

The Victory of the Cross – John 12:31-32

The Gospel Age of Hope - #4

Introduction – We have seen that the scriptures clearly identify Jesus as the Savior of the world. Of course, His victory came through His death on the cross. Unfortunately, many Christians believe that spiritual warfare today is conducted as though Christ never died, or as though His death is irrelevant, or worse, that Christ lost the world to unbelief in His death. Many Christians teach that today, the devil is the lord of this world or this age. They treat Satan as though he were omniscient, omnipotent, and in charge of this world. But this is not what the Bible teaches.

Cast Out – Now! (John 12:31-32) – Twice, Jesus uses the word, “now” and not “then.” Speaking prophetically at the advent of His crucifixion, Jesus declares a judgment “now” upon this world. We saw another time that Jesus was not sent to condemn the world (John 3:17), but Jesus makes clear what He means in this context in the parallel statement, “...*now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*” Second, Jesus says that through His crucifixion, He will draw (or “haul”) all peoples to Himself. Christ prophesies that His crucifixion will cast out the present ruler of the world and will bring all peoples of that world to Him.

More on the Old World – In the Old Testament, gods of various nations are not dismissed as old myths, fairy tales and such. When a pagan looked to a god, the Christian worldview teaches us to see a fallen angel, a devil, in opposition to God. This is why Paul would teach that sacrificing to idols is worshipping demons (1 Cor 10:20). Two clear examples: angelic beings stand behind the nations of Persia (Dan 10:13) or Tyre (Ezek 28:11-16). In Psalm 86:8 God is contrasted with these beings; He is completely in another category. God was exhaustively sovereign over them, but in some sense, they *were* mediatorial princes. Now, in the gospel age, God has established just one Prince, a Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Age to Come (Heb 2:5-9) – The New Testament period, a transition is occurring (maybe analogous to our present political transition). The author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 8 and notes that Jesus has fulfilled this prophesy of mankind in general. This is not about the Son of God not ruling at some point; Christ has always been the eternal Word of God and sovereign. It is about a new world, a new Mediatorial Ruler over the nations. As our Mediator, He has freed us to rule with Him. “*For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham*” (v16). Elsewhere, Paul instructs the Corinthians that we will judge angels.

The Triumph That Occurred – The New Testament resounds with the truth that Satan was decisively defeated and restrained at Christ’s first advent (Heb 2:14, John 12:31, Luke 10:18, 1 John 3:8). But the church has been taught to act as though the devil has control over the earth today and most of the time she acts like a whipped puppy because we do not understand or believe what God has done for us in the cross.

The Rulers are Coming to Nothing (1 Cor 2:6-7) – 2000 years ago, Paul stated that the rulers of this age are coming to nothing. They did not know the cross would topple them and glorify the saints.

The Ruler is Judged (John 16:11) – The Holy Spirit convicts us (if we are listening) of judgment (*but I thought Jesus came not to condemn the world?? – right*) “...*of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*”

Public Humiliation (Col 2:15) – Paul exalts in the paradox of the cross. Jesus was not humiliated; Satan and his minions were. A Roman “triumph” included the public humiliation of the defeated after the battle was over. And Jesus said, “*It is finished*” on the cross.

Destroyed the Power of the Devil (Heb 2:14) – This is so clear. We are not longer subject to bondage; we have been liberated. We have freedom from the power of the one who had the power of death. Whether we are living like it is entirely another point.

Binding the Strong Man (Matt 12:29) – Recall that Satan had offered Jesus the nations if He would only bow down and worship. Satan had real mediatorial authority. But Jesus refused because He planned to knock him down and take the kingdoms of men from the devil.

So Clear, We Have to Be Careful (1 Pet 5:8-9) – The scriptures are so clear of Satan’s downfall that we must be careful. Having been cast from his throne to the earth, Satan now roams about like a roaring lion. The vigilance, our protection, is our faith in standing against the “accuser.”

Who Is the God of This World “Now?” (Rev 1:4-6, 11:15) – We cannot declare the gospel, the power of the cross, without declaring what He did. If you preach the cross, then preach the power and triumph and result of the cross; the victory of the cross.