

and with what result? To be bound hand and foot by the Great Deliverer, to be stripped of all his armour. Which was the stronger man in that encounter? Jesus had fasted for forty days, the outer man was weak and weary; the strong man, ever watchful, and determined to keep his goods in peace, came upon Him then, stole on Him unawares, grappled with Him in straining might, used every feint his hoary skill had taught, but only to be overthrown, ignominiously bound, and utterly spoiled of all the panoply wherein he trusted. Jesus not only defeated, but also disarmed him there, taking away the means of regaining his lost power once and for ever. Therefore, at His darkest hour of earthly trial, He could say, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." The victory is completed at the cross, where He spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly.

Jesus spoils the strong man.

In the blind and dumb one just rescued from the power of Satan, the people saw the witness of this truth; and all His deeds of love, His miracles of mercy, as well as His words of love, preached deliverance to the captive because the strong man was bound. And if even before the cross He thus divided the spoil with the strong and made the lawful captive go free, what since then has He wrought. Even as He hung on the cross a poor slave of Satan took shelter under His wing, and was carried that day into His Paradise.

Behold the blasphemer of Tarsus, the jailor of Phillippi, the sinners in all ages and in all countries who have been rescued from Satan's power. Behold the blood-bought hosts within the golden city, that ye may glory in His gracious spoil. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and HE THAT SITTETH ON THE THRONE shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." What a glorious kingdom, what an absolute and eternal spoiling of the strong man have we here! Surely it becomes each one of us in view of this glorious triumph, oppressed by Satan's present power, to flee now from the strong destroyer, and take shelter under the wing of the stronger Saviour.

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