



A new creation focus through Colossians ...

## The Great Public Display

In connection with Jesus' resurrection and His ascension to glory, Satan suffered a crushing blow and a tremendous defeat. "Through death," a process culminating in Christ's accession to the right hand of power, He rendered "powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). The awesome spiritual battle between the forces of Michael the archangel and the hosts of the devil took place in heaven, resulting in the Satan's loss of access to the courts of glory and of his ability to have dominion over the people of God. What an awesome, unfathomable victory this was,

and how important it is for the saints to begin to comprehend the Almighty's great power toward us who believe, and of His love toward those who potentially would obey the gospel.

- **Disarmament** — "Angels," said the apostle Peter, "are greater in might and power" than the sons of men, those who of the dust of the earth (2 Peter 2:11). Those whose eyes see the physical realm can only begin to imagine the strength and grandeur of these angelic beings in comparison to mere men. But "through the cross" (not "by the cross") on into Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God "disarmed the rulers and authorities" (Colossians 2:15). Speaking of Satan, or Beelzebub, calling him "a strong man," Jesus noted that "when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied, and distributes his plunder" (Luke 11:21,22). Jesus, then, during the years of His earthly sojourn, anticipated the time when He would disarm the prince of darkness and his minions, and triumphantly take those would otherwise have been captive into the fellowship of glory. At the time Paul wrote to the brethren in Colossae, this disarming have already been accomplished; Jesus had risen from the dead, ascended to glory, and the forces of darkness had already been banished forever from the courts of heaven.

- **Public triumph** — No one from the physical realm saw the event Jesus thusly described prophetically, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (Luke 10:18). Similarly, the Galatian Christians did not physically see Jesus crucified. Yet the apostle Paul would say, "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?" (Galatians 3:1).

The point was that the preaching of the gospel presented such a clear picture to the spiritual "eyes" of the Galatian brethren that the crucifixion was regarded as a public spectacle even though far from Jerusalem. A step further into this realm is what Paul described to the brethren in Rome, speaking of the redemption which was accomplished in Christ, "whom," stated the apostle, "God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith" (Romans 3:25). The act of propitiation occurred when Jesus sprinkled His own blood to cleanse heaven and open the opportunity for others to be freed from guilty consciences through that blood. But no one saw that sprinkling with a physical eye; it was revealed to the apostles through the Holy Spirit, and the preaching of that made it a *public* event. Similarly, "when He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." The *public* display was the revelation given through the apostles of Jesus' victory over the forces of darkness, and their being cast out of heaven.

The triumph of Jesus over Satan and his angels was one of total victory. A physical representation of the complete conquest of Christ is given in the description of the defeat of the last king of Judah at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon: "And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon" (2 Kings 25:7). This is a portrait of absolute abjection. The saint of God has had presented to him the true picture of Satan's defeat through the resurrection and ascension of Christ; hence the terminology of *public display* is used.

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