

The Inauguration of the Kingdom

The Biblical Hope: Part III

Acts 14:14-18; 17:22-31

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I. Lord and Christ (cf. Acts 2:30-36)

II. Who is the Ruler of this World? (cf. Jn 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2)

Some Christians would insist that Jesus isn't the Ruler of this world, Satan is. Satan is in charge and what Jesus is doing is rescuing people from the war zone. History will progress from bad to worse and our only hope is to be raptured from the disaster. Is this correct?

A. Times of Innocence – Creation (cf. Gen 1:26-30; 2:15-17)

As Sovereign Ruler, God created Adam and commissioned him to rule the earth in God's Name. God created _____ king and ruler over all the earth.

B. Times of Ignorance – Fall (cf. Dt 32:16-17; Dan 10:13, 20)

When man rebelled against God and followed the devil's temptation, God judged him by handing him over to the devil and to his demons – demons which our pagan ancestors worshiped as _____. Moses describes the apostasy of Israel:

[Israel] provoked God to jealousy with foreign gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons, not to God, To gods they did not know, To new gods, new arrivals That your fathers did not fear. (Dt 32:16-17)

In the Judaic age, God left the nations largely in ignorance of Himself, subject to these demonic powers. Paul expresses this to the inhabitants of Lystra: *“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things [idols, false gods, demons] to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:15-16).*

C. Times of Repentance – Redemption (Jn 12:31f; Act 14:14-17; 26:17f)

But those *times of ignorance* have now come to an end! _____ has cast down Satan as Ruler of the world and has assumed that mantle as His own. As Ruler, Jesus is now summoning the nations to worship the Father in His Name.

Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. (Jn 12:31-32)

The temporary reign of Satan over the earth has been broken as has his ability to keep the world in darkness and ignorance. So Jesus announced to Paul: *“...I now send you [to the Gentiles], to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:17-18).*

And so this is why Paul journeyed throughout the Mediterranean world, including the city of Athens, and proclaimed, *“Truly, these times of _____ God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead”* (Acts 17:30-31).

1. Binding the Strong Man (Mt 12:25-29)

²⁵ ... *“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶ If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?... ²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.*

2. Falling like lightning (Lk 10:18-20; Hb 2:14; 1Jn3:8)

¹⁸And [Jesus] said to them, *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”* (Lk 10:18-20)

3. Disarming the Principalities and Powers (Col 2:15)

¹⁵ *Having disarmed principalities and powers, [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [the cross].* (Col 2:15)

III. Application

A. The Rod of Disaster (Ps 2:7-9 cf. Lk 13:1-5; Eph 1:19-23)

⁷*“I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ⁸Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. ⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”* (Ps 2:7-9)

B. Freedom from fear (Heb 2:14-15)

¹⁴*Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, [Jesus] Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* (Heb 2:14-15)

C. Freedom to love (1 Jn 4:17-19)

¹⁷*Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹We love Him because He first loved us.* (1 Jn 4:17-19)

IV. Conclusion