

The Party After the Game

by Lynn Andrew

Satan must be removed from the scene and not allowed to oppose God forever. I think most people who acknowledge the existence of the literal devil agree that God intends to put down the rebellion. But the logical consequences may be surprising.

Condemning Satan and his angels to hell would be an injustice if other sinners were not similarly condemned. This is why every creature who breaks the commandment of God must go to hell along with Satan. It's a matter of justice. Even though a human soul may be relatively powerless and unable to upset the economy of heaven, Satan could rightly accuse God of injustice if he made an exception to the law and permanently accommodated even one sinner in heaven.

Satan knows this, which is why he undertook to corrupt the creatures God made in his own image. Satan knew that human sinners would be like aces in his hand against which the royal hand of God could not score without ruining the whole game. Some theologians stop at that: God will fold, they hold, and in the end everyone including Satan will be forgiven, and hell will be unnecessary after all.

God had foreseen this. His solution was sacrifice: he had merged himself into the deck and he drew himself as Jesus Christ. This divine card of the bleeding Son has unlimited value and the ability to trump any number of aces in Satan's hand. Although Satan still holds the many who remain in the game, he is bound to discard anyone

redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Some say that when the game is over the table gets folded up and put away. But the table is still needed. Those won by Christ were bought at too dear a cost to be put on the shelf; and the table was not created for a game of cards in the first place. After the game is finished, the age of the new earth begins. Having lost his bid to be excepted from the consequence of sin, the devil will be reduced to watching glorified souls he once owned go about restoring the earth.

For if God does not reclaim the earth, it will leave Satan with a legacy that vindicates his contention that the decision to create beings free to disregard the legal system was fundamentally flawed. That's reading between the lines of the Bible, but the Bible definitely predicts that God will replace the kingdoms of the earth with his own.

The prophets all agree: there will be a golden age on earth. The picture in the Bible is that God will rule the nations from Jerusalem for a length of time during which Satan is kept from stirring up dissent. This will prove that the Creator's designs are good and able to sustain obedience and foster holiness if well managed. Finally, to separate out those who never agreed to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, Satan will be given leave once more to deceive the nations and rally a force against Jerusalem. His defeat will send him, his angels, and his self-righteous followers to the place prepared for his incarceration.

Clearly God must renew the earth: Satan must not be allowed to ultimately spoil the planet on which we live. God will see to it that his own good creation fulfills its potential with a large, well-functioning, God-fearing population of humans who participate in the glory of

being made in his image. "Sorry, it's too late for that," science declares. "The CO₂ surplus guarantees continuous warming that will degrade the habitability of the planet far below what its potential might have been with better management of population growth and resource allocation. Look to another dimension for your golden age."

The prophets spoke geographically about the ultimate capital city; God let his choice be known and had it preserved in writing: the capital of the world is to be at Jerusalem. His reservation of this spot at the crossroads of continents was made in advance, for it would be unjust to evict a nation without warning. He prepared Israel physically to mark and reserve the place until he comes, and all Israel including those who have been grafted into Israel spiritually look forward to his appearing. As to the physical condition of the planet on which Jerusalem rests: the Bible predicts disaster too, the magnitude of which competes with the most pessimistic predictions of science. However, the Bible goes on to tell us what comes afterward. God always reveals through his prophets what he is going to do, and he constrains himself by physical laws only in order to nurture faith.

Multiple times Satan has tried to counterfeit God's plan through other agencies, and on one occasion he tempted Christ to take control of the kingdoms of the earth prematurely. Israel still stands to mark the spot after many assaults but not without support: allies defying political probabilities have been provided from time to time. This is the purpose of the USA today.

When the Lord returns with his army of angelic beings and glorified saints, a new-earth government must be established. A preview of

the laws of that kingdom were given by Jesus to his audience on the mount. Clearly it will require qualified servants stationed around the world to enforce such laws in every nook and cranny of society, and this is where the sanctified and glorified body of Christ comes in. The Rapture, occurring at a measured time before the end of the present age, will allow for those most familiar with every aspect of modern life and its technology to be trained for their duties and introduced to their overseers who are the saints of earlier days elected for their meek and incorruptible love of God. Such will inherit the earth while saints of the old covenant serve on Israel's ground as priests.

In short, if we are born of the Spirit of God, we are destined to be peace makers serving under the Prince of Peace. Happy are those who align their thinking with the plans of God as published in the Bible. Can you imagine living under a perfectly just and merciful government? Such has never been experienced in the history of the world. Policies and decisions will rest firmly upon the well known character of God. Corruption will not be tolerated, and lawbreakers will be speedily apprehended by saints who have hungered and thirsted after righteousness. There will be security and ample supplies and mercy to meet every need; but greed will be rare. Instead, the joy of serving will be coveted and rewarded. Constructive schooling and enlightened counseling under the Spirit of God will lead to satisfying employment.

Of course there must be pilgrimages to Jerusalem where friends will meet and celebrate the happiness of God and where, if we are pure in heart, we will enjoy seeing him.

†