

The Triumph of the Cross

Rich Nathan
June 23-24, 2007
God At War
Colossians 2:13-15

My favorite subject in school was always history. I know that a lot of you might have hated your history classes in school because what you experienced was a dry, endless recitation of unrelated facts and dates that seemed to have nothing to do with life. But I've always loved reading history and studying history because for me history is a slice of life. It is a story of real human beings; how they lived; how they grappled with the challenges that faced them in their particular times.

I was a history major in college along with being a comparative religion major, and for the last 30 years I've almost always had a history book on my nightstand along with other reading that I am doing. One of the things that I've discovered in reading history is that historians and philosophers of history have very different approaches to understanding the meaning of history. Some people write history as if it is only the story of the accomplishments of great men and women. So we read about the accomplishments of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great and Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln. That's the approach that most of you who are my age were taught in elementary school and high school. History is the story of what great men and women did.

The meaning of history

Then, for many years, there was a trend of dismissing personal accomplishments altogether and history began to be the teaching of the impact of impersonal forces upon our world. So we were taught about the impact of plagues, or class warfare between those who produced and those who owned capital.

And then you have people like Professor Arnold Toynbee, who taught that history is basically cyclical. We see these great powers rise like Greece or Rome, or Spain, or England, or the United States now. But the things that made the great powers great to begin with were forgotten. Governments became proud and they overstretched themselves and overstretched their populations with foreign wars and military adventures. The country begins to face global competition from other nations that are more innovative. And then the nation begins to be eaten out on the inside by decadence and immorality that often accompanies wealth. So one of the really popular theories of history is that history is just the cycle of the rise and fall of great powers.

In the 19th century when the Optimists were dominant in universities and the church, there was a view of history that history is the story of the forward

progress of humanity. One writer talked about the brotherhood of man and the universal Fatherhood of God; that we should all live together in this great peaceful global village. A Christian magazine picked up this theme of liberal optimism. In fact, it called the 20th century “The Christian Century” because there was a notion that during the 20th century the whole world would become Christianized.

Then WWI happened; WWII happened, and a dozen holocausts happened. And now people are far more pessimistic as we read history. It seems that most contemporary historians agree with the German philosopher, Hegel, who said,

“The only thing that history teaches us is that history teaches us nothing.”

There is no meaning to history. There is no rhyme or reason. We aren’t going anywhere. History is just a random series of events without lessons, without purpose.

But interestingly, the Bible has a very different view of history. We read in Revelations 5:1-4 these words:

Revelations 5:1-4

1 Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” 3 But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. 4 I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.

The scroll that explains the history of the world is sealed to human investigation; the apostle John writes. In other words, we are totally in the dark about the world situation and we won’t get any real light about what’s going on in the world, or why things are the way they are from our politicians, or talk radio, or the political pundits, who can give you instant opinion about everything that occurs in the world every single day. We are not going to discover the ultimate meaning of history from the philosophers, or sociologists. John tells us that there is only one person who can open up the scroll of history and explain the world to us. We read in Revelations 5:5-6:

Revelations 5:5-6

5 Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” 6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center before the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.

John is talking about Jesus Christ. He calls him the “lion of the tribe of Judah,” the conquering Messiah, who comes from the Jewish tribe of Judah, who can trace his lineage back to the great King David, but a lion who triumphed by becoming a sacrificial lamb. And he died for the sins of the world.

History cannot be understood unless you look at it through the lens of Jesus Christ and his death for us at the cross. Why is it that God sent his one and only Son into the world? Why did Christ die on the cross? Unless we look at life through the lens of the cross, and the one who died on the cross, namely Christ, we will remain in the dark about history, about the world right now, about the problems facing this world, and what will bring healing. Only Christ can open up the meaning of life to us because he has triumphed at the cross. As it says in Revelation 5:5, “Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.’”

I’ve called today’s talk, “The Triumph of the Cross.” Let’s pray.

One of the things we discover when Christ opens up the scroll of history to us and reveals to us the meaning of life, one of the things we discover is how utterly superficial people’s approaches to the challenges facing this world.

The source of our challenges

Every other day we read about another study commission investigating the causes of gang violence and juvenile delinquency; another blue ribbon panel appointed to investigate steroid use by baseball players, which will help us to answer the question of whether any players or managers, or front office people, knew or should have known that something was going on when a baseball player’s head suddenly grew three hat sizes, or when a 35-year old’s feet suddenly grew four shoe sizes. One of the things you discover when Christ opens the scroll of history and reveals to us the meaning of life is how utterly superficial people’s explanations are regarding why conditions in the world are the way they are and what’s at the root of the fundamental challenge facing humanity today.

Jesus tells us what’s going on in the world; what’s the source, the ultimate source of our problems in Luke 11:21-22:

Luke 11:21-22

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder.

Now this is Jesus’ account of what he was doing in the world. He says that when the strong man is armed, he guards his house. And when he does so, his

possessions are safe. This is Christ's way of describing our world today. Life in this world is like a huge mansion which is dominated by the owner of the house, the strong man who is armed. And his possessions are safe. The means that while he is governing them, he controls them and they can do nothing about it. They can't escape. They live under the strong man's control.

But, the Lord says in verse 22:

Luke 11:22

But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder.

Someone stronger is Jesus' way of describing himself. He takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils. Jesus comes and takes the possessions that were kept safe and he sets them free. This is Jesus' description of his work in the world. He came to deal with the strong man who is armed; the devil, who keeps men and women in slavery to do his bidding. And he releases those men and women into the life that God intended for them from the beginning.

Now this is not just Jesus' teaching. We find this all through the Bible. The apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:1 these words: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."

In other words, if you are to understand the world's problem, you need to see that human beings all of us are following a path that has been grooved out by the devil. And he says something similar in Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Again, the apostle Paul is saying that humanity's explanations of our problems are so indescribably superficial. He is saying to us that the problems you face in life are not fundamentally from your ex-spouse, or your boss, or the globalization of the economy. Paul is saying that the enemy we are facing were not ultimately the communists in the 1950's or the Muslim extremists in the 21st century. He is telling us what Jesus told us when he opened up the scroll of history that at the root of our problems is the devil.

Why are we facing the problems we are facing? Some people would say, "Ah, it's bin Laden. It is Al Qaeda; it's the Republicans; it's the Democrats; it's the secularists; it's the religious right. Paul says the muddle that we're in is not merely human. There is something bigger than us, something more powerful than us, someone that Jesus called the strong man fully armed, that Paul calls

the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places that we ultimately must deal with.

There is an unseen spiritual world that is constantly influencing us and destroying our joy. The author of the book of Hebrews echoes this in Hebrews 2:4-15 where the author says this:

Hebrews 2:14-15

Since the children have flesh and blood, he [Christ] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Don't you find it amazing, friend, that despite all of our medical technology, all of the advances of the last couple of centuries in understanding our bodies and understanding disease, despite all the million dollar pieces of medical equipment and the exceptional skill and learning of physicians, we do not seem to be any closer to overcoming the fear of death than our ancestors were 2000 years ago. One man commented and said: We are the opposite of the Victorians. The 19th century Victorians never talked about sex, but obsessed about death. We obsess about sex and never talk about death.

Well Jesus opens the scroll to us and reveals the ultimate source of the world's problem. It lies in Satan and spiritual forces of wickedness that keep us trapped. They're forces that beat us down and make us slaves. They cause men and women to be hopeless. And in opening the scroll, Jesus tells us the goal of history and the goal of God's purposes in this world.

The goal of God's purposes

Jesus reveals to us that history is not just an endless meaningless sequence of events. It is not cyclical as Toynbee said – the rise of one nation and the fall of another. History is linear. It is going somewhere. Where are we going? Where is this world headed? Are we headed towards nuclear holocaust or towards the destruction of life on planet earth by a comet or the extinguishing of the sun?

Here is where all of history is headed, Revelations 11:15:

Revelations 11:15

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."

The kingdom of this world, the kingdom that is dominated by the strong man, by the prince who grooves out a way of living and a way of thinking for his slaves, the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

Where is history headed? The apostle Paul puts it this way in Ephesians 1:9-10:

Ephesians 1:9-10

he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

God is going to bring this entire world under the rulership of Jesus Christ. The triumph of God over Satan ultimately took place at the cross. But as Jesus opens the scroll of history, we see how God's triumph over his enemy is worked out in five very distinct stages.

History: the triumph of God in five stages

I'm indebted to the great English pastor and Bible scholar, John Stott, and his book *The Cross of Christ*, for laying out so plainly the stages of God's triumph. We have first of all, according to Stott, triumph predicted.

Triumph predicted

The first prediction of Christ's triumph over Satan is given in the Garden of Eden as part of God's judgment on the serpent in Gen 3:15: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

The woman's offspring is the Messiah and he is going to crush Satan's rule of evil. But in Genesis 3:15 we also read that when Messiah crushes the head of the serpent, Messiah himself will be wounded, his heel will be bruised. The moment after our first parent's sin, God communicated hope to humanity. History is not just going to be an endless series of meaningless events. Life is not just an unbroken series of tragedies. We are not just going to have to muddle through in the dark and in the fog. Back in the Garden of Eden, God predicted triumph over our great enemy.

And then in the second stage, we have triumph begun in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Triumph begun

As we read the gospels in the New Testament, we see Satan and his forces progressively pushed back. Satan tried to get rid of Jesus when Jesus was an infant by inspiring King Herod to kill all of the babies in Bethlehem. Satan tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness to move him away from his messianic calling. But Jesus kept pushing back the powers of darkness through healings, deliverances,

through teaching and giving instruction to us regarding the way we are supposed to live. The triumph was begun in the life and ministry of Jesus.

And then most importantly in the third and decisive stage, the triumph was achieved at the cross over Satan and the spiritual forces of wickedness.

Triumph achieved

The cross is the fulfillment of the prediction made in Genesis 3:15. The misery and bondage that the serpent brought about in Eden was triumphed over at the cross where the serpent struck the heel of Christ and Christ crushed the serpent's head.

Perhaps the most important New Testament text in explaining to us how the triumph was achieved was Colossians 2:13-15:

Colossians 2:13-15

13 ...He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Now this is such an important passage that I want to break it up for you and savor every phrase. Paul says that God forgave us all of our sins. How did he forgive us our sins? Verse 14:

Colossians 2:14

having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

More literally, having blotted out the charge of our legal indebtedness. We human beings are under obligation to obey God's law. God is the Supreme Ruler of this universe. And he revealed his will to us at Mt. Sinai in ten simple commandments.

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make any idols.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Keep the Sabbath.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not lie.
10. You shall not covet.

Now, Jesus revealed to us the heart and spirit of these ten commandments in the most famous sermon that's ever been preached, the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus gets to the heart of the commandment by telling us that it is not enough that you don't join your body physically to a person who is not your spouse. The commandment was designed to go deeper and to prohibit lust in our heart. You may not mentally undress someone else.

The commandment against murder wasn't just aimed at keeping us from picking up a gun or knife and ending someone's life. Jesus tells us that the heart of the matter is that God wants to prohibit us from hating another human being, writing someone off, closing our hearts and saying, "I will have nothing to do with that person ever again." Have you ever written someone off? Have you ever murdered someone verbally, just torn them apart? Have you ever said the one thing you knew would shred another person's dignity, or destroyed someone's self-esteem?

We can go through the list of the Ten Commandments and see that all of us without exception have rung up this tremendous debt of broken obligations to God. We owe God our Maker and our Ruler, total obedience. And a million times over, a billion times over, we have failed to pay God the obedience that we owe. No matter how hard we try, you and I will never pay off the debt we owe to God. That is the great trap of religion as around the world people are trying through various religious rituals to pay what they know in their consciences they owe to God.

- Maybe if I go to church...
- Maybe if I go to a mosque...
- Maybe if I join a convent...
- Maybe if I go to confession...
- Maybe if I get baptized...
- Maybe if I promise to be good...
- Maybe if I pray 5x a day...
- Maybe if I reform my ways...
- Then I will pay off my debt to God.

Friend, we on our own will never pay our debt to God. You on your own, the Bible says, are bankrupt; and I am bankrupt. I can't pay my debt. It is too great.

And this is why the gospel is such good news. God in his grace acted through Jesus Christ to take care of our debt. And in Colossians 2:14 it says:

Colossians 2:14

having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

More literally, it says

He blotted out the debt and the document of indebtedness.

God not only cancels out the debt of your disobedience, God destroys the document upon which the record of your disobedience was written. See, there is no record of your failure before the heavenly court any more. When you stand before God in judgment on that great and terrible day, and God says to the clerk, "Read me the record of so-and-so's sins," the clerk will say, "I'm sorry. Not only are there no sins recorded; I have no record. The file has not only been deleted, but the backup has been destroyed."

Paul goes on in explaining how the triumph over Satan was achieved. He said not only were your sins blotted out, but they were nailed to the cross. Verse 14:

Colossians 2:14

having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

In the ancient world when a prisoner was crucified by the Roman government, the charge that stood against them was hung over them. On the cross of the condemned person would be the charge: Murderer, Thief, Rebel. And you will recall when Jesus was crucified:

Picture of Jesus' Crucifixion

...over the cross in three different languages was the charge leveled against him. The sign on Jesus' cross read: Jesus of Nazareth, The King Of The Jews.

Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews

What the apostle Paul is saying is that wasn't the only sign hanging over the cross of Jesus. There was another sign hanging over his cross, a sign listing your sins and my sins – all the charges against us were nailed to his cross. His cross didn't only say: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, his cross said: Adulterer, Pornography User, Slanderer, Gossiper, Cheater, Liar, Unforgiving One, Ungrateful, Self-Pitying, Proud, Angry, Greedy, Selfish, Self-Centered, Lover of Money, Hater of God.

When you look at the cross, friend, do you say, "I see the sign listing my sins." Do you say, "The cross is where my sins were nailed? Christ was condemned for all the charges that were leveled against me."

Why is there victory achieved at the cross? Because he blotted out our debt. He nailed it to the cross. And he disarmed the powers, verse 15:

Colossians 2:15

15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

What power was taken away from Satan at the cross? The power to accuse us, the power to condemn us. You know the name Satan means “the accuser.” I’ve been doing a series on spiritual warfare and I’ve talked about some of the ways that Satan attacks us. Last week we talked about temptation. We discussed demonization. We’ve talked about addiction. But one of the major ways that we are engaged in spiritual warfare is by Satan reminding us of our sins - accusation. I see this over and over again in my pastoring of people. Counselors face this all the time with their clients. A Christian is thoroughly depressed and discouraged because of their past – either because of some sin in their past, or because of the particular form their sin took. You talk with them about what Christ achieved and they say, “Yes, I understand that I can’t be right before God except through faith in Christ, but...”

And then they go on and describe the particular sin, the one big thing they did. They committed adultery. They said a horrible thing to their father or mother before their mother or father died and had no chance to take it back. They failed to tell their mom or dad how much they loved them before they died. They failed as a parent. Their child is in rebellion and they feel it is their fault. They betrayed a trust or treated someone shamefully. They failed to respond to God’s call and now they feel that they’ve missed it forever. There is often at the root of discouragement and depression Christians this one big sin, or this one particular failure – a divorce, a crime, a lifestyle of promiscuity. This is what the enemy uses to condemn, to accuse.

Friends, do you experience this form of spiritual warfare in your life? A flood of accusations coming to you in the middle of the night as you lie awake? A flood of accusations coming to you on long drives as you have time to think about yourself? How do you respond to accusations brought against you?

Denial is an inadequate response. Trying to argue with the devil doesn’t work.

- No, I was a good mother. I tried to do my best.
- I was young. I made a lot of stupid mistakes because I was young.
- I was a good husband. My wife didn’t leave me because of me.
- I’m a good employee. I wasn’t fired because of anything I did.

Friend, the devil loves it when you argue with him. The moment you get engaged in arguing your case, you have lost. Accusation is like fly-paper. The moment you step down, you get stuck. It doesn’t matter whether your cause is just or not. Engaging in the argument means you’ve already lost.

So, let me ask you a question: Do you find yourself often arguing with the devil? Do you try to establish your own righteousness? Does arguing with the devil work for you? Is it a successful strategy? Probably not. We can’t convince

ourselves of our complete rightness. There is an element of truth in almost every accusation that we have made mistakes, we have failed, and we have sinned.

The second inadequate response is escape: I just won't think about it. I will keep my mind so busy that I won't ever have to deal with these accusing thoughts.

Let me speak an affectionate word to some of you and say: How many of us are trying to escape from the guilt of past failures through our addictive behaviors, our constant need to drink or the constant escape into marijuana use, or workaholism, the constant need to have noise in the background – a radio playing or a TV on – or our obsessive concerns with what we eat? Often, the backdrop to addictive behavior is the need to fill our souls with noise so that we don't have to deal with the constant accusation of our own failures and sins. I say this affectionately, but some of you are escaping into addiction to try to silence the voice that is inside that tells you that you have blown it and there's no hope for you. You are a failure. You are unloved; not even God could love someone like you.

The problem is that the voice of failure gets louder and louder over time. Our addictions only add fuel to our feelings of guilt. The devil traps addicts into this downward spiral of guilt, leading to the need to escape through addictive behavior, leading to greater guilt and accusation, leading to the need for even more escape. The noose around your neck gets tighter and tighter until you cannot breathe at all.

Projecting onto other people doesn't work: I haven't failed. It is you. The reason why you are pursuing a divorce, the reason why you are breaking your marriage vows is his fault; it is her fault. It is never your fault. It is always someone else's fault. Play the blame game and shift blame. I will tell you in the quiet moments, when you are by yourself, you will not be able to escape the accuser who lets you know that you are responsible.

If denial, escape, and blaming others doesn't work, what does work in dealing with the devil's accusations?

What works is believing God's Word and employing it to meet the accusations of the devil.

Friends, let me say something with all affection. Your greatest sin and my greatest sin is not that horrible thing we said and can't take back. It's not your past adultery, or drug use, or alcoholism, or your child out of wedlock, or missing God's call. That is not our greatest failure. Your greatest sin and my greatest sin is the failure to believe the Word of God. God has declared in Colossians 2:13-15 that he has blotted out your debts; blotted out the record of your indebtedness, and he has nailed your sins to the cross of Christ where it has been fully paid for. And the great sin that we regularly commit against God is to

say: I don't believe you. I believe you keep a record somewhere. I know one day you are going to throw this in my face. I don't believe you. I don't believe that the cross is enough for this.

Friend, if you want to repent of something before God, stop repenting over and over again of the same thing that Satan throws in your face. Instead, repent of your unbelief. The cross has taken the power of accusation away from Satan his main weapon to discourage. The cross has disarmed him. That's why the apostle Paul can say in Romans 8:31-34:

Romans 8:31-34

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then can condemn? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Who can condemn you? Who can bring any charge against you if you have talked to Christ and asked forgiveness for your sins? No one!! Not another person, not your own conscience, not Satan, no one. That is the freedom you are supposed to enjoy, Christian. That is the good news – no condemnation if you've turned to Christ for forgiveness. No condemnation.

And then in Colossians 2:15 we read:

Colossians 2:15

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

You know this word for public spectacle is used of Christ in Hebrews 6:6 where it says:

Hebrews 6:6

To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

What happened at the cross is that Christ turned the tables on Satan. Satan thought he would hold the Son of God up to public disgrace. As the Son of God hung there spread-eagled, naked and mocked, with all the taunts of the passersby, with all the mocking of the crowd, with all the devils shrieking, Satan thought he was holding up Christ to public disgrace. But the cross was the means of disgracing Satan.

There is in this text in Colossians a picture of what would have been a common sight in the ancient world. A Roman General coming back victorious from battle first would have the enemy in chains marching through the street, defeated, as the crowd screamed at them and taunted them. Then the victorious Roman troops, marching behind. Flowers and laurels being tossed at them. And then behind was the victorious Roman General in his chariot.

That's what happened at the cross, friends. Satan was made a public spectacle of. He is paraded in chains. He is a defeated foe. Never allow Satan to deceive you that he still has the weapon of accusation in his hand which the cross of Christ has taken away. You can't accuse me anymore, Satan. My Lord has triumphed at the cross.

And then the fourth stage:

Triumph announced and extended

Have you ever wondered why God didn't just destroy Satan at the cross? One reason may be that Satan now has to watch; through all of history he has to watch the kingdom of God being extended and his house being plundered. Disarmed, with the power of accusation taken away, he is forced to stand and watch as weak, insignificant, unimportant people extend the victory of the cross throughout the world.

What is history about? As the scroll is unfolded by the Lion who is the Sacrificial Lamb, namely our Lord Jesus Christ, there is entrusted to us in the church this great message of salvation where we get to invite people to come to the cross and find forgiveness. We invite people to come to Christ and find hope and fulfillment. We invite people to come to Christ to discover how much God loves them.

History, as it is commonly taught, suggests that it is all about great people – presidents and politicians, and great generals. History as Christ unfolds it says that these great people are peripheral to the real story. The real story is taking place in lunchrooms among ordinary people as one Christian employee explains the meaning of the cross to someone who is not yet a Christian. The real story is taking place as one Christian speaks with a family member or friend and invites them to come to Christ.

The real story, his story that makes up history is the story of missionaries going out sharing the meaning of the cross all over the world. The victory is announced and extended not only with words, but with deeds of love as Christians feed the hungry, as we pray for the sick, as we cast out demons, as we assist people to find jobs, as we tutor kids, as we challenge demonic structures of racism and greed that keeps people in poverty. You, friend, if you are part of the Christian church, you are in the center, you are a main actor in God's story.

And finally, the triumph will be consummated.

Triumph consummated

...when Christ returns. The kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ when Christ is revealed at his second coming. On that day every knee will bow to him and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. On that day the devil will be thrown into the Lake of Fire where death and hell will join him. On that day every evil authority and power will be destroyed and heaven and earth will merge and become one.

History is going somewhere. It is going towards the full expression of the triumph of the cross. Let's pray.

The Triumph of the Cross

Rich Nathan
June 23-24, 2007
God At War
Colossians 2:13-15

I. History: Its Meaning, Challenges and Goal

- A. The Meaning of History (Revelations 5:1-6)
- B. The Source of Our Challenges (Luke 11:21, 22; Ephesians 2:1, 6, 12)
- C. The Goal of God's Purposes (Revelations 11:15; Ephesians 1:10)

II. History: The Triumph of God in Five Stages

- A. Triumph Predicted (Genesis 3:15)
- B. Triumph Begun
- C. Triumph Achieved (Colossians 2:13-15)
 - 1. Blotted Out Our Debt
 - 2. Nailed It To The Cross
 - 3. Disarmed The Powers
 - 4. Made A Public Spectacle of Them
- D. Triumph Announced and Extended (Matthew 28:18-20)
- E. Triumph Consummated (Philippians 2:9-11; Revelations 20:1-3)