parts of the book are telling the same basic story, as has been noted. The difference between the two is that part one introduces and hints at what part two reveals more fully. The relationship between the two parts can be illustrated by showing how a major theme of the book is developed.

Just as Collins mentioned above, one must carefully consider the continuity of chapters 12-13 between the previous section and following section. While chapters 12-13 start with a new section, beginning with *καὶ σημεῖον μέγα ὄφθη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ*, it completes the final eschatological judgment and salvation in chapters 20-22 (Mounce, 1977:234). Chapters 12-13 must be a pivotal section (Kistemaker, 2001:351) connecting chapters 1-11 and chapters 12-22 in terms of salvation to the conquerors and judgment to the defeated, but having a different perspective. Even though this part will be focusing on chapters 12-13, I will also deal with other sections, which are connected with chapters 12-13 in terms of the heavenly and earthly perspectives.

### V.2.1. The Theophany Formula

One of the characteristics dealing with final eschatological salvation and judgment in Revelation chapters 12-13 is the theophany formula, expressed as flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm (e.g. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18-21; see Shea, 1985:37-54). These eschatological phenomena indicate the presence of God to execute salvation and judgment in connection with the Old Testament (e.g. Ex. 19:16; 20:18), where one hears echoes of salvation and judgment. According to Bauckham (1993a:201), the scene that shows the final eschatological event expects the coming of God

as King or Judge, who gives eventual salvation to the conquerors and executes his final judgment on the people of Satan (cf. Beale, 1999:618). This idea can be linked with the throne scene that is the demonstration of God's rule revealed in 4:2 (θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ; cf. Johnson, 2001:178), and that is one of the central symbols of the book of Revelation (Bauckham, 1993b:31). In contrast with the present crisis situations that the community of God's people in chapters 2-3 faced, John introduces the opened door and the scene of heavenly throne in chapter 4:1-2. That is, John's vision reveals a heavenly worship scene where God is constantly worshipped by four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. Here, God is described as none other than the conqueror who is able to conquer the world of Satan, personified as the Roman Empire. It means that God is in control of the whole world and shows his sovereignty as the one who is worshipped by all creatures in contrast with Satan expressed as the deified Roman Empire (Witherington III, 2003:111-122).

The examples of the theophany formula are introduced in 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18. This formula appears in different places in Revelation, for example at the throne (4:5), from the altar (8:5), and from the temple (11:19; 16:18). All these things are closely connected with the heavenly temple in which God's divine salvation and judgment are executed and where the heavenly perspective is provided. To the first-century Christians, the image of the temple might provide both transcendence and transformation in terms of the heavenly perspective that the conquerors will have (Stevenson, 2001:220).

The most interesting thing about the theophany formula is that the theophany formulas appearing from the throne in 4:5 are closely linked with three judgment series (Bauckham, 1993b:41) in the seals (6:1-8:5), trumpets (8:6-11:19), and bowls (16:1-21). In the theophany formula in 4:5, God's holiness to the conquerors and his divine judgment of the people of Satan are manifested. This theophany formula, based on the rhetorical and social situations, provides the transformation of their viewpoint and a new divine understanding. That is, the image of the theophany formula provides a symbolic picture in which to look at this world from "God's kingship" (Poythress, 2000:101), requiring new understanding and a new point of view. As Stevenson (2001:231) argues, this revelation displays this world from a heavenly point of view and the reality that Christians faced in the Roman

Empire. Therefore, this kind of a heavenly perspective provides a clear boundary between God and his people and Satan and his followers.

Then, who are the people of God, the conquerors? The prophetic message of Revelation is very clearly seen in the light of a heavenly perspective. Some Jewish communities and even some Christian members have joined with Satan through compromise and assimilation with the Roman Empire. Self-sacrifice, receiving harsh treatment, faithfulness in keeping the word of God (cf. 1:3, 9; 2:25; 3:10; 12:17; 22:7) and suffering unto death (cf. 2:2-3, 13, 19; 12:11; 13:10; 14:12) are the true attributes of God's people as the conquerors. They maintain a heavenly perspective in contrast with an earthly perspective. While the oppressed people of God as the conquerors experience the transformed universe and the newly understood heavenly perspective (De Smidt, 1994:231), the people of Satan are involved in a three judgment series as the object of God's judgment (Mounce, 1977:231).

Before the heavenly scene is introduced in order to reveal the destiny of the conquerors and of the evil ones in chapters 12-13, the scene in 11:19 is divided into two kinds of motif: salvation and judgment. In this context, it has a dual meaning that concludes the seventh trumpet (11:15-19) and introduces the following visions (chaps. 12-13). On the one hand, the theme of God's open temple (ἡνοίγη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ) indicates the place where God presents. The ark of his covenant (ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ) reflects God's continued presence to save his faithful people from their enemies (cf. Wilcock, 1989:116). Regarding the covenant people of God, the message of the theophany formula emphasizes the opened temple and the ark of God's covenant. It is clear that "no matter what happens on earth nor how fierce the opposing forces become, God's covenant is secure just as the ark is secure in the heavenly temple" (Stevenson, 2001:264).

On the other hand, through the eschatological phenomena, namely the theophany formula, the judgment on the people of Satan is executed. That is why the trumpet plague that occurred from the temple of God is concluded with the seventh trumpet in 11:19. The structural continuity between 11:15-19 and chapters 12-13 (contra Bauckham, 1993a:15-18) must be emphasized in order to reveal the theme of victory and judgment. Song (2003:141) is of the opinion that "the great significance of John's placement of events is



clear when he emphasizes the great power of God by placing an appearance of the ark of the covenant (Rev. 11:19) in dramatic precedence over the immediately following actions of the dragon.” Accordingly, chapters 12-13 have a structural framework that is located within the whole structural framework of chapters 1-22, providing a divine war story.

### V.2.2 Heavenly War between the Conqueror and the Defeated

Chapters 12-13 reveal a heavenly dimension of how the conquerors won the victory and how the people of Satan received the judgment from God. This is explained by using intense interaction between the heavenly and earthly perspectives in order to unmask the true nature of events (Poythress, 2000:133-134). These divine war events provide throughout chapters 12-13 a heavenly perspective on the earthly reality. The meaning of the heavenly perspective is to transform our earthly perspective into the heavenly perspective (Gilbertson, 2003:84) and to give us a new understanding as to how Christians should see the world they experience now. In Revelation, this element has a reversed effect at times (cf. Thompson, 1990:42-43).

The characteristics of chapters 12-13 are, indeed, evaluated as including the final judgment against the evil ones in chapters 19-20. In chapters 12-13 and 19-20, the prominent theme of victory or salvation and judgment or defeat frequently appears in conjunction with combatant terminology between God and Satan. The story of God and Satan in chapters 12-13 and 19-20 can be paralleled as the same symbolic story in terms of victory and judgment, focusing on the victory of God/his people and the judgment of Satan/his followers (see Shea, 1985:37-54). According to Poythress (2000:64), the structural parallel of chapters 12-13 and 19-20 can be suggested as follows:

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| <p>A. The people of God depicted with the imagery of light and creation (12:1-2)</p> <p>B. The Dragon, Satan (12:3-6)</p> <p>    C. The Beast and the False Prophet (13:1-18)</p> <p>    C.' The Beast and the False Prophet are destroyed (19:11-21)</p> <p>    B.' The Dragon is destroyed (20:1-10)</p> <p>A.' The people of God in the imagery of light and creation (21:1-22:5)</p> |
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The above structural parallel shows, according to Poythress, the final victory of the people of God in terms of the new creation and the total destruction of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet. One can assume that the theme of victory and judgment is the prominent narrative story in understanding the whole content of Revelation as the central chapters. In terms of John's heavenly perspective and structural parallel with chapters 12-13 and 19-20, these chapters suggest that the reader or audience must see the deep spiritual struggle of salvation and judgment between God and Satan (Bauckham, 1993b:88-90). This is in contrast with the historical situation they faced under several problems such as compromise, persecution, and self-satisfaction (cf. Johnson, 2001:198).

In connection with the theme of victory and judgment, the most interesting thing is the parallel between chapters 12-13 and 19-20, introduced from various narrative perspectives with a theological meaning (Kistemaker, 2001:532). The literary structure of chapters 12-13 and 19-20 reveals God, Christ and the destiny of the people of God as the conquerors; Satan as defeated, and the punishment of the people of Satan, in the light of victory and conquest. When one considers the combatant terminology in these chapters, one can easily recognize the theme of conquest and victory that happened between God and Satan:

**\* Chapters:12-13**

- 1) 12:7: πόλεμος, πολεμήσαι, ἐπολέμησεν: war in heaven Michael and his angels against the dragon and his angels
- 2) 12:8: οὐκ ἴσχυσεν, οὐδὲ τόπος εὐρέθη: the evil ones lost their place in heaven
- 3) 12:9: ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθησαν: Satan and his followers are hurled to the earth
- 4) 12:10: ἐβλήθη: the accuser has been hurled down
- 5) 12:11: ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας: conquest or victory
- 6) 12:13: ἐβλήθη: the dragon has been hurled down
- 7) 12:17: πόλεμον: war against the rest of the woman's offspring
- 8) 13:4: πολεμήσαι: war of the beast of the sea
- 9) 13:7: πόλεμον, νικῆσαι: the victory of the beast of sea
- 10) 13:14: πλανᾶ: deception of the earthly beast

**\* Chapters: 19-20**

- 1)' 19:11: πολεμῆι: Christ's war as Divine Warrior
- 2)' 19:15: πατάξει: Christ's punishment to the nation
- 3)' 19:19: πόλεμον: war between Christ's army and Satan's army
- 4)' 19:20: ἐπιάσθη, ἐβλήθησαν: the beast and the false prophet are thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulphur
- 5)' 19:21: ἀπεκτάνθησαν: the followers of evil killed
- 6)' 20:2: ἐκράτησεν, ἔδησεν: the binding of the dragon

As suggested above through the words used between chapters 12-13 and 19-20, the events of 12-13 and 19-20 are in most cases well matched with each other in terms of victory/conquest and judgment/defeat. In no 1) and no 6)', the fighting and the binding of the dragon (12:7-8) correspond with the binding of the dragon (20:2). In no 8) and no 4)', the fighting of the sea beast in 13:4 is closely linked with his binding in 19:20. And in no 10) and no 4)', the deception of the earth beast in 13:14 is connected with the binding of the earth beast in 19:20. As recognized through these parallels, it can be assumed that chapters 12-13 and 19-20 have a very similar structural parallel (cf. Shea, 1985:38; Giblin, 1994:81-95; contra Jauhiainen, 2003:543-559).

As noted above, very significant words used throughout chapters 12-13 and 19-20 are πόλεμος (noun), πολεμέω (verb), implying "military as well as a juridical symbol" (Leivestad, 1954:219). The frequent use of πόλεμος, πολεμέω in this section implies the combat between God and Satan, highlighted by the defeat of Satan (Kistemaker, 2001:353). The words of these various wars (πόλεμος, πολεμέω) in chapters 12-13 and 19-20 reveal who the real conquerors are in the light of eschatological salvation and judgment perspectives. That is why the author of the book of Revelation delivers some encouragement and hope to those who were in need of being encouraged (cf. Beasley-Murray, 1992:191-197).

The result of this war, as we know through the use of these words ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθη,

ἐβλήθησαν (aorist, passive of βάλλω: cf. 12:10, 13; 19:20; Kistemaker, 2001:353) in 12:9, is the defeat of Satan and his followers. That is, their defeat and judgment are highlighted by the use of these verbs ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθησαν in 12:9, as well as of these verbs ἐβλήθησαν in 19:20 and ἔδησεν in 20:2. The casting down from heaven and their limitation to the earth in chapter 12:8, 12 describe their ultimate judgment in terms of spatial dimension (cf. Gilbertson, 2003:100-102). Through the use of these words, we can suppose that ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθησαν (to throw away) and ἔδησεν (to bind) indicate the victory of Christ and the conquerors against the evil forces as a passive meaning (Aune, 1998a:527-528, 695). The words like ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθησαν (to throw away), ἔδησεν (to bind), and οὐδὲ τόπος εὐρέθη (there was no longer any place; cf. 20:11: τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη ) are used as other ways of conquering. That God has thrown out and conquered Satan and his followers from heaven, and God has established his kingdom (cf. 11:15), emphasizes salvation and victory (Aune, 1998a:664) διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν in 12:11 in terms of active meaning. Therefore, the thematic parallelism suggested through chapters 12-13 and the interrelation within chapters 19-20 depict two warring kingdoms – God’s kingdom and Satan’s kingdom. It establishes a well-constructed cosmic divine war story in terms of victory and judgment and climaxes with the victory of Christ who became the real conqueror through the death on the cross (Harrington, 1969:167-172).

Chapters 12-13 provide a heavenly perspective to show victory or salvation and to give encouragement to those who were under in desperate situations. These are closely linked with chapters 19-20 in terms of victory to God and his people and judgment to Satan and his followers. From now on, I want to focus on the text itself to disclose how it works within the completed texts that are carefully intended to deliver something that the Christians wanted to listen to through John the prophet in this section.

### V.2.3. Symbolic transformation

What I try to do in this section is to reveal the reality of the heavenly point of view and of the earthly point of view. The reason for this is that the first Christians needed to be encouraged by the exalted Christ, to be provided with a different symbolic cosmos in contrast with the present reality of those days (Beale, 1999:624). Therefore, the symbolic

transformation point of view<sup>164</sup> between heaven and earth in Revelation, in fact, might give some powerful rhetorical effects to those who listened to the prophetic messages.

#### V.2.3.1. The Conqueror, The Victim

The prominent example of symbolic transformation is the image of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, which was the traditional messianic expectation. But these titles, Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David are reinterpreted by the slain Lamb (Michaels, 1992:131; cf. 5:5-6) and introduced as conqueror. Through this symbolic transformation, this picture provides a powerful message in conjunction with the question of the conquerors. It indicates that the victory of the Lamb is not connected with the overthrowing of enemies by military or political power, but his own self-sacrifice on the cross (Michaels, 1992:137). According to Aune (1997:352), the figure of the Lamb can be interpreted as the conquering Messiah and the atoning sacrificial victim, which has a transformed symbolic meaning. That is, the conqueror is the victim through his self-sacrificial death (cf. Barr, 1984:39-50).

In chapters 12-13, the point of view provides a contrasting image of heaven (above)/earth (below) to give God's point of view. John's narrative world, however, is explained beyond the surface meaning of this section in the light of the heavenly (above) perspective (Du Rand, 1997a:258-259; cf. Louw, 1982:11-14). It is John's narrative meaning that his beliefs, values, and points of view lead the audience/readers to recognize behind the situation of everyday life, the world of ultimate reality through the contrasting point of view (cf. Thompson, 1990:41). Events that happened on earth must be regarded from another perspective, that is the heavenly or above perspective (cf. Caird, 1966:153-154; Barr, 1984:41; Resseguie, 1998:48). As Gnatkowski (1988:96) comments, images of contrast in Revelation demand the choice of the reader between God and Satan and provide

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<sup>164</sup> Upensky's (1973:8-100) point of view can be classified into four separate planes: ideological, phraseological, spatial and temporal, and psychological. The ideological point of view refers to the normative system of the narrator that shapes the work. This point of view may be the author's point of view, value, norm, and the worldview. The phraseological point of view is described as an expression of speech in the level of words and diction. The spatial and temporal point of view is heard in terms of space and time provided in the narrative story. This point of view adopted by the author reveals the settings, characters, events, and process of time in the narrative story in order to give a clearer narrative perspective. The psychological point of view focuses on an individual consciousness through the action and speech of the characters in the narrative story, indicating emotions, thoughts, and perceptions.

the heavenly view about the real world in the symbolic world of Revelation. In this present situation, the most urgent message to his reader/audience is to see the contrasting image between God the Creator, as the sole object of worship, and the Roman Emperor, as the pretentious counterpart (Barnett, 1989:112). Hence, John's symbolic world accomplishes the remarkable symbolic transformation through the contrasted images of heaven (above) and earth (below), and of visible and deep structure.<sup>165</sup>

In 12:11, one encounters the saints as the conquerors to whom Satan is opposed. In this verse, one has the other symbolic transformation that the conquerors are none other than the victims. Through chapter 12:9-11, the scene of victory or salvation is proclaimed in heaven and reveals the conquerors as follows:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| → | A (12:9): Satan (dragon) hurled down                   |
| — | B (12:10): Proclamation of victory/salvation in heaven |
| → | A' (12:11): The Conqueror, the Victim                  |

What makes the saints conquerors? The basis of the victory of the saints depends on 'the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony' that are closely linked with 6:9, 7:14, and 20:4. The reference regarding the blood of the Lamb can be connected with 7:14 (cf. 5:9) that "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The reference 7:14 that is linked with 144,000 describes the conquerors through the blood of the Lamb. This verse also encounters a symbolic transformation and a "striking paradox" (Mounce, 1977:174).

The interesting thing is the mentioning of salvation through the word of their testimony. This passage is closely linked with 6:9 and 20:4 in that it has similar lexical and thematic correspondence (Aune, 1998a:406). A similar lexical and thematic correspondence of these three passages are: 6:9: *διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν*, 12:11: *διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν*, 20:4: *διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ*. These three passages (e.g. 6:9; 12:11; 20:4) are given to the souls who are in heaven

<sup>165</sup> In Revelation, the image of contrast is one of the important literary patterns. Contrast associates things that are dissimilar or opposite (cf. Powell, 1993:32-33). Through the image of contrast, the author can reveal the meaning of the text. For example, John uses the heaven (above)/earth (below) point of view (between chaps. 2-3 and 4-5) that contrasts ultimate reality between theological confidence with present experience.

(Gourgues, 1985:679). These images provide a heavenly (above) perspective through which the first Christians must conquer as the conquerors. The word and testimony of Jesus and God make them martyrs (Aune, 1998a:406). That is, the use of these same word clusters in these passages implies that the same group of people is in view (cf. Shea, 1985:45-47). They are none other than the conquerors who died as victims at the hand of Babylon (Resseguie, 1998:184; cf. 11:7-10). Therefore, the death of God's people is clearly a prominent theme to help discern (Beale, 1999:392) whether they belong to the people of God or the people of Satan. As Pattermore (2004:90-98) argues, their death is a result of their witness (6:9; 11:7; 12:11; 17:6; 20:4) and their victory is by means of this witness, which leads unto death. The idea that their victory is their death imparts a powerful symbolic transformation – the conquerors are the victims.

### V.2.3.2. Seeing and Hearing

In Revelation, it is very interesting to see the causation between the seeing and hearing formula. The hearing, implying the inner reality, often interprets the seeing – implying the outer reality or *vice versa*. According to Resseguie (1998:33), while seeing is influenced by outer reality, hearing uncovers what is hidden in the inner nature. It shows us that the author leads the reader from an old perspective to a new understanding – as was his intention. It is depicted with an irony that Christ is both a lion and the Lamb.<sup>166</sup>

In chapter 12 John sees a great and wondrous sign about a woman who appeared (ὤφθη) in heaven (12:1) and also sees another sign of a red dragon appearing (ὤφθη) from heaven (12:3). The red dragon stands in front of the woman who is about to give birth, so that he might devour her child. The outward appearance and power seen from the red dragon is the outward reality or surface meaning, which is not the essential character. But the appearance and power of the red dragon is reinterpreted from a doxological view in Revelation 12:10-12. This unfolds inner reality in contrast with the previous section (Du Rand, 1993b:315).

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<sup>166</sup> In Revelation, irony is one of the figures of speech that are used. Irony reveals the character of the true meaning of the hidden thing in contrast to what appears. According to Kenney (1966:71), irony in fiction consists of a discrepancy between what is stated and what is suggested. Through the ironical implication as rhetorical devices that occurs often in Revelation, the author delivers his intentional meaning to his audiences (e.g. 2:9; 3:1, 9, 17; 5:5-6).

The seeing formula is changed into a hearing formula (ἤκουσα) that brings into symbolic transformation, or the audience's point of view (12:10-12). The hearing formula indicates the inner reality and the seeing formula provides the outward reality (cf. Resseguie, 1998:33-37). The foundation of the hearing formula is that the inner reality can be linked with the Christ-event, which the Christian community conquered by the blood of the Lamb (διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου) and by the word of their testimony (διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν). As Du Rand (1993b:319) argues, "God is the Conqueror through the Christ-event." The comparison between outer reality and inner reality provides "the rhetorical power" (Fiorenza, 2001:11) to the reader/audience to make decisions as to who the real conquerors are and who the real rulers of this world are. The foundation for the victory of Christ and his people as the conquerors is based on the death and exaltation of Christ and the downfall and binding of Satan (cf. 12:1-12; 20:1-3) from διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν in 12:11. Leivestad (1954:225) is quite correct to say:

The blood of the Lamb and the word of the gospel form the objective base of the Christian victory over the devil. Through the sacrificial and victorious death of Christ they have been delivered from the authority of the devil and supported with moral strength to reject his temptations and persecutions.

In Revelation 13, while John sees (εἶδον) a beast coming out of the earth in 13:1, he hears a voice that sounds like the dragon (ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων) in 13:11. What John sees is that the earth beast had two horns like a lamb. He imitates the Lamb, but John hears that the earth beast speaks like a dragon. The identity of the earth beast is expressed in his speech. He speaks with proud words and blasphemies (ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας:13:5) which he received from the dragon. Through deceptive language and blasphemy, the beast asks to worship the dragon as being more exalted than God (Beale, 1999:695-696). The words or speeches of the dragon and the two beasts reveal their identity and what they think. As a reliable narrator, John describes the identity of the earth beast as the one who speaks like a dragon. Here, John hears the loud voices and the voices of the twenty-four elders as follows: "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever (11:15)" and God will



reign because he has taken his great power. Therefore, the content of what John hears through these narrative voices is the establishment of the kingdom of God.

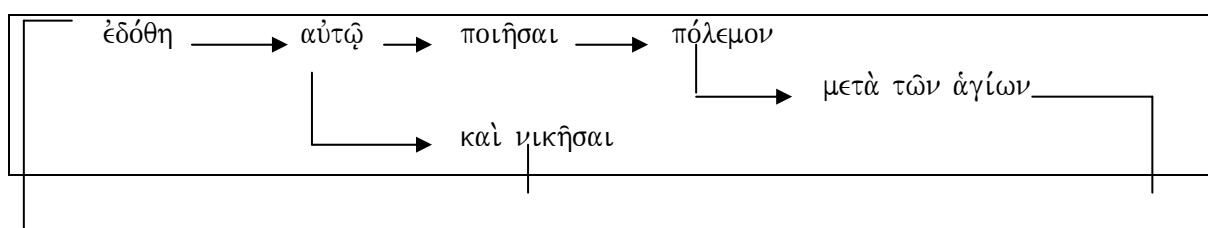
One can say that in 13:11, the earth beast seems like the Lamb, implying a parody of the Lamb. He makes people worship the satanic forces (13:12-17), but his speech reveals his true nature or his inner reality as deceiver. According to Kenney (1966:60-63), it can be called denotation echoing its surface meaning and connotation, echoing the associations in connection with denotation. Through these kinds of dictions, speeches, and words, John corrects or reinterprets the viewpoint of the audience or reader in order to see the inner reality or deeper meaning.

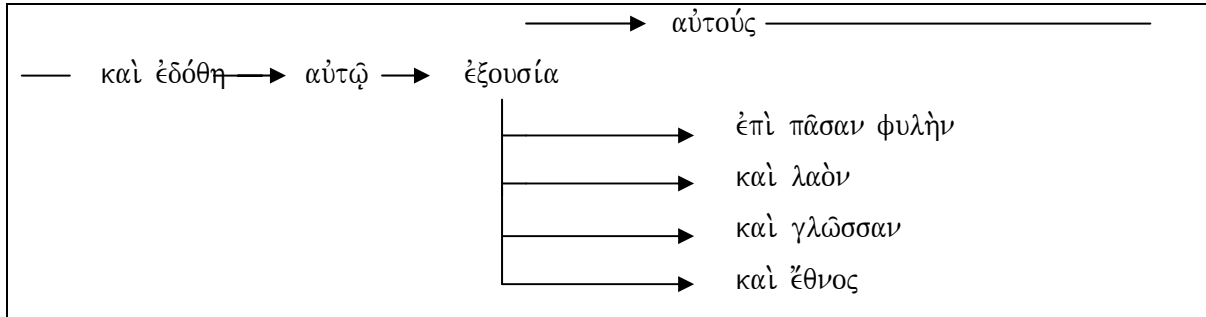
As Barr (1986:256) mentioned, as a story the Apocalypse has the power to transform into a new symbolic world that helps us to see the paramount reality in contrast with worldly reality. In connection with the social, political, and religious perspectives in which the book of Revelation was written, this section provides the symbolic transformation to the conquerors to see the identity of “competing cities, competing worship communities, and competing cosmic leaders” (Marshall, 2001:180) in their present situation as seen and heard from a heavenly perspective.

#### V.2.3.3. The People of God and the people of Satan

One could suppose that the formula of seeing and hearing is a good vehicle to reveal the identity of the conquerors as reinterpreted through the outer and inner reality of the dragon, the sea beast, and the earth beast. Then, one can ask who the real conquerors are or who the true people of God are. What do the texts say about their identity? Are the conquerors the dragon, the sea beast, and the earth beast or anyone else?

In chapter 13:7, the sea beast is given his authority to make war against the saints and to conquer them and to rule the whole world. It can be analyzed as follows:

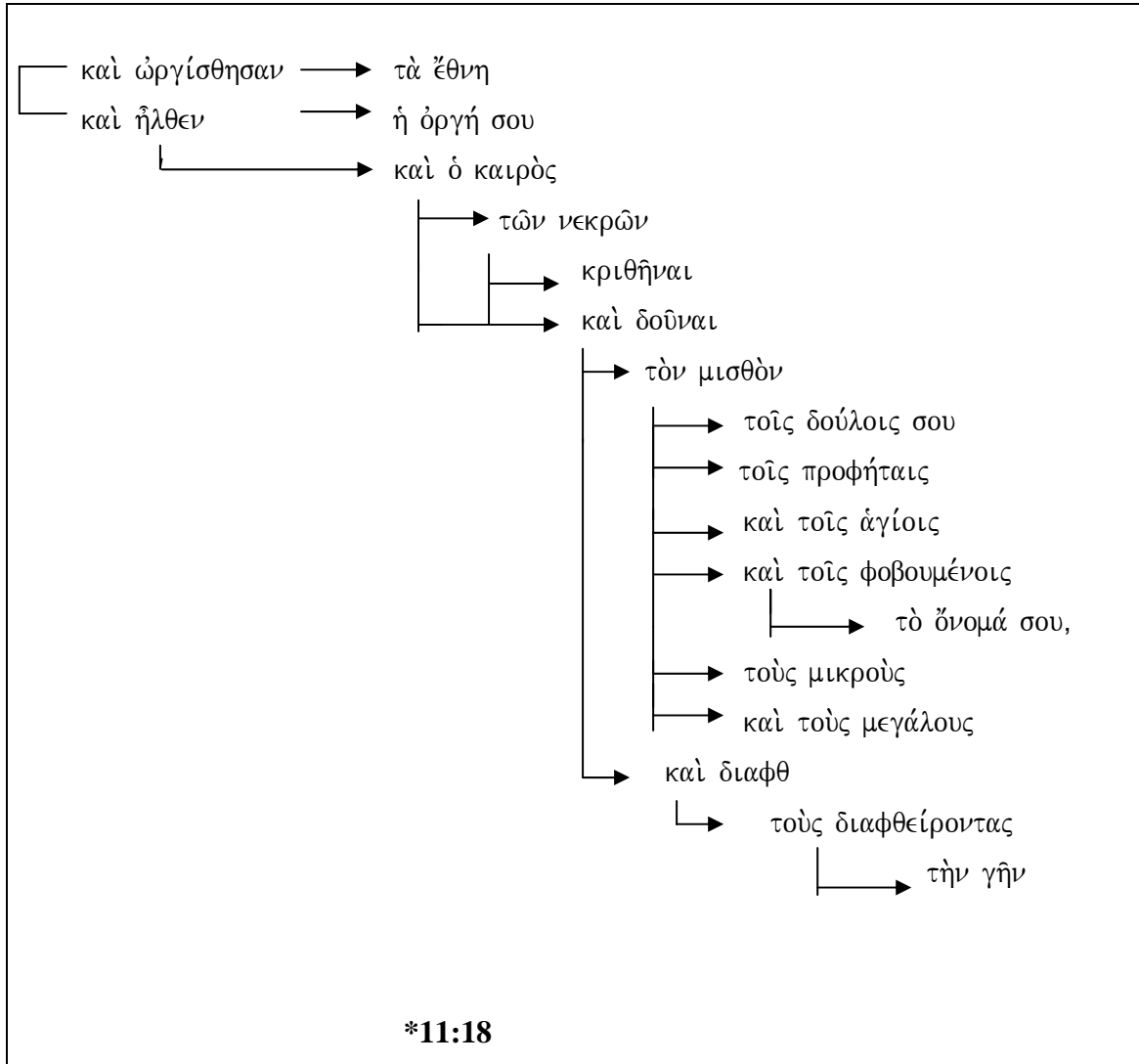




The dragon gives the sea beast the authority to make war against the saints and the whole world. Unlike the victory of Christ who wages war on the dragon and the beasts, the sea beast’s attacks are leveled against the saints, every tribe, people, language, and nation. This fourfold formula (cf. 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:5; see Bauckham, 1993a:326-337) is reflected in 5:9 in that Christ, the Lamb, purchased the whole world with his blood (ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους).

The contrasting image between the Lamb and the sea beast leads the conquerors to see the present reality in terms of a heavenly perspective. Bauckham (1993a:333) is of the opinion that “The close relationship between 5:9 and 13:7 is part of a deliberate pattern of ironic parallels between the Lamb’s conquest and the beast’s.” It means that, in contrast with the deceptive identity of the sea beast who makes war to conquer the whole world (ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους), the Lamb and the 144,000 standing on Mount Zion are the real conquerors as the people of God. As the conquerors, they did not have the number of the beast but received the name of the Lamb and his father on their heads (14:1-5). Through this, the conquerors experience a violent death (13:10). It implies that the conquerors overcame “the Beast through death itself” (Michaels, 1992:135). Even though the sea beast tried to conquer the people of God with his deceptive power, he proved a false conqueror from a heavenly perspective.

In contrast with the deceptive power of the sea beast, the identity of the conquerors is described in chapter 11:18 and 14:1, implying the inclusion of chapters 12-13 as a vehicle for revealing victory and judgment. Chapter 11:18 can be analyzed as follows:



Through the analysis above, one can recognize that the theme of reward and judgment in this verse is a prominent characteristic. This analysis can be classified into two parts in terms of reward and judgment that are given to the conquerors and the people of Satan. In this section, the reward is given τοῖς δούλοις σου, τοῖς προφήταις, τοῖς ἁγίοις, τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά σου as the people of God. It means that they are none other than the conquerors because they defeated the dragon, namely Satan in 12:10-11 and the beasts in 15:2. The judgment is inflicted upon τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν as the people of Satan.

The servant: The mentioning of servants appears in 1:1; 2:20; 6:11; 7:3; 10:7; 11:18; 15:3; 19:2, 5, 10; 22:3, 6, 9. The image of the servant is especially frequently echoed in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, Abraham (e.g. Ge. 26:24) and Moses (e.g. Nu. 12:7-8) are called as servants. The prominent evidence in the Old Testament is the prophecy of

Isaiah (e.g. 42:1; 49:3; 52:13; 53:11) where the servant is portrayed as chosen by God (cf. Barker, 2000:133-139). On the one hand, whenever the book of Revelation describes the word about the servants, it is closely linked with the community of faith. For example, in the case of chapter 2:20, which was sent to the church of Thyatira, the prophetess Jezebel lures God's servants into fornication and into eating food sacrificed to idols. Here, δούλος indicates the faithful community against the false prophetess Jezebel (Beale, 1999:183). On the other hand, the word servant is used together with God, implying that all believers are those who belong to God (Kistemaker, 2001:248).

As the servants of Christ, the souls of those who were slaughtered ask for revenge on the inhabitants of the earth in chapter 6:9-11. The reason that they had been slaughtered is based on διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον as God's servants. Their vindication as God's servants is completed in 20:4 (see Beasley-Murray, 1992:292-295). The souls of those who had been beheaded and had not worshipped the beast and his image reign with Christ for a thousand years because "they are martyrs" (Michaels, 1992:134). That is, their reason for reigning with Christ for a thousand years is also based on διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ like 6:9. The people who reign with Christ are none other than the conquerors because the foundation of victory for the conquerors is possible through τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. Therefore, the expression to the servant in 11:18 is another way of expressing the conquerors in Revelation (cf. Mounce, 1977:355).

The prophet: The references to the prophet (τοῖς προφήταις) are introduced in 10:7; 11:10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9. The expression to the prophet is closely linked with the servant of God (cf. τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ δούλους τοὺς προφῆτας; 10:7; 11:18; 22:6). The term "his servants the prophets" is frequently used in the Old Testament together (cf. 2 Ki. 17:13, 23; Jer. 7:25; 35:15; 44:4; Da. 9:6; Am. 3:7). The prophets in the Old Testament proclaimed the mystery of God to reveal the prophetic message and word between salvation and judgment. As Bauckham (1993b:87) comments, "the judgment is actually salvific." In Revelation, the role of the prophets is to proclaim and to reveal through the prophetic witness and word the meaning of history that will be delayed no more (Bauckham, 1993b:84-85). The word of prophecy that the prophet announced means 'good news'

bringing salvation to the people of God (cf. Michaels, 1997:135). That is why, even though the proclamation of the prophetic word is announced in 10:6, the fulfillment of that prophetic word appears in 11:15-19; 15:1; 16:17, and 19:17-20:15.

When one considers the functional role of the prophets to deliver the mystery of God, the announcement of this prophetic word can intimately be connected with 10:11 and 11:3 in terms of micro-structure. In the case of Bauckham (1993a:258), chapters 10:1-11:13, the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets, are understood as the climax of the church's witness to the world. The prophetic witness given to the prophets in 10:11 (δέϊ σε πάλιν προφητεῦσαι) is changed with the prophesy of two witnesses in 11:3-13 that means "the unavoidable necessity of prophesying" (Aune, 1998a:573). This implies that the functional role of two witnesses is to execute the same functional role (προφητεύουσιν) as well as the prophets' function. Therefore, the text in chapters 10 and 11 must be regarded as the same thematic parallel, implying the proclamation of God's prophetic witness in order to ensure the conversion of the nations (Bauckham, 1993b:84).

Here, the word προφητεύω (prophesy) does not merely indicate God's word talking about the future events that will happen someday, but rather reveals the present reality (Boring, 1992:716) and its interpretation of what the first Christians faced. The present reality is to endure the present situation and to proclaim the word of God to the unrepentant people as a warning. That is why the primary function of two witnesses as the conquerors is to proclaim the prophetic word to the unrepentant people (Beale, 1999:573). The similarity between the prophets in 10:7 and the two witnesses in 11:3 can be regarded as the same functional role that is to proclaim the gospel. It demonstrates that they are conquerors through the witness of God's word and their death and resurrection (Pattemore, 2004:85) just as Christ has achieved victory as conqueror through his witness over God's word and his death and resurrection in this world.

The saint: The references to the ἁγίοις appear in 5:8; 8:3, 4; 11:18; 13:7, 10; 14:12; 16:6; 17:6; 18:20, 24; 19:8; 20:9. Through these references, one can recognize that the words connected with the saints are αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἁγίων in 5:8, ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων in 8:3, ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων in 13:10, ἡ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων in 14:12,

αἵματος τῶν ἁγίων in 17:6, αἷμα ἁγίων in 18:24. These words such as prayer, endurance, faith, and blood, are political, social and religious terms, where the severe situation of the first Christians is reflected (Kistemaker, 2001:345). That is, words such as prayer, endurance, faith, and blood in Revelation represent the characteristics of what the conquerors bore. The characteristics of worship between God and Satan and of endurance under severe stress and of the blood to be shed because of the name of Christ are provided as proper characteristics of the saints as conquerors of those days (see Friesen, 2004:303-313). As Wilson (1996:184) points out, “The saints and the victors are one and the same.” The first Christians must have been confronted with the choice over worship between Christ and Caesar or God and Satan. This action, in the light of believer, is the need to be faithful as well as to shed blood and endure under any circumstances. Accordingly, John offers his audiences the possibility of joining as faithful saints as well as slaves and prophets (Carey, 2001:177). The faithful saints, as the people of God, can be called conquerors because they endure a period of desperate suffering.

God fearer: The references about God fearer are introduced in 11:18 and 19:5. The interesting things in these two verses are that they are in the midst of the scene of salvation and judgment. After the testimony of the two witnesses in 11:3-13, the end of the kingdom of Satan and the initiation of the kingdom of God are introduced. And the judgment of the evil ones and the reward of God’s people are also introduced. In 11:18, there is a division between the two sides, implying the people of God and the people of Satan in terms of μισθός and ὀργή. The people of God, who will be rewarded by Christ as the conquerors, are the servants, the prophets, the saints, and God fearer. They are all conquerors as the people of God, because they will be rewarded (μισθός) by God in the eschatological final time. The reward of the conquerors depends on their worship of God, their endurance unto death, keeping the faith under severe suffering, and the blood they shed in the name of Christ (Aune, 1987:244; Boring, 1989:5-23). That is why one can say that “the martyrs, then, are conquerors” (Pattemore, 2004:97).

The context of 19:5 where the word οἱ φοβούμενοι is introduced, is linked with the judgment of Babylon and God’s sovereignty to the whole world. In contrast with the judgment of Babylon that is executed in chapters 17-18, chapter 19 includes the

glorification of God who executed his righteous judgment of the great whore. As mentioned in 11:18, this verse is well matched with the previous and following sections that explained the judgment (ὄργη) of the great whore of Babylon and her followers (chapters 17-18) and the wedding ceremony of the Lamb (chapter 19:1-10) who conquered his enemies by his blood (cf. 1:5; 5:6, 9, 12; 7:14; 12:11; 19:13). Therefore, the word οἱ φοβούμενοι, indicating that those who are God fearing, can closely be connected with the praise of God that only the conquerors can sing a new song to God (Mounce, 1977:286-287; cf. 5:12; 15:3-4). The word οἱ φοβούμενοι can be contrasted with the τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς as the people of Satan in 13:14 (cf. Kistemaker, 2001:345) because they worship the beast. The contrasting image between two sides οἱ φοβούμενοι and οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς indicates that God fearers can be called conquerors because they did not worship the beast as did the inhabitants of the earth (cf. 3:10; 6:10; 11:10).

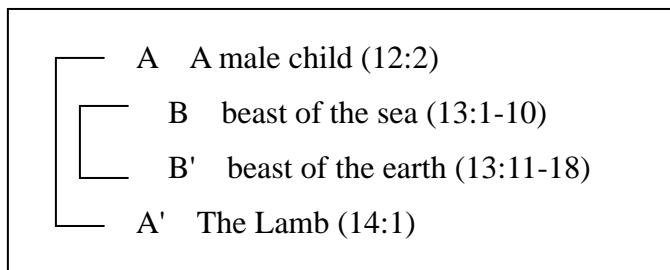
Generally speaking, those who dwell on the earth are regarded as “the enemies of God and his people” (Beagley, 1987:34) and it is confirmed in 6:10 that the martyrs ask to avenge the inhabitants of the earth for shedding the innocent blood of the martyr. Through this analysis, one can recognize that the servant, the prophet, the saint, and the God fearers are conquerors as the people of God who conquer the situation they confronted, and keep the word of God and the testimony of Christ unto death. In contrast with them, the inhabitants of the earth shedding the blood of the martyrs can be regarded as the people of Satan, namely the defeated.

### **V.3. The Conqueror motif from a heavenly perspective**

Generally, the heavenly point of view in Revelation reflects the context for earthly events because that context is often closely connected with the socio-political situation that makes the story meaningful (cf. Sweet, 1979:16, 113-114). Consequently, the spatial dimension between heaven and earth functions as the prominent element of the text, as well as a powerful tool created by the author (Van Eck, 1995:129).

In Revelation, the heavenly point of view offers the overall framework for the movement

and development of the plot to reveal the earthly reality (Gilbertson, 2003:81). John divides his prophetic message into two aspects, those of heaven and earth. The reason why he divides his message into heaven and earth is to focus on the core of his prophetic message or theology to the audience. Therefore, the earth must be reinterpreted through heaven or *vice versa*. The doxology of 12:10-12 concerning Christ and the conquerors emphasizes the reason for victory, as martyrdom by the blood of the Lamb and the word of the believers' testimony (Strand, 1990:242-243). The story flows into an earthly perspective again, that indicates a beast coming out of the sea (13:1) and the earth (13:11). The destiny of the beasts is decided with the appearance of the Lamb as the conqueror who stands on Mount Zion as the heavenly figure. It can be drawn as follows:



Through the diagram above, one can see that A and A', indicating the Messiah Christ and the Lamb, are the heavenly figures who will judge B and B', namely the sea beast and the earth beast. The scene of a male child, implying the exalted Christ in salvation history, in an earthly perspective is changed into the scene of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. Zion is introduced as the place of God's kingdom and of his presence to avoid God's woe, having a theological and eschatological meaning (Beasley-Murray, 1992:221-222). An inclusion of A and A' in contrast with B and B', indicating the deceptive worldly power, supposes that the victory of Christ, the Lamb and the conquerors is confirmed in the heavenly perspective, as well as in the earthly perspective, against the sea and the earth beast (Du Rand, 1993b:318-319). Therefore, one can find out the heavenly point of view of John that a male child and the Lamb as the conquerors will defeat the sea and earth beast and will win.

### V.3.1. Temporal dimension

In the book of Revelation, the temporal dimension is the important element to unravel how



the author's apocalyptic message flows. Its importance is that the narrative story<sup>167</sup> provides the heavenly point of view (Boring, 1992:706) in that readers or audiences must follow the intention of the author. By and large, the temporal dimension of Revelation can be divided into chronological order (linear order)<sup>168</sup> and typological or symbolical order (Powell, 1993:72), including various kinds of temporal elements. When one applies the temporal possibility of Revelation only to chronological order, it might be wrong to apply the message of the book of Revelation as such. One must keep in mind that to see the dynamic or cyclical temporal process or movement of the content of Revelation (cf. Gilbertson, 2003:109-142), it is helpful to reveal the true message of Revelation.

The sign of the woman and the dragon and the cosmic battle between Michael and the dragon in heaven (12:1-9) and the appearance of the sea and earth beast on earth (13:1-18) seem to be depicted in chronological order. When, however, one looks carefully at the text itself, it is very clear that the text is filled with flashforward (prolepsis) and flashback (analepsis; Barr, 1998:121-122). The sign about the woman who gives birth to a male child and the cosmic battle between Michael and the dragon is expressed as flashback (analepsis), indicating Jesus' death on the cross. With the method of flashback, it discloses that the victory of the Christian community is only possible through the death of Jesus on the cross (cf. Boring, 1989:158; Johnson, 2001:183-185). Even though some scholars insist that the battle in heaven between Michael and the dragon indicates the primeval conflict of Satan's fall, this story may rather refer to Jesus' death or victory (Goldsworthy, 1984:121).

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<sup>167</sup> In the narrative story, narration time is called objective time and narrated time is called subjective time. Objective time in the narrative story means the flow of the continued story without any interruption, breaking, and insertion. Thus, narration time can be evaluated in a precise and objective way. Subjective time in the narrative story, in contrast to objective time, is never continuous and enlarges or diminishes the narrative story according to the intention of the implied author. This narrative time fashion does not express the story within a chronological framework. It mingles the past, present, and future with intention. That is, narrated time is not uniform or regular and its directions and speed often change (Bar-Efrat, 1989:141-143). Whenever one reads the narrative story, if one distinguishes between the narration time (objective time) and narrated time (subjective time), it might be helpful to understand the meaning of the narrative story according to the intention of the author.

<sup>168</sup> The crucial text to find out the temporal structure of the book of Revelation is Revelation 1:19 because this text is understood to be the interpretative key to Revelation. Many commentators (e.g. Charles, 1975:1.33; Ladd, 1979:34) have seen Revelation 1:19 as implying a threefold chronological division: "what you have seen (ὃ εἶδεις)" refers to the previous vision of chapter 1 and "what is now (ὃ εἶσιν)" is a reference to the condition of the seven churches of chapters 2-3 in Asia Minor and "what will take place (ὃ μέλλει γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα)" refers to the chapter 4-22, denoting the final tribulation and final salvation (cf. contra Beale, 1992:360-386). This opinion does not regard the possible recapitulative nature or progressive parallelism (cf. Hendriksen, 2000:34-36). Thus, each of the three clauses in v. 19 refers equally to the entire book (Beale, 1992:381).

The doxology of 12:10-11 is functioned as flashforward (prolepsis), implying the future victory of the Christian community. The dragon's war with a woman and a male child is not heard in order<sup>169</sup> but is rather interchangeable within the narrative story in order to give the message of victory and conquest in terms of the death and victory of Jesus (Shea, 1985:52). In terms of the temporal dimension, as Caird (1966:26) rightly pointed out, the whole of the book of Revelation is closely intertwined with past, present, and future. Through flashback and flashforward, the conquerors as the people of God confirm their victory against the dragon and the hostile world.

### V.3.2. The Psychological perspective: positive and negative

In chapters 12-13, the characteristic words are as follows: 'fighting', 'repulsion', 'conquest', and 'death'.<sup>170</sup> The repetitive use of these military words between Michael and his angels and the dragon and the sea/earth beasts symbolizes the positive and negative psychological perspective in terms of victory and judgment (cf. Resseguie, 1998:44-45).

The psychological perspective in Revelation discloses the thoughts, emotions, and responses of characters in order to evoke some effects on their audience (Powell, 1993:64-65). It is designed to catch the imagination of the audience and to see one's historical situation and perspective in a new way or from a new understanding. As Collins (1984:145) pointed out, "The Apocalypse handles skillfully the hearers' thoughts, attitudes, and feelings by the use of effective symbols and a narrative plot that invites imaginative participation." Therefore, the type of language in Revelation that discloses the thoughts, attitudes, and feelings of the audience in terms of a psychological perspective, is a very

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<sup>169</sup> According to Gilbertson (2003:110-111), the temporal categories can be classified into five different categories as follows: present, primordial past, historical past, penultimate future and ultimate future. While he divides the temporal dimension in Revelation into five categories, he denies a chronological order. He (:111) argues that "it is misguided to seek to construct a chronological scheme out of it." Thus, through the temporal dimension, one should find out the dynamic moving of the text from the beginning to the end.

<sup>170</sup> These words such as 'fighting', 'repulsion', 'conquest', and 'death' in chapters 12-13 are the prominent words, indicating combatant terminology or eschatological battle. For example, 'fighting' is used in 12:7 (πόλεμος, πολεμήσαι, ἐπολέμησεν), 17 (πόλεμον); 13:4 (πολεμήσαι), 7 (πόλεμον). 'Repulsion' is used in 12:9 (ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθη, ἐβλήθησαν), 10 (ἐβλήθη), 13 (ἐβλήθη). 'Conquest' is used in 12:11 (ἐνίκησαν); 13:7 (νικήσαι). 'Death' is used in 12:11 (θανάτου); 13:3 (ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, θανάτου), 8 (ἐσφαγμένου), 10 (ἀποκτανθῆναι, ἀποκτανθῆναι). Through these words one can see that in Revelation 12-13, the theme of conquest or victory in terms of a heavenly community and death or defeat in terms of an earthly community are the prominent theme.

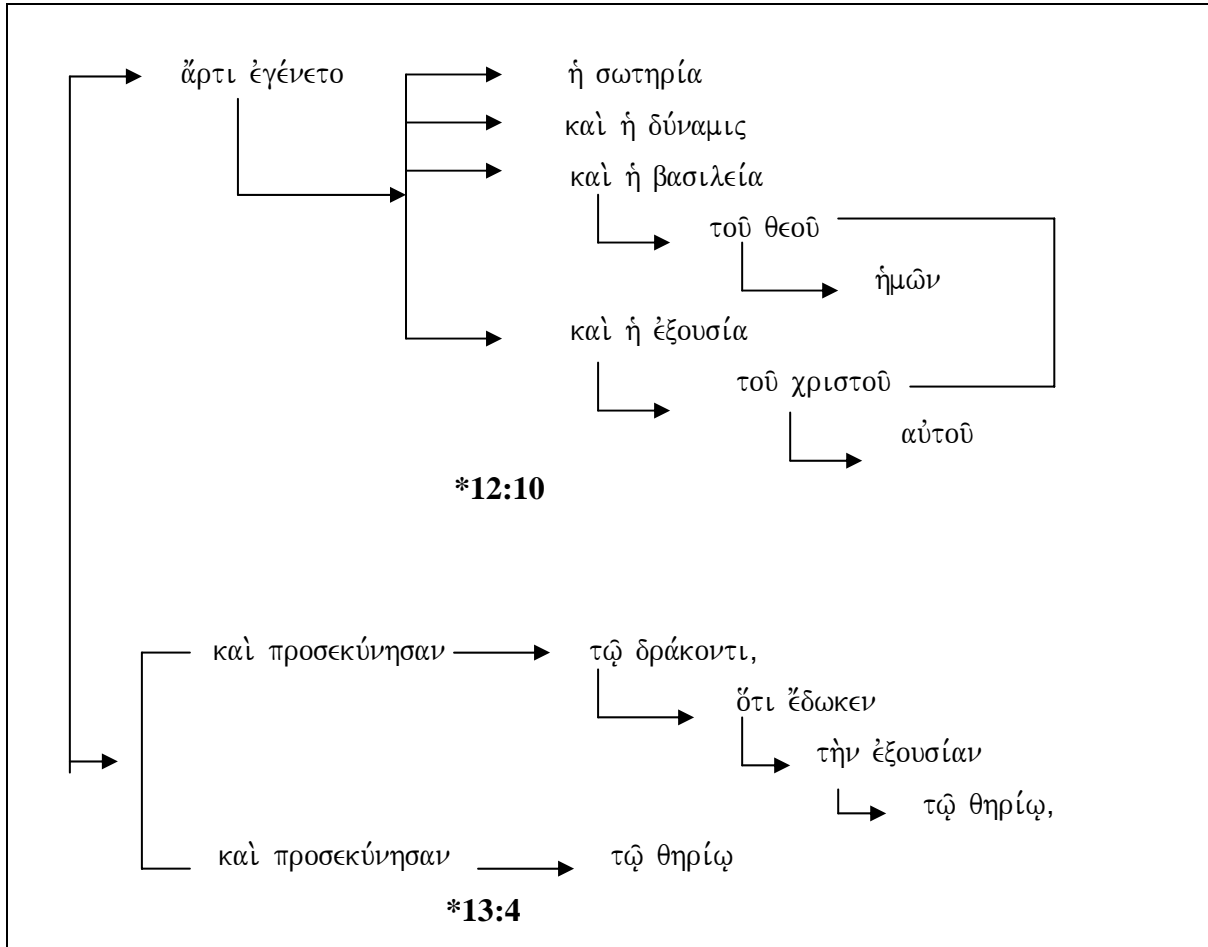
important element.<sup>171</sup> The thoughts, attitudes, and feelings of characters disclose the meaning of events.

The response of the major psychological perspective in Revelation 12-13 can be divided into two parts: the positive and the negative (cf. Barr, 1998:105-115). In the cosmic battle (12:1-9), the defeat of the dragon brings about two responses. In the positive part, a loud voice in heaven responds with praise of the salvation and power of the kingdom of God and the authority of his Christ (ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ). But in another part, one has a negative response because Christ's death on the cross and the saint's testimony, the devil responds with fury (θυμὸν μέγαν:12:12).

In 13:3-10, the response to the healing of the sea beast's head can again be divided into two parts: positive and negative. In the positive part, the whole earth was astonished and followed the beast (ἐθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου:13:3] and worshipped (προσεκύνησαν:13:4) the dragon and the beast because of their act. And the saint who did not worship the dragon and the beast must be patient and faithful (13:10) in the negative part. Whereas this psychological perspective reveals the deceptive power of evil as conqueror from an earthly perspective, it also discloses the victory of God's people as the conquerors from a heavenly perspective (Kistemaker, 2001:353). Therefore, the audience must decide which way to choose. That is, the psychological perspective represents the reality for one's identity whether one is a conqueror or not. As one will see below, the contrasting response of these verses (12:10, 12:12, 13:3-4 and 13:10) shows us which side they belong to, namely the conquerors or the defeated.

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<sup>171</sup> The language of Revelation provides the crucial interpretive key of the texts, if one regards carefully the text itself. Because Revelation itself is not the book to deliver information over the historical situation to the ancient audience but to give evocative or expressive language, the book of Revelation demands to share and participate in the language of the symbolic transformation (cf. Caird, 1980:7-36).



The contradictory features of these two verses reveal the characteristics of God/Christ and Satan, and of the worshipper of God/Christ, along with Satan’s worshipper, the dragon. The conquerors who praise the works of God and Christ, and who recognize the ultimate reality confirm the salvation, power, kingdom, and authority of God and Christ in heaven as well as on earth (e.g. 5:12-13).

The victorious hymn of God, Christ, and the conquerors in 12:10 are based on 12:7-9 in that the war between Michael and the dragon is mentioned. The heavenly war between Michael and the dragon is reflected in 12:10-12 on the basis of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross (Mounce, 1977:243). The result of this war between Michael and the dragon has brought a different positive and negative psychological response. The establishment of God’s kingdom and his sovereignty in heaven is expressed with the praise of God and Christ as the object of worship by people of God in contrast with the worship of Satan (Du Rand, 1993b:316-317), personified as the Roman Emperor. This is a proper message in the

context of the conflict situation between Christ and Caesar (cf. Aune, 1987:243-246). Therefore, those who praise the works of God and Christ might be called conquerors because they accept salvation, power, kingdom, and authority derived from God against Satan. Even though they live in difficult circumstances enduring persecution, compromise, and self-deception, they recognize the ultimate reality of God and Satan. Through this hymnic composition, John provides the heavenly perspective that God is in control of the cosmos as well as of history (Lee, 1998:192). As Witherington III (2003:34) insists, “The very heart of apocalyptic is the unveiling of secrets and truths about God’s perspective on a variety of subjects, including justice and the problem of evil.”

The diagram shown above implies that the source of their authority in the text is derived from God and the dragon respectively. According to DeSilva (1998:79-110), epideictic rhetoric, dealing with the topics of honour through praise and censure, reinforces virtues to the audience or reader in order to lead to honour and honourable remembrance after death. Only God and Christ can receive honour through the whole world. The first Christians had to accept faith that God and Christ are in control of the whole world and they are the ultimate conquerors who should be worshipped. Consequently, the analysis above indicates that the right worship of God and Christ in contrast with its alternative, idolatrous worship of the dragon and the beast in a socio-political situation (cf. Botha, 1988:87-98), had to be executed in the first Christian community to be called the conquerors (cf. Boring, 1986:257-269).

### V.3.3. Social and political implications

Because understanding social conditions and the political *milieu* in biblical times is important in interpreting the text itself, an analysis of various socio-political approaches as a social setting must be attempted. When one studies the book of Revelation, one may find that, within the narrative story, various methodological interrelationships must be tested. That is, Revelation must be read from its social matrix as well as a narrative story that has a unified intention, emphasizing history, literature, and theology (Du Rand, 1997b:59). The author, John, focuses his message on history (eschatology), the narrative, and theology to conquer the outcome of their present crisis (cf. Fiorenza, 1985:46-56).

In fact, because the social, economic and historical settings had been mentioned above, I just want to deal briefly with the socio-political situation of chapters 12-13, which is based on the pressing circumstance wherein God's people were persecuted. But in contrast with the previous section (e.g. 8:6-11:18), chapters 12-13 deal with God's victory from the perspective of a "cosmic war" (Barr, 1998:104), dividing worshippers of the Lamb and worshippers of the beast (13:8).

In the Old Testament, a dragon is a symbol of evil (e.g. Job. 7:12; Ps. 74:13; Isa. 27:1; 51:9; Jer. 51:9). The purpose of the Satan in this section is to kill the woman, who represents the people of God or the Church (Bruns, 1964:459), and a male child who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre.<sup>172</sup> This story is provided to depict God and Christ's victory in terms of a cosmic dimension and war, but in a real sense, it is stated to describe the socio-political situation that the first Christians confronted within pagan society. Because the characteristic of the dragon as an image of God's opposition is embedded in a historical context, here the dragon depicts the imperial power of Rome (Harrington, 1969:177-181; Wilcock, 1989:124).

In chapter 13, John explains the beast of the sea as the 'Roman Empire' (see Fiorenza, 1991:83; Roloff, 1993:155; Talbert, 1994:52; Barr, 1998:107; Beale, 1999:684; Marshall, 2001:139-140). As the dragon's minion, the beast of the sea encourages the imperial cult of Rome and Emperor worship in order to worship both the dragon and the beast of the sea (13:3-4). In contrast with the scholars mentioned above, Van De Water (2000:246) regards the two beasts not as the Roman government, but political messianism in Palestine and Diaspora Judaism against the followers of Jesus (see Beagley, 1987). Although his argument shows good insight, it cannot be supported by the text itself.

The parody continues with the appearance of another beast coming out of the earth (13:11). The beast of the earth can be defined as John's opponents, indicating the prophets "Balaam

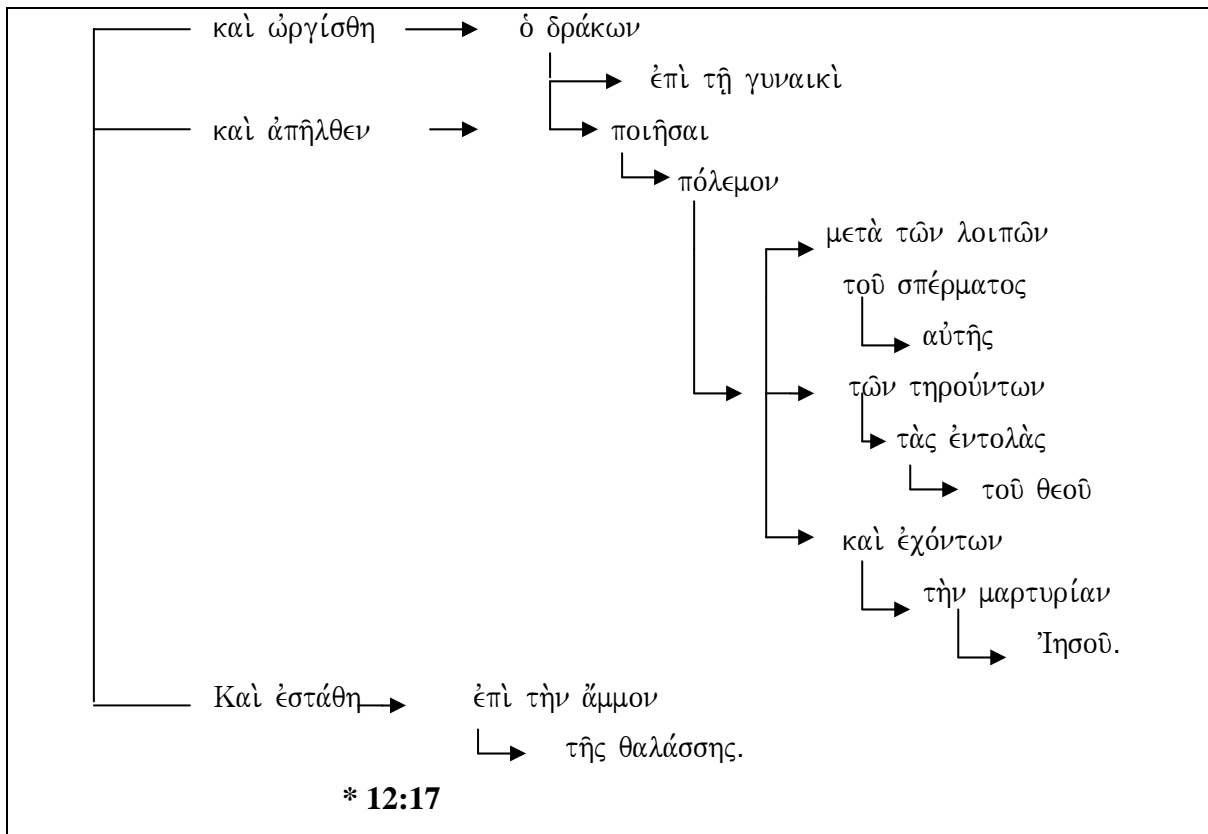
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<sup>172</sup> The conflict between the woman and a male child and Satan in 12:1-6 does not refer to Satan's futile hostility toward the Messiah from the beginning (cf. Beckwith, 1967:617). It is speculated that John put the story into pre-historical conflict between Messiah and Satan. But John tells this story on the horizontal line of history. That is, Revelation's primary hermeneutical perspective is to interpret the present events of history by placing them in their *heilsgeschichtlich* context (Boring, 1986:268). Thus, the pursuit and the defeat of the dragon (12:1-9) must be based on the death and resurrection of Christ. This story is confirmed in 12:10-11, explaining the death of the Lamb and the testimony of the saints (cf. Torrance, 1959:78-81).

and Jezebel” (Garrow, 1997:89), or “the false prophet”, promoting an imperial cult and emperor worship (Kistemaker, 2001:388; cf. Boring, 1989:156; Thompson, 1998:143) or “the false religions and philosophies” (Hendriksen, 2000:144) or “provincial cult” (Price, 1984:197). Even though there are many debates among scholars about what the identity might be, one can suppose that it is the epitome of evil against the people of God, encouraging the imperial cult and emperor worship, false religion, and the provincial cult. As Bauckham (1993b:38) argued, Revelation provides prophetic critique of the system of Roman power. Therefore, the prophetic critique of the system of Roman power provides the socio-historical setting of chapters 12-13 in order to help the reading of this section.

V.3.3.1. The Conquerors versus the Dragon (δράκων)

The dragon is always a ‘flat character’ in Revelation that carries out evil’s destructive power against God and his people, that is, the conquerors. But the heavenly war between Michael and the dragon (12:7-9) determines in advance the destiny of the dragon. The diagram below will show the contrast between the conquerors and the evil ones.



The analysis of the diagram above shows us how the dragon fights in anger against God's people. The rest of woman's offspring, implying the promise of Genesis 3:15, points to the church as a whole (Michaels, 1997:153-154). The war between the dragon and the woman happens in two places: heaven (12:7-12) and earth (12:13-17). The reason why the woman is persecuted is due to the dragon's defeat in heaven. After his defeat, the dragon comes down to the earth to persecute her. This image provides a contrast between the spiritual church and the earthly church, reflecting protection and victory of the conquerors (cf. Lee, 1998:189-190). It implies that "God shields the church's members not from physical violence but from spiritual destruction" (Johnson, 2001:187).

When one views the diagram above, the identity of the conquerors is clearly demonstrated. That is, the conquerors are the rest of woman's offspring but it does not mean that they imply all human beings. Who are the rest of woman's offspring? They are those who obey God's commandment and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Obeying God's commandment and holding the testimony of Jesus brought about suffering and death for the first Christians (Mounce, 1977:245). It is really "a clash of total cultures, a clash of life-styles" (Downing, 1995:248). This verse can be linked with John's situation in Patmos (1:9). The confinement of John resulted from his witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Because of his witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, he was ἐν τῇ θλίψει. In the book of Revelation, tribulation (θλίψις) is used to indicate the victory, conquest, and kingship of the conquerors (Thompson, 1986:153). This would mean that God and Christ in a heavenly court would reward the witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. To keep and hold the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, which are characteristics of all true saints, are the way of victory and conquest as the conquerors (Bauckham, 1993b:91). This prophetic rhetoric of John's demands the church's endurance and the Christian faith under circumstances that the conquerors experienced, that is, suffering, distress, poverty, and economic disadvantage in a daily life (cf. Fiorenza, 1991:50-51).

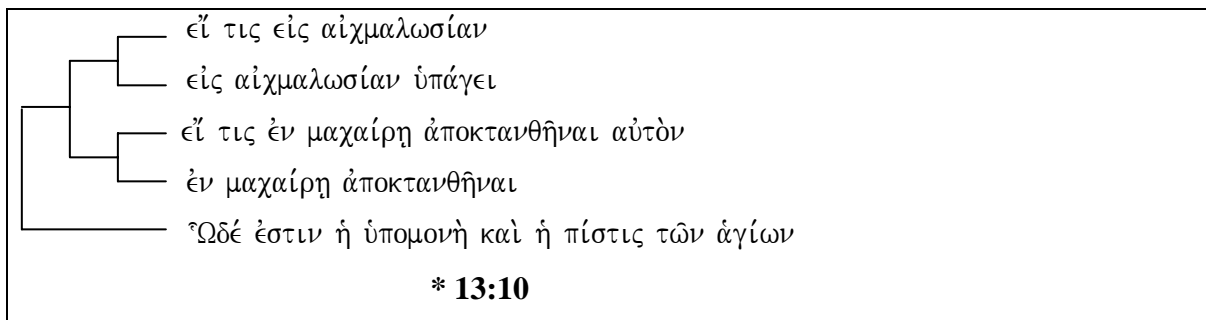
#### V.3.3.2.The Conquerors versus the Beast from the sea

The beast of the sea is expressed as a 'flat character' in the story. He comes up from the



Abyss that is part of John's spiritual topographical place, representing the abode of evil (cf. Resseguie, 1998:88-90). Just as the function of the dragon has to make war (ποιῆσαι πόλεμον) against the rest of her offspring, the beast coming up from the Abyss is to make war (ποιήσῃ μετ' αὐτῶν πόλεμον) on the saints. The beast of the sea appears as a servant of the dragon imitating the dragon. The author portrays the beast of the sea as being on the dragon's side. That is, many of his actions and speeches expose his imitation of the dragon. In fact, what the beast of the sea did to the conquerors was derived from the authority of the dragon. The beast was given (ἐδόθη) his power, his throne and his great authority from the dragon. The beast was given (ἐδόθη) a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies, and was allowed (ἐδόθη) to exercise his authority for forty-two months (13:5; cf. 13:7), implying a period of limited but intense persecution (Mounce, 1977:254).

The repeated use of the passive voice mentioned above, like ἐδόθη, discloses the functional unity between the dragon and the beast of the sea as evil ones blaspheming God and the conquerors (Aune, 1998a:735). The outer appearance of the beast of the sea is like the dragon, and his speech copies the dragon in uttering proud words and blasphemies. The narrator's statement as a negative meaning represents the inner reality or deeper meaning of the beast of the sea. The analysis of conqueror in 13:10 can be suggested as follows:



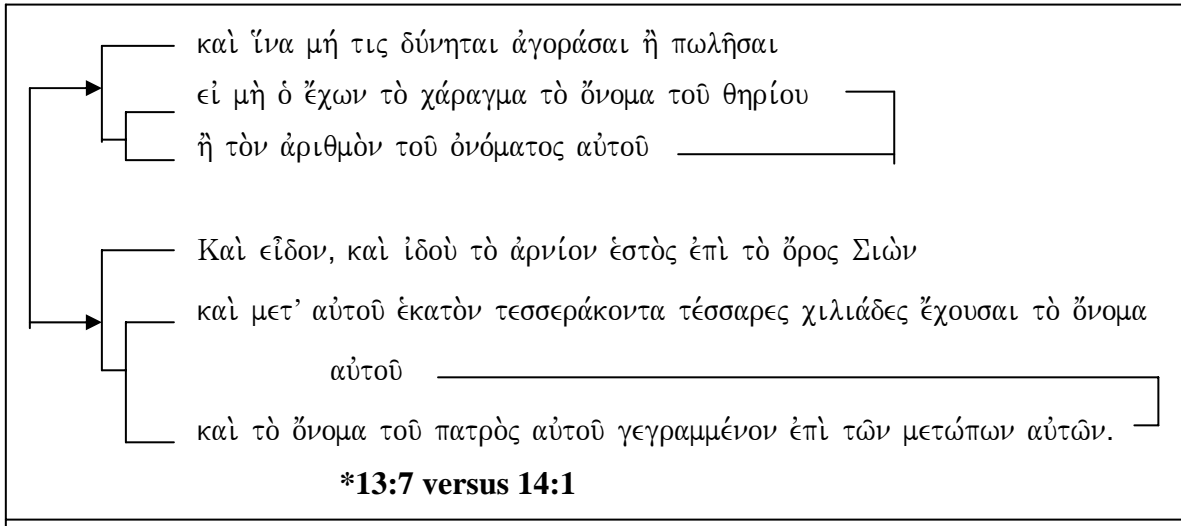
These lines are derived from the quotation of the prophecy of Jeremiah 15:2 and 43:11 that wrote about the destiny of the wicked people. But John reinterprets this text into the concept of a suffering Christian. The emphasis in this verse is not on the judgment of the wicked people, but on the suffering of the conquerors to give encouragement and consolation in their present situation (Morris, 1999:165; contra Wall, 1991:170). Their suffering in this world is not the end, but God and Christ will vindicate them as the

conquerors. Therefore, the conquerors have to maintain the endurance and the faithfulness unto death. According to Bauckham (1993b:91), “the beast’s apparent victory is the martyrs’ - and therefore God’s- real victory.”

Interestingly enough, a hearing formula is contained in the exhortation of 13:9. The hearing formula, that “He who has an ear let him hear”, can be connected with the refrain in the letters to the churches, immediately preceding and following the reference about the conquerors (cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). This hearing formula in the seven churches is accompanied by the promise that was given to the conquerors as an eschatological reward (cf. Duff, 2001:31-47). One can suppose that this combination between the hearing formula and the promise given to the conquerors in the seven churches intended to encourage and to give hope to the Christians as spiritual conquerors in the midst of worldly hostility. The same idea in 13:9-10 is used to encourage and to give hope to the Christians who “practice the qualities of faith and endurance” (Aune, 1998a:750). Just as the promise statement given to the conquerors in the seven churches encourages Christians to maintain their status in the worldly conflict as spiritual conquerors, 13:9-10 also emphasizes the perseverance and faithfulness of the conquerors in the midst of conflict with the beast of the sea. If they do that, they could be called conquerors/victors from a heavenly perspective (cf. Reddish, 1995:212-222).

#### V.3.3.3. The Conquerors versus the Beast from the earth

The beast from the earth is the third member of the evil ones. His function is to deceive the inhabitants of the earth and lead them to worship the first beast (13:12, 14). That is, he is a deceiver, and as a deceiver, he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men (13:13; see Scherrer, 1984:599-610). Just as the followers of the Lamb and God receive the seal of the living God on their forehead (ἄχρι σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν; e.g. 7:3-8; 14:1-5), the followers of the beast receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead (13:16: δώσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν). Here, the actions and attributes of the beast of the earth disclose his inner reality as a deceiver. With the identity of the beast of the earth, the identity of the conquerors can be analyzed as follows:



The analysis of 13:17 and 14:1 reveals the contrasting identity between the conquerors and the earthly beast (cf. Ford, 1975:225).<sup>173</sup> Those who have the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name, understood as the characteristics of slaves, soldiers, indicate to where they belong. It means that they who have the mark of the beast are devotees and true followers of the beast because having the mark indicates “divine ownership” (Aune, 1998a:768).

Just as the followers of the earthly beast have the mark on their forehead or right hand, the 144,000 who are the followers of the Lamb have received the mark of the name of the Lamb and of his father. The name of the Lamb and of his father, written on the foreheads of the 144,000, is in contrast with the name of the beast of earth. Whether they have the mark of the Lamb and of his father or of the earthly beast or not, it identifies where they belong. As Beale (1999:735) pointed out, “the divine name and the seal are marks of genuine membership in the community of the redeemed.” It means that they are none other than the conquerors who have the name of the Lamb in terms of the heavenly perspective.

The conquering or victory of the conquerors and judgment over all three evil ones begins with the statement of 16:17 about γέγονεν. In chapters 17-18, the destruction of great

<sup>173</sup> The argument whether the beast of the earth is a true prophetic witness of chapter 11 or of the Holy Spirit is not easy to determine. If the dragon is the counterpart to God and the beast of the sea the counterpart to Christ the Lamb, the beast of the earth is the counterpart to the Holy Spirit. As Boring (1989:156) argued, John explicitly reveals this second beast that rose out of the earth as the false prophet. It is the Satanic counterpart and a parody of the Holy Spirit at work in the churches, thought of especially as the Spirit that inspires prophecy (cf. Coetzee, 1993:317-318; contra Resseguie, 1998:127-129).

Babylon as an apparently powerful and rich city or the woman who was destroyed by the beast and her own evil occurs as the result of her own evil disposition. That is, great Babylon is destroyed by evil because evil has a self-destructive character in itself. That is why great Babylon can never conquer and rule the people of God as the conquerors (cf. Bauckham, 1993b:35-39). In chapter 19, the conquering and victory in heaven are proclaimed with the hymn (see Shea, 1984:249-257) against the judgment over great Babylon. In 19:19-20:15, the final judgment scene against Satan, beasts, and the false prophets is introduced. Here, one encounters the theme of victory or conquering of all faithful Christians, implying the members of the church, believers, and the martyrs, as well as the judgment of evil powers. According to the expression of Shea (1985:51), it can be described as “God’s throne (*victory and conquering*)<sup>174</sup>, and the judgment given from it.” All glorification of evil will be gone forever (e.g. 20:11-15) and the result of the destruction of all evil ones will be a new heaven and new earth (e.g. 21:1-7).

#### **V.4. Victory and Doxology of the Conquerors**

It is widely accepted that Revelation 12-13 is the central position in the book (cf. Mounce, 1977:234-235; Beasley-Murray, 1992:191) because this section makes up the structural framework as a whole. Kistemaker (2001:351-353) suggests that there is no close connection between the content of chapter 11 and that of chapter 12. But this section (chaps. 12-13) is closely tied up with the previous section (e.g. 10:1-11:14) and the following section (15:1-16:21) in terms of micro-narrative (Aune, 1998a:635) to emphasize continuity (cf. Smith, 1994:284-293). The use of the conjunction *καί* demonstrates that the two sections (11:15-19 and 12-14) are closely related (contra Kistemaker, 2001:351-352). That is, it indicates that the victory and the kingship of the Lord or Christ have thematically been reinterpreted in terms of a historical and cosmological perspective (Beale, 1999:619, 622-624). Christ has already made us to be a kingship and priests of God through the blood of the Lamb and the word of the saints’ testimony (Bandstra, 1992:12).

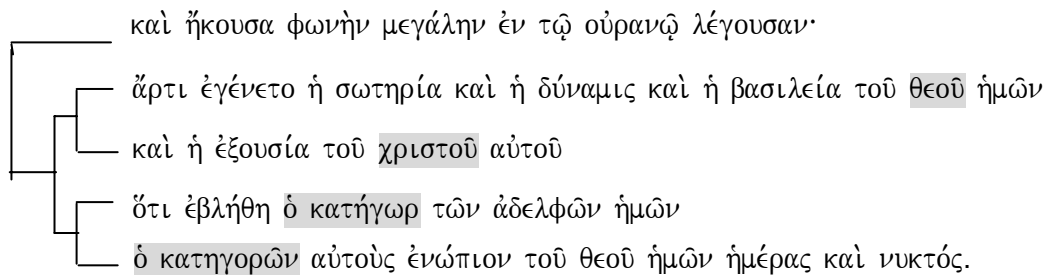
The crucial issue in Revelation is on the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven (Du

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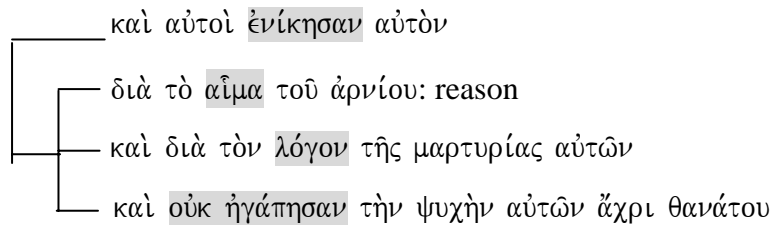
<sup>174</sup> Italics in the bracket are mine.

Rand, 1993b:318-319; cf. 4:11; 5:13). The establishment of the kingdom of God is the task of Christ, involving both victory and judgment. Charles (1975:1.294) argues that the hymn celebrates the divine victory of the world as if it were already achieved. The hymn represents a proleptic reflection as flash-forward (cf. 19:17-21; 20:10). Therefore, the hymn in 12:10-12 represents the establishment of the kingdom and sovereignty of God on the earth as it is in heaven. The hymn in 12:10-12 can be analyzed as follows:

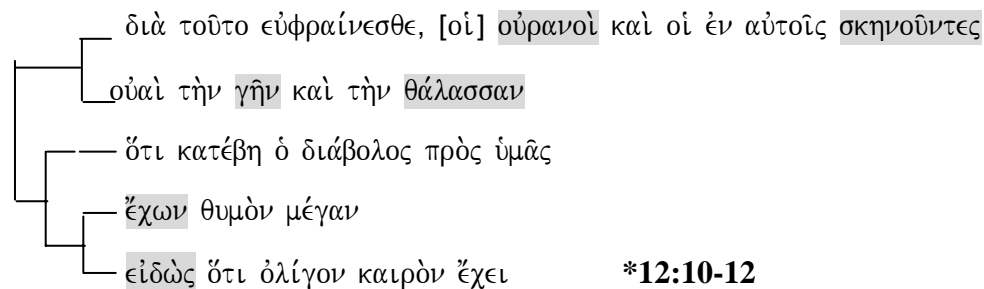
#### Phase 1 (v. 10): Kingship/Sovereignty



#### Phase 2 (v.11): Victory



#### Phase 3 (v. 12): Result (Effect)



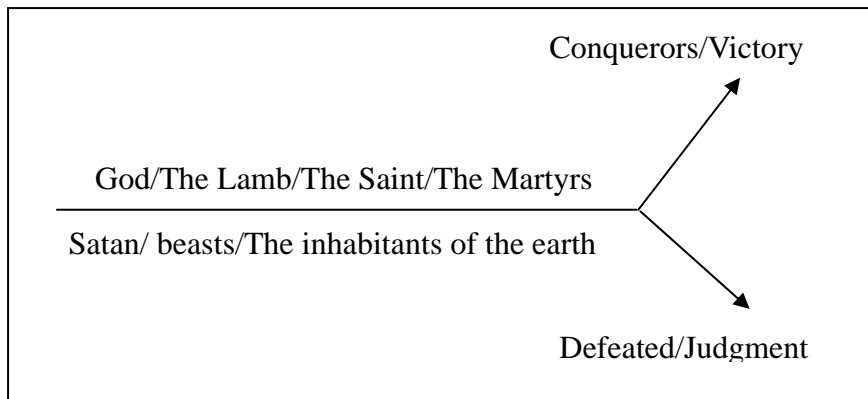
These phases are constructed with various patterns, indicating parallel, contrast, and causality. It consists of three phases. In phase 1, the salvation, power, and kingdom of God and Christ's authority contrast with the accuser Satan, who accuses our brothers before our God day and night. It has already occurred in hurling down the accuser, Satan, to the earth, indicated by the use of the aorist tense ἐβλήθη. God and Christ are already conquerors who have achieved the decisive victory against the accuser, Satan, on earth as it is in heaven.

In phase 2, the reason for the conquest (ἐνίκησαν) is suggested with three items- αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου, λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν, and οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν. Here, the objects of the conquest are changed into the people of God. In order to conquer the accuser, Satan (αὐτὸν), their lives must be dependent on the blood of the Lamb who died on the cross and on the word of their testimony, even to the death. Just as God and Christ are the subjects of the conquest through the death of the Lamb, the same things can be applied to the Christians (Aune, 1998a:702). If Christians who live their lives in difficult situations depend on the blood of the Lamb and on the words of their testimony even unto death, they can be called the conquerors because of the already determined event of Christ on the cross (Homcy, 1995:193).

In phase 3, the audiences are exhorted to rejoice (εὐφραίνεσθε) because the devil has been cast down to earth and he is defeated. The result of rejoicing is a typical element of a victory song (Collins, 1976:138). The victory and the defeat are expressed with two points of view: heavens (οὐρανοὶ) and those who dwell in them (σκηνοῦντες) and the earth (γῆν) and the sea (θάλασσαν). As the sphere of ultimate reality, the heaven contrasts with the earth and the sea as the place of evil. The casting (κατέβη) of Satan out of heaven can be connected with the kingdom of God in 12:10 (ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) as a contrast image. That is, the heavenly victory of God and Christ is a guarantee of victory of God's people as the conquerors in the given situation.

The song of victory in 12:10-12 is based on Christ the Lamb's event as the conqueror on the cross and as the defeated in the light of the historical and cosmological aspect. It reflects the dualism in Revelation between God/Satan, the Lamb/the sea beast, heaven/earth, salvation/judgment, and the kingdom of God/the kingdom of Satan. The

hymn in 12:10-12 is connected with the hymn in 11:15b, 17-18, expressing the thematic assimilation. Ford (1998:222) is of the opinion that the hymn in Rev. 12 elaborates the themes of 11:15b, that Christ will reign, and of 11:17-18, the presence of the Christ which brings judgment with it. Thus, the theme of victory or judgment and conqueror or defeated must be one of the prominent themes in 12:10-12. It can be summarized as follows:



## V.5. Conclusion

Until now, I have described the conqueror motif in terms of the heavenly and earthly perspectives, focusing on chapters 12-13. When one understands the conqueror motif, an interesting thing is that it is dramatically expressed. To reveal the theme of conquering or victory and defeat or judgment, various symbolic images and transformations are suggested.

In the light of judgment, the theophany formula is provided in verses such as 4:5, 8:5, 11:19, and 16:18. In conjunction with the Egyptian plagues (e.g. Ex. 9:18, 24; 10:6), Bauckham (1993a:199-209) argues that the theophany formula is introduced to provide the increasing severity of each series of judgment, reflecting eschatological salvation and judgment events. That is why the temple as the place of divine salvation and judgment is introduced wherever the theophany formula appears. The use of temple and throne reveals a dual purpose in terms of the heavenly and earthly perspective: victory and judgment (Mounce, 1977:232-233). As the place of God's presence, glory, and victory, the temple is seen and nothing unholy is allowed to replace it as the place of judgment. Stevenson (2001:264) correctly argues that "no matter what happens on earth nor how fierce the

opposing forces become, God's covenant is secure just as the ark is secure in the heavenly temple."

In terms of the theophany formula and the temple, John provides two perspectives, namely the heavenly and earthly perspectives. God's salvation and judgment are initiated upon the conquerors and the dragon, the beast of the sea, and the beast of the earth and proclaim the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. That is, the heavenly reality reinterprets the earthly reality that is dominated by the dragon, the beast of the sea, and the beast of the earth. The purpose of the heavenly perspective is to reinterpret how Christians should understand the earthly world they experience in pagan circumstances as the people of God (Barr, 1998:4, 64-65, 104-105). That is why in chapters 12-13, the eschatological battle between Michael and Satan is introduced from a heavenly perspective. In the light of the earthly point of view, the dragon and two beasts look like conquerors who accomplish various wonderful works such as ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη (13:3), σημεῖα μεγάλα (13:13). But in the light of the heavenly point of view, they are the defeated. According to Caird (1966:153-154), the earthly reality can't be the same as the heavenly reality. The real victory can be won by the blood of the Lamb unlike that of the dragon and two beasts (Boring, 1992:715).

The dragon and two beasts have the socio-political settings based on the exigency and urgency over the people of God. The story of the dragon and two beasts provides the victory of God and the conquerors and the defeat of the evil ones in the light of the cosmic dimension. The heavenly war between Michael and the dragon (12:7-9) and the doxology over the Lamb and the people of God show who the conquerors are (cf. Hendrickson, 2000:134-151). Even though the dragon, Satan, tried to kill the people of God, he is defeated from a heavenly perspective. That is why two images like the heavenly war between Michael and the dragon (12:7-9) and the doxology of the victory of the Lamb and of his people (12:10-12) are introduced to give victory and encouragement in the light of the heavenly point of view (Kistemaker, 2001:53-54).

The function of two beasts, as the servant of the dragon, is to make war and to conquer the people of God on this earth. It reveals that as the dragon, two beasts opposed to the people



of God are the object of God's judgment, even though they look like conquerors in the light of the earthly point of view. The close relationship between the dragon and the two beasts can be identified with the use of these words as follows: ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην (13:2), ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ (13:4), ἔδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας καὶ ἔδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία (13:5), ἔδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς (13:7), ἔδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου (13:14), ἔδόθη αὐτῷ (13:15). The transfer of authority from the dragon ⇒ the beast of the sea ⇒ to the beast of the earth portrays their evil identification that fights with the people of God. The repeated use of the passive voice reveals the functional unity as "the satanic trinity" (Bauckham, 1993b:89), fighting against God and his people.

Although they tried to kill the people of God, their judgment is introduced in 16:17 through the word γέγονεν. In chapters 17-18, the judgment of great Babylon occurs as the result of her evil disposition. In 19:19-20:15, the destruction of two beasts and of the dragon occurs. These images are presented as the ultimate judgment images through which the final judgment of the evil ones as defeated is executed (cf. White, 1989:330-336).

Then, who are the conquerors in this section? A good insight into the identity of the conquerors is provided in 11:18 and 14:1. In 11:18, those who would receive the heavenly reward are introduced as those who are the servants, the prophets, the saints, God fearers, and the small and great. Why are they called conquerors? The reasons are in the fact that they endure a time of desperate suffering and death and conquer the circumstances that the first Christians faced (Mounce, 1977:31-36).

In conjunction with 11:18, the doxology of 12:10-12 praises the real victory of God and his people by the blood of the Lamb (διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἀρνίου) and the word of the believer's testimony (διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν) in terms of the heavenly perspective. One can recognize that to keep and to hold the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, and to trust the blood of the Lamb are the way of victory and conquest of all the faithful saints as the conquerors in pagan circumstances.