

WILL CHRIST TOTALLY DESPOIL SATAN'S KINGDOM?

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“If I cast out devils by the spirit of God (“with the finger of God”, says Luke), “then the kingdom of God is come unto you.” Else how can One enter into a strong man’s house (i.e., Satan’s kingdom) and **spoil** his goods, except He first bind the strong man? And then He will **spoil** his house” (Matt. 12:28–29).

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us...(He) took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having **spoiled** principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself” (or, “in the cross”, Greek). (Col. 2:14–15).

“He shall divide the **spoil** with the strong, because He has poured out His soul unto death” (Isa. 53:12).

“When He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive...” (Psa. 68:18).

In the first three passages, the word “spoil” is used in its pure English meaning, the people and goods of a conquered city or kingdom taken captive by the victor. Thus did a Roman commander, fresh from victory at the frontier, parade his barbarian captives in chains along the streets of Rome, as his rightful spoil of war. Thus did Nebuchadnezzar display the Hebrew captives and golden vessels taken from Jerusalem, as spoil, on his victorious return to Babylon. And thus did the Soviet Russia almost totally despoil and strip East Germany in 1945!

But our texts speak of a far greater and more glorious despoiling now in process. For they clearly teach that one great consequence of the victory at Calvary and the Open Tomb, is that Christ will despoil Satan’s power and kingdom, bringing it to ruin and making Satan’s captives His own.

Now the question before us is whether this ruination of Satan, and spoiling of his captives, is to be total or just partial. Is there to be a final Messianic Satanic Treaty in which Christ agrees to divide things 50-50 with Satan and leave him a domain of his own? Is there even an “unconditional Surrender” (as after the last World War) in which our Lord magnanimously agrees to leave Satan some territory and people of his own? Or is that a war to the finish, leaving Satan’s realm and people **totally** destroyed, non-existent, never to rise again?

To those who see the Biblical catastrophes of Flood, Sodom and Jericho as the great ante-types of Christ’s victory over Satan, the answer is perfectly clear. There were no terms of negotiation or surrender between God and His enemies in these three events. In each case God took all the captives for His own: Noah and his family at the Flood, Lot and his daughters at Sodom, Rahab and her family at Jericho. And in each case there was

nothing left of the enemy or his city. All was totally destroyed, never to be seen again. (This same powerful analogy may be seen in Israel's deliverance from Pharaoh at the Red Sea. Moses offered no "treaty" allowing Pharaoh to keep a few Israelites so the rest could escape. Nor did God promise Pharaoh he could swim safely back to the Egyptian shore with his army as soon as he stopped the chase! All the enemy were **destroyed**, including the king. All the captive Israelites whom God claimed for His own, were delivered.)

To those who saw the consummation of human history and Judgment Day through Puritan eyes (Cf. John Bunyan's "Ruin of Anti-Christ" pages 34–37) there was no great problem, even though they clung (many of them) to the Papal and pagan view that Satan and his captives would continue alive forever in some corner of the universe, though undoubtedly confined and in some kind of torment. For, in the Puritan view of the 18th century, the future was entirely rose-colored; it was to be the "latter-day glory" of the gospel. All heathen darkness was to vanish; the Moslem error was to be extirpated; and the citadels of Romanism were to become centers of pure Bible teaching. Kings and nobles, rich and poor, in due time would be found in faithful attendance upon the pure preaching of the Word in every cathedral from the lips of priests and bishops who had formerly erred in the worship of the Mass, of saints, or images and of the Virgin Mary.

This was the Puritan View, and some even confidently predicted an almost totally Christian world, from which war had vanished by the middle of this present century! (the 1900's — ref, "history of Nations" Browns Bible, 1811 et. al.). Likewise the Puritans had a very imperfect view of world history and population. To them, the world before the Flood was only a few thousand rejection Noah, and the world of heathen since the Flood was similar in number to the Europe they knew about, and would soon be out-numbered by a flood-tide of millions of converts from every tongue and nation, so the Judgment Day would see a division with the vast majority found in the Lamb's Book of Life, and only the hardened wicked along with Satan (few by comparison) consigned to the lake of fire.

Thus they had no difficulty in reconciling the Biblical ante-types cited above, with the ultimate fact. Christ would despoil Satan of the vast majority of his captives, and Satan would be left with a few million wicked to writhe in the lake of fire (which they wrongly called "hell") forever. Even though this view did not fit the O. T. types exactly, it was acceptable to minds steeped for centuries in the view that Christendom was to be the dominant part of humanity, that considered the heathen of China and India of little account to God, and thought that the Negro and American Indian were probably even sub-human species!

But what are the facts that evangelical Christianity must face today. Far from a world almost totally obedient to the gospel, living in its blessings of peace and prosperity and good will, we see a world filled with discord, strife and blood-shed, 99% still in the bondage of Satan and dominated by three equally gospel-hating, Bible-scoffing camps; atheistic humanism in the "West," Marxism in the totalitarian world, and Islam.

Futhermore, with a far better knowledge of world history and demography, we now know that the world swept away by the Flood probably exceeded two Billion in population (out of whom, at the end, God only saved eight) and that by the end of this century the total number of humans ever born may well approach 200 billion, of which only a fraction of 1% at best ever came to salvation through repentance and faith in the gospel, Old Testament and New (Acts 10:35).

If then the traditional view (i.e., Roman Catholic and most “Reformed” creeds) of the eternal state is correct, and Satan with all his captives remain alive, conscious and in rational rebellion forever, how can Calvary be called a victory? How can Christ be the total despoiler of Satan’s kingdom in accordance with our texts and with the O. T. figures cited, if Satan keeps 999/1000 of his slaves, and keeps them alive?

No matter how vividly Dante and Milton paint the horrors of “hell” (neither one based on Scripture, by the way), its occupants are still in Satan’s camp, and still his captives in the darkness of their minds, no matter how much torment they may suffer.

Now it is quite true that there are two passages (Rev. 14:11, Rev. 20:10), though none at all in the O. T., which **appear** to teach that God will perpetually torture Satan and his captives in the eternal state. Be it noted that there are many more passages that **appear** to teach universalism, e.g. (I Tim. 2:4, John 3:17 etc.). But it is equally true that there are at least 100 passages in the O. T., and almost as many in the N. T. that unequivocally teach that total final destruction of both Satan and all his captive men and angels.

We leave it as an exercise for the student, rarely done by preachers and almost never in any Bible college, to take a concordance and ponder the enormous number of such passages, beginning say at II Thessalonians 1:9 and 2:8, in which the unequivocal Greek words most often used are *apollumi*, *airo*, *olethros*, etc; and the equally unequivocal Hebrew words are *abad*, *kalah*, *shamad*, *akal*, etc.

Nor can total destruction, in any of the Hebrew or Greek words used in Scripture, be reconciled with continuous existence as an organized, conscious rational entity. Whether we consider Sodom, Tyre, Babylon or Jericho, all these entities were “brought to nothing”, never brought to a lesser state of consciousness, organization or captivity!

Nor is there any case in all Scripture where “fire” connotes anything but destruction. Let the reader consider the use of fire for the Paschal lamb, for Sodom, for Korah, by God at Mt. Carmel, and by Nebuchadnezzar on the three young men. In every case the purpose is destruction, never torture.

Furthermore, there is no case in all Scripture where torture is used either by God, or at His command, as a judicial act of punishment. Only once does the word occur in the Greek (*tumpanizo*) in Heb. 11:35, and there significantly to describe one of the despicable ways in which Satan has tried to afflict God’s people down through the ages. In fact, it is part of the natural instinct God has placed in man that torture is always repulsive and the torturer is always despised. Only among the most depraved elements of mankind do we find it otherwise.

Those who would defend the traditional, or Papal and pagan, view of the eternal state of the wicked and of Satan, thus have the burden of reconciling it with at least four facts:

- (1) It is refuted by Scripture 60 to 1.
- (2) Divinely punitive fire is always a destroyer, never a means of torture.
- (3) It is a low view of God’s majesty and ultimate holiness in that it has Him endowing one of His own attributes, immortality, upon those totally in rebellion, un-reconciled to Him, and outside of Christ (Cf. Eph. 1:10).
- (4) It largely vitiates the precious doctrine of Christ despoiling Satan’s kingdom.

Scripture presents Christ’s triumph as complete — total life for those He redeems from sin and death; total destruction for all unredeemed — leaving not one fiber nor even

on thought left in opposition and rebellion to His Who is “All in all” (Cf. II Cor. 10:5). Every tongue that survives Judgment Day will confess Him Lord forever, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10–11), from a free and grateful heart. Any confession less than that would be an insult to His matchless Throne!

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