

Dominion Restoration, Part 2 (1 Corinthians 15:42–58)

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Introduction

Last week we gave a general description of the war that is being waged in the world, largely unnoticed by most of earth's population. We noted that Scripture describes the conflict as between Satan and God in terms of dominion. Because of Adam's sin, dominion was usurped by Satan. God's present work is to reclaim that dominion (Acts 26:18).

We argued that in this present age dominion restoration involves the gospel of Christ lived out by the people of God through the church in obedience to Christ's mandate in Matthew 28:18–20. The church, when assembled, is a temple of the Lord where the people of God worship the Lord in Spirit and truth. In obedience to Christ, the churches are to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Last week, we began the message by asking three questions about (1) current events and their place in the work of dominion restoration, (2) the church and its place in this work, and (3) the individual believer's role in this work. This message answers those questions in reverse order, but first, we need to see what the New Testament teaches about how this war ends. As we noted last week, Jesus is taking dominion back as declared in Revelation 5: 9, 10.

I. Ultimate Victory

1. The ultimate victory of God over the devil involves the recovering of the creation mandate through *resurrection* (1 Corinthians 15:54–57; citing Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14).

This has always been the hope of the fallen but redeemed children of Adam (Job 19:25–27; Psalm 17:15).

- a. As the federal head of humanity, Adam disobeyed and brought the death penalty upon all his posterity (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22; Romans 5:12, 17).

- b. Death is a great enemy, and through death, Jesus conquered death.

- 1) The process of dominion reclamation involves two stages:

- a) The *regeneration* of the dead human spirit—the new birth, the resurrection of the sinner to new life in Jesus Christ. This is called the first resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:17, 18; Revelation 20:4–6).

- b) The resurrection of the body of the regenerate believer at the end of the age (1 Corinthians 15:22–25)

- 2) The result of the process of reclamation is full deliverance from the power of death (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

2. Since the final victory does not occur until Christ's return, the church is God's place for His people to find sanctuary in the midst of Satan's crumbling domain.

II. The Church's Place

Revelation 12 provides a composite view of the whole spiritual war between the dragon (Satan) and the woman (the covenant community represented in every age). The first half views the war from the earthly perspective and the last half from a heavenly perspective.

1. Satan's hatred for the people of God illustrated (vv. 1–6).

- a. The identity of the woman: the faithful covenant community throughout history (Genesis 3:15).

- b. The identity of the enemy: a great red dragon, the old serpent called the devil and Satan (v. 8). That he is the great enemy of God and His kingdom is evident in his casting one third of the stars to earth, referring to the saints of God (Daniel 8:10).
- c. The male child delivered: clearly a reference to Jesus Christ. He is “*one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron [Psalm 2:9], but her child was caught up to God and to his throne.*” This is a reference to His resurrection and ascension.
- d. The protection of the woman: the wilderness, a reflection on Israel’s time in the wilderness after the Exodus in which God protected from every enemy and provided for every need (Psalm 91).
- e. What we take from this is the assurance that the church cannot fail and will succeed in its mission (Matthew 16:18). God will protect her as she faithfully represents her Lord in the wilderness of this world. This is not to say that saints will not suffer persecution, for they will. However, their trials will be amply rewarded in glory (Matthew 5:10, 11).

2. Satan’s defeat is fully assured (vv. 7–17).

Some wonder whether Satan thinks that he can finally win over God. Revelation 12 answers this inquiry with firm assurance. He was defeated and cast down for good. All that is left for him is to do as much damage as possible until Christ comes.

- a. The heavenly conflict affirmed: Michael is “*the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people*” (Daniel 12:1, NASB; 10:13, 21). This angel and his compatriots are the heavenly representatives of God’s people. God’s agents are able to defeat Satan and his host because Christ destroyed death, the power that he held over the saints (Hebrews 2:14, 15).
- b. The declaration of victory (Revelation 12:10, 11)
- c. The warning to earth dwellers (Revelation 12:10, 11; 1 Peter 5:8)

III. The Believer’s Duty

What is the responsibility of individual believers in this war? The New Testament is chock full of warnings and admonitions to protect and direct the child of God in his spiritual walk. One text stands out as relevant to this discussion.

- 1. Colossians, more than any other epistle, points to Christ’s reclaiming of the dominion lost in Adam’s fall (Colossians 3:4).
- 2. How do we prepare for this? Paul lists several things
 - a. Put to death what is earthly in you because the wrath of God coming (vv. 5, 6).
 - b. You must also clean up your emotional life: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk (v. 8), which includes lying (v. 9).
 - c. The old “self” and its conduct must be put off from us as an old garment and replaced with the new self. It is this admonition that is very revealing (v. 10).

What Can We Take from This?

How do you expect to reign with Christ if you do not experience dominion restoration in your own life?

The secret is in Colossian 3:10—“*being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*” What do you know about Jesus? Do you know that when He appears, you will be like Him? Just how radical will be the change? Ought we not now to constantly behold His glory (2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 51, 52; 57, 58)?