

“Understanding God’s role in history.” © by Craig Savige

The Bible has been divinely inspired. Prophecy is the demonstration in word that God knows all of history from the beginning to the end as well as all the hearts of men involved in history — nothing is hidden from Him. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read that “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God”, so Scripture must have the stamp of God upon it. The prophecies of Scripture show a major part of this wonderful stamp, revealing the great wisdom and power of God. The student of Scripture will surely be strengthened by an in depth study of Biblical prophecy.

Bible prophecy is unique. There is no other religious book on Earth that even remotely matches the exactness, accuracy and majesty of the Bible’s statements concerning history and God’s control over history. Prophecy is God’s mark on history to let mankind know that He is providential and will do His perfect will in both Heaven and Earth. “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10).

We must believe that God is in control of history and that sinful circumstances cannot undermine this fact. While it is evident that on the Earth sin and its curse are present, it is also evident that it is contained, curtailed and judged. “*And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” (1 John 5:19).

The Devil (also called Satan) rules over his kingdom — the kingdom of darkness — because of the presence of sin on the Earth. The present fallen world is his domain. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Corinthians 4:3,4). Satan is the spiritual ruler of fallen mankind — “the god of this world”. Christ stated: “If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?” (Luke 11:18a). Hence, Satan’s kingdom is organised and hierarchical.

Christ stated the reality of Satan’s kingdom but showed it to be subject to the Kingdom of God, as are all the world’s kingdoms. “Again, the devil taketh him [Christ] up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Matthew 4:8-10).

The Kingdom of God transcends the world and the devilish rulership of the world. “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” (John 14:30). The Lord Jesus Christ said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (see John 18:36), and “But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.” (Luke 11:20).

How we view history is very important. Do we see God in control? Do we understand His providential power? Do we understand His appointed times? “Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.” (Jeremiah 8:7). The judgment of the Lord is upon all sin and there is a time appointed by the Lord for that judgment to be manifested. The kingdoms of the Earth cannot continue forever and, as Daniel reveals, the appointed times are times of a succession of dominating kingdoms until finally the Kingdom of God ends their dominions forever. “And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end *shall be*.” (Daniel 8:19). God appoints the time. God declares the end. Man is not in control of history.

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Daniel 2:44).

The terms of history are set by God, not man, since the power of God is greater than anything of man. “And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Daniel 4:35).

One of the titles of God is “Lord God Almighty”. This tells us that nothing is too hard for God. God rules in history, regardless of the presence of sin, rebellious man and the devils. To understand this is to start to understand history properly, and to discern the importance of Bible prophecy as God’s mark on history, that He is in control and reigns over time. “Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” (Revelation 11:17). “Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for thee” (Jeremiah 32:17).

The following Biblical principles should guide our thinking about history:

- (1) God is the ultimate ruler of history, regardless of how it might appear to some.
- (2) The Devil has rulership (as God dictates according to sin and judgment) in the kingdoms of men — this is the kingdom of darkness.
- (3) The world kingdoms are bounded, and so have no influence outside of these boundaries.
- (4) Satan’s kingdom could not operate if sin was not present on Earth. Satan’s rulership over rebellious man is a judgment on sin!
- (5) Satan was deceived enough to think that Jesus was within the dictates of the kingdom of darkness, which operates in a fallen world system.

Satan is “god of this [fallen] world” but not the God of the universe. The Kingdom of God is not of this fallen world and so is outside the dictates of Satan’s rulership. Thus, righteous men are indeed translated from his influence, rulership and power — only ignorance and sin could keep them connected. Nevertheless, the temptation offered by Satan to Jesus was real in that Satan had something to offer; only Satan found nothing in Jesus that could link him to the kingdom of darkness.

Our thinking about history must be guided by the Word of God. Biblical prophecy helps to focus on the will of God in the Earth. It is His will that must be done. It is His will that can never be thwarted. Once this present world ends as prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:20, then only God’s Kingdom will be standing. “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15). This is the end result of all history and the pointer of all Biblical prophecy.