



Links Players

The Heartbeat of Links | Already/Not Yet

After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." (Luke 10:1; 11:17-18, ESV)

It is hard to believe ten years have elapsed since Jordan Spieth's "collapse" at the 2016 Masters. Coming off four straight birdies on the front nine and heading into the back nine on Sunday with a five-shot lead, it looked like he was a lock to be the back-to-back Champion.

After bogeys on #10 and #11, "the wheels came" off at #12 with a quadruple bogey. Although he rallied with birdies at #13 and #15, the tournament was basically over after that "quad." While "what ifs" are fun to consider, the chances of Jordan making a comeback were slim.

If you are looking for the quintessential definition of a "zero-sum" game, look no further. Though counter-offenses occur, there will be no comeback for the forces of darkness after Calvary.

After Jesus commissioned the seventy-two disciples to advance his kingdom agenda, they returned rejoicing that demons were subject to his name. Jesus explained, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

This metaphor is pregnant with meaning— Jesus is saying that Satan's dominion is crumbling, the kingdom of God is advancing, and the reign of dark forces is nearing its appointed end.

This truth is often baffling to many people when they first meet it. They ask, "How can you affirm Satan's ultimate defeat by Jesus two thousand years ago when we see so much evil remaining in the world?"

The answer comes in the form of a famous analogy from World War II: On June 6th, 1944—D-Day—the Allied Forces invaded Normandy, France. At the cost of 4,500 brave soldiers' lives, the significance of these bloody battles cannot be overstated—it was "the turning point of the war,"— the "successful beginning of the end of Hitler's tyrannical regime."

A year later, on May 8, 1945—VE-Day—Europe celebrated the end of World War II. On that day, the unconditional surrender of Nazi forces to the Allied Forces formally ended the war in Europe.

Once our troops established a beachhead at Normandy, it was only a matter of time before the demonically inspired Nazi thugs bowed the knee.

Yes, there were many skirmishes between D-Day and VE-Day, but once Allied forces breached the wall of German defenses, the final victory was assured.

Analogously, once Jesus died and rose again at his first coming [D-Day], the worldwide triumph over evil is an assured reality in the future [VE-Day].

Victory in Europe came at a high cost, with many valuable lives lost. Victory over Satan and his nefarious forces cost one incalculably valuable life.

The defeat of Satan, then, is not something conjured up by the unfettered minds of mystics about an imaginary past, nor an empty dream about a probable future. The person and work of Jesus Christ at the cross was the redemptive turning point of history!

Often, many ask, "What now?" Between his first and final conquests, Jesus empowers his followers and deploys them in "Operation Mop Up!" Enlist today and be on the "right side of history!"

Prayer: Jesus! Open my eyes to the reality of this cosmic battle!

READING: Luke 10:1-20; Colossians 2:6-15; Revelation 12:10-11; Romans 16:20.

1. Recall and discuss a previous round where a single swing or hole ultimately decided the outcome.

2. Though Jesus' first victory guarantees the ultimate outcome of history, many battles still lie ahead. What has he equipped us with to fight in the meantime?

3. Application: Find another brother or sister and ask them to stand with you in the battle.
