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**The victory of the slaughtered lamb: A theology of winning (and losing) for Christian athletes****Brian K. Gamel***Baylor University, USA*

Christians have often struggled to articulate a clear notion of victory that is at once different from the world's as well as still victory—and yet, because the pursuit of winning is not necessarily contrary to Christian values and ideals, how do Christians unite their convictions and the goal of winning? Is a Christian vision of winning the same as the world's only nicer, kinder, gentler? Or does winning for Christians mean losing but then calling it winning by some kind of mental exercise? Should Christians involved in sports, or competition more broadly, seek victory, and if so how? This paper explores these questions through an analysis of the language of *víkḗ* ("victory," "conquering") in Revelation 5. The Lion who conquers is, for John the seer, the Lamb who is and remains slaughtered.

This strongly suggests that for John being slain is the victory; being faithful unto death itself is conquering. In order to communicate that this activity is synonymous with victory John employs the language of conventional triumph elsewhere throughout his book. Although for many readers of John's book there is a temptation to divorce the means of winning from its end, John wants to fuse them together. The final victory John describes is full of fanciful, mythical language; the act of being victorious is clear-cut and sober: be a faithful witness unto death, just as Jesus was. The way one conquers is the substance of that conquering. Therefore, the means of victory is synonymous with its end.

**Biography**

Dr. Brian Gamel is a scholar of New Testament Studies and Theology at Baylor University, USA. His research interests include the death of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, mythology and theology in the New Testament, and New Testament and Sports. He is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at Baylor University's Faith & Sports Institute where he is working on a book analyzing athletic imagery in the New Testament. He holds a B.A. in Microbiology from the University of Missouri, an M.Div. from Duke University, and a Ph.D. in New Testament and Theology from Baylor University.