

WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: FACTOR THREE

We Reap What Christ Sowed – The Cross/Chapter Two: The Devil's Position

In Matthew 12, Jesus is accused by the Pharisees for casting out demons by the power of Satan himself. Christ responds to such slander in Matthew 12:28-29 by saying this –

“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.”

In its context, this is an unmistakable reference to our Savior entering the devil's domain in order to rescue a fallen humanity from the oppressive influence of Satan and his demon host. There are three key passages from the New Testament which establish this connection between Christ's death on the cross and its impact upon the devil's position of power and authority over the human race: John 12:31-32; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15. These three texts describe how Jesus' sacrifice served the purpose of *dethroning, disarming, and destroying* the current rulers of this evil world system, so as to deliver us from their dark domain.

In John 12:31, Jesus speaks of the time having arrived for judgment upon the world, a judgment involving the ruler of this world being cast out. Yet the context connects that judgment with Christ's death (vv. 27, 32-33). Even though our Savior doesn't say how His death could cause the devil's defeat, leading to his dethronement; He makes it clear that it would. The crucifixion would signal the end of the devil's earthly dominion; not by offering a ransom to the devil, but by paying the penalty of sin.

That issue is clarified for us in Colossians 2:14-15. There, Christ's death disarms Satan and his demon host, as payment for the penalty of sin, consisting of a certificate of debt, which condemns every one of us under the righteous judgment of God. Earning our freedom from condemnation in this manner, Jesus made it possible for a transference to take place from one spiritual realm to another. The moment a conversion to Christ occurs, the power and influence which the devil possesses over each of us is broken. We are no longer members of his kingdom, but citizens in the kingdom of God, as described by Paul in Colossians 1:13-14 –

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Hebrews 2:14-15 gives us a final insight into how the sacrifice of our Savior has defeated the devil. Satan's most effective instrument in establishing his authority and dominion over human beings is that of death. Why? The justice of God, violated by sin, demands the penalty of death. As long as the devil could keep people in bondage to sin, under God's judgment, resulting in both suffering and death, he could successfully exercise his cruel rule and reign over everyone. Yet both were destroyed by the death of Christ on the cross. The devil no longer has the power to ensure that individuals will experience the penalty of sin which is death, since Jesus paid that penalty for each of us when He died on our behalf. When He rose from the dead, He conquered death, creating a God-given opportunity for each of us to escape the fear of condemnation and death, while entering into the freedom of forgiveness and life.