
“all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”

A reprint from *The ENJOY THE BIBLE QUARTERLY* — 2000, 1st Quarter

— Keith R. Blades

The above words, recorded in Matthew 28:18, were uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ to His apostles following His resurrection from the dead and just before returning to His Father. Though the words are few and simple in themselves, what the Lord conveyed by them to His apostles was highly significant. They were not simply words that declared His victory over death, but they were words that declared His capability and right to begin to now execute the remainder of what the Davidic covenant called for Him to do as Israel's Christ. Specifically they were words that declared to His apostles that He was in the position *at that very time* to fulfill all that had been prophesied concerning vanquishing Israel's enemies, purging out the apostate element, restoring the kingdom to Israel, and so glorifying her. In short, therefore, they were words that announced that He was in the position to execute all that the final installment in Israel's program — 'the day of His power' — called for. Hence these few words were full of promise and expectation concerning the fulfillment of God's program with Israel. They proclaimed to the apostles the good news that the Lord was in possession of all the power and authority necessary to finish off the climactic stage in Israel's program and to then establish the kingdom of heaven on this earth. And in view of the truth of those words, the Lord commissioned His apostles to fulfill their special role as His apostles during that final installment to the program.

These words, therefore, were indeed highly significant words for the apostles to hear. And they understood and appreciated what they

meant. However they ought to be also highly significant to us, though for an entirely different reason. This is because what they signified has yet to be fulfilled. The Lord's 'day of power' has yet to occur.

The Background to These Words

As Israel's Christ, the Lord Jesus particularly came into this world to be Israel's "horn of salvation." He came to redeem and to deliver Israel in fulfillment of all of the mandates of the Davidic covenant. In so doing, the Lord would not only suffer for them as their Redeemer, but He would also deliver them from the hands of their enemies, avenge God's cause with them on this earth, and glorify them. He would powerfully execute the "days of vengeance" spoken of by the prophets and so destroy Israel's enemies. And He would then powerfully and without successful opposition establish Himself as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" on this earth, ruling and reigning in Zion. The prophets repeatedly proclaimed these things, and they were the hope of Israel, as the following examples testify.

4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

5 For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but *this* shall be with burning *and* fuel of fire.

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

(Isaiah 9:4-7)

20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones *that are* on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

22 And they shall be gathered together, *as* prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

(Isaiah 24:20-23)

1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.

3 Thy people *shall be* willing IN THE DAY OF THY POWER;...

5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

(Psalm 110:1-3,5-7)

The foregoing passages make it plain that the Lord Jesus Christ, in redeeming and saving Israel, was not only going to suffer for them. He would also execute the wrath of Almighty God upon their enemies in the ‘day of His power,’ and reign victoriously through and with Israel over this earth in the glory of their kingdom, just as promised in the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants.

Wherefore at the beginning of the climactic stage in Israel’s program, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, spoke about this aspect of Christ’s work as he declared the reality of what God was doing at that time.

68 Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,
 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;
 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:
 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
 72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;
 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,
 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

(Luke 1:68-75)

The execution of the Christ’s power as Israel’s “horn of salvation” in judging and destroying her enemies was anticipated with great longing, as the nation looked for her “consolation” through the son of David. And the fact that the time for that aspect of His work was nigh, was pointed out by the Lord to his disciples when He told them,...

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

(Matthew 10:34)

49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?
 50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

(Luke 12:49-50)

Though “already kindled” the Lord was not going to have “the day of his wrath,” purge His nation, and vanquish her enemies, until He first suffered in her behalf. However once having done so, then in accordance with the remaining mandates of the Davidic covenant He would be given “the sure mercies of David” with the power and authority

to “put all things under his feet.” Then, just as is set forth in the 2nd Psalm, the Father would say to Him,...

8 Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.

(Psalm 2:8-9)

This, once again, was the powerful position Jesus Christ was in when following His resurrection He declared to His apostles, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” He, in accordance with the Davidic covenant, was now in the position to subdue all things unto Himself. He was now in the position to have His day of power and to so fulfill all the things written concerning the “days of vengeance.”

The Readiness for the Execution of The Lord's Power

In the opening chapters of the book of Acts we read about the arrival of the “last days” in Israel’s program and the urgent need for Israel to realize that they were on the verge of having the Lord’s day of power come upon them. Hence after certifying that their prophesied “last days” had begun, Peter proclaimed to Israel concerning Christ,...

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

(Acts 2:34-36)

And again, as recorded in Acts 3, he announced unto the people,...

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

(Acts 3:22-24)

Finally, Stephen, after indicting the rulers of Israel for their persistent rebelliousness against God, particularly in view of God’s extension of mercy to them, proclaimed to them that the Lord was now ready to ‘make His enemies His footstool.’

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus STANDING on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man STANDING on the right hand of God.

(Acts 7:55-56)

With Stephen’s announcement the nation of Israel (and the world as a whole) was ripe for receiving the execution of the Lord’s “all power.” The Lord had taken His position in preparation for administering the judgments of His indignation and fierce anger, just as had been expected.

The Unexpected Staying of The Lord's Power

However instead of doing what had been expected, the Lord Jesus Christ did something totally unexpected. As Acts 9 records, He came back from heaven and re-appeared to Saul of Tarsus (Paul) on the road to Damascus. In so doing, the Lord raised him up as a brand new apostle and sent him out to declare the longsuffering of God and that God was making a

great dispensational change. To Paul God revealed that He was temporarily suspending His program with Israel and was bringing in a dispensation of His grace for us Gentiles. Wherefore Paul testifies, for example, in Ephesians 3:1ff,...

1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

(Ephesians 3:1-6)

Instead of pouring out His wrath and administering His “days of vengeance,” God revealed to the apostle Paul “the mystery of Christ,” which He had kept secret in ages and generations past.

It is because of this present dispensation of God’s longsuffering and grace that the Lord has not yet executed His day of wrath on this earth. It is because of the out-working of the “mystery of Christ” that the Lord has not yet fulfilled all His promises to Israel and reigned gloriously over her on this earth as their “horn of salvation.”

However this present “dispensation of the grace of God” will not continue on indefinitely. As the apostle Paul declares in Romans 11:25-27, the “fulness of the Gentiles” will one day be “come in,” and then God will resume His program and dealings with the nation of Israel. When He does so, the Lord will have His day in which He will show Himself to be the One to whom ‘all power

in heaven and in earth’ has been given. As the apostle Paul says in reference to that time,...

15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

(1 Timothy 6:15)

“All power” truly has been given unto the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will indeed “rule in the midst of his enemies” and fulfill all the remaining mandates of the Davidic covenant with Israel on this earth. But this will not be until after He concludes this present dispensation of His longsuffering and grace to us Gentiles. Then, and only then, will He ‘take unto Himself His great power and reign.’ — *K. R. Blades*