***The Authority of Jesus Christ

RV160-01***

We are studying "War in Heaven." This is segment number eight on Revelation 12:7-12.

**Does the Bible Say that the Earth is Flat?**

I listened to an Episcopalian priest on TV this week who was being interviewed about the Bible. He was from New York, and I've heard his name before, and he bears considerable status and fame within the Episcopal Church. He was on the program with his clerical garb and his turned-around collar. He exuded sophistication; he projected an air of scholarship; and, he spoke in a sincere manner to convey an air of love. The priest's main point in that interview, interestingly enough, was that the Bible was not an absolutely reliable book, so its teachings were not binding on people. He accused the authors of the Bible of sincerely, but mistakenly, championing the prejudices and the misconceptions of their age about God; Satan; demons; morality; sin; and, male and female roles. The priest said that he could not view a book as absolutely true which teaches things which are obviously false. When asked to illustrate what he meant, he said, "A book that teaches that the earth is flat." That blew some of you out of the water.

The program was no sooner over before the phone rang. The voice at the other end said, "Were you just watching channel 5? Did you see that?" I could hardly get a word in edgewise with this horrible indignation, because it was horrid. Others of you have since grabbed me and said, "Did you hear that priest?" What would he mean by saying that the Bible teaches that the earth is flat? He was referring to Isaiah 11:12: "And He will lift up a standard for the nations, and will assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

He was also referring to Revelation 7:1: "And after this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind should blow on the earth or on the sea or on the tree." He was referring to this expression: "the four corners of the earth." His point was that the Bible writers were out of touch with real scientific fact. They were just writing this book on their own. That was his point. There was no God guiding them, so they made the mistake of referring to the earth as if it was something flat that had four corners.

Well, obviously, the Bible writers were speaking about the way things appear. We call this speaking phenomenologically – the way the phenomena appears to us. People commonly speak of the four corners of the earth because that's how the world does appear to us. There is, in the western United States, one place alone where four states join, and it's called the Four Corners country. Well, you know that that isn't flat, just because we call it Four Corners. You know that there's a curve even right there, in an infinitesimal way, at the point where those four states join. We all know, indeed, that it's round.

The deceit of this sophisticated priest; his modulated tones; and, his exuding of scholarship is that either he ignored or didn't know that the Bible explicitly teaches that the earth is a circle. Isaiah 40:22 says, "It is He, speaking of God, who sits above the vault (or circle – either word is a proper translation there) of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in." Very clearly, around the circle of the earth, God has spread the circle of the heavens. Either that priest doesn't know this, or (as I suspect) he is being deliberately.

**Does the Bible Say that the Sun Rotates Around the Earth?**

Another example he gave was that the Bible says, "That the sun rotates around the earth." He was referring to Matthew 5:45: "In order that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven, for he causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

He was referring to Ephesians 4:26: "Be angry, and yet do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger." So, his point was that the Bible talks about the sun coming up over the earth, and the sun going down over the earth. And he indicated that this was an ignorance; a lack of knowledge; and, an error in Scripture. Well, this is also people writing and speaking of what we observe from the earth as the action of the sun appears to us. Do you really think that when the TV weathermen give you the time of sunrise and sunset, they think that the sun is going around the earth rather than the earth going around the sun? How dumb can you be? You know that they don't think that.

Well, these are a couple of very sorry examples to prove that the Bible teaches falsehoods. I could tell that the lady conducting the interview was a little uncomfortable, and tried to push toward the idea that the Bible has some merit and some value. But this was no doubt the best that this man has to offer to support his claim. And it is not unusual for people of great intellect and education to make remarks such as this – that the Bible teaches that the earth is flat. I've heard that many times.

What this reveals is a deep-seated rebellion and antagonism toward Scripture, which these people cannot readily dismiss and refute. So, they try to come up with a pretended issue which doesn't really exist. The lady who interviewed this priest asked him whether the Bible had any value at all. He said, "Oh, yes, but it must be reasonable." So, what was he saying? "OK, read the Bible. But your mind, contaminated as it is by sin and the fall into sin, must judge what is acceptable in the Bible and what is not.

**Does the Bible Say that Men have Authority over Women?**

This priest went on to tell the lady that he did not agree with Paul's teaching about women; that is, women not exercising authority over men. This is the idea that women are supposed to be helpers to their husbands at home. This is the idea that women are supposed to take care of their children. The way he explained this was (and he referred to the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung) by saying that Paul had what Jung called a dark side. He said that Paul's dark side was antagonism toward women, because Paul was a homosexual. He just didn't like girls. I'm telling you, folks: this is national TV. It got worse and worse and worse. I was so dumbfounded in trying to mentally record all these things as fast as they were coming through.

Now, there is indeed a dark side that Jung referred to. Jung didn't understand it. He was too much into the occult. He was thinking about that kind of a dark side. But there is a dark side in man, and the Bible very clearly indicates that it's the old sin nature. However, Paul very clearly expresses the authority of men over women in the line of authority within the home, and this was simply described as his dark side of homosexuality.

**Does the Bible Say that Demons Cause Disease?**

He further scoffed at the biblical records about demons who could cause physical ailments. When he said that, I was really amazed – that the Bible was mistaken in suggesting that demons caused certain physical ailments, because when he said that, he now had come to step on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Yet, this is a priest that stands in a pulpit. He preaches, and guides people spiritually. And this is his viewpoint about Jesus. Matthew 9:32-33 was an example: "And as they were going out, behold, a dumb man (demon-possessed) was brought to Him. And after the demon was cast out, the dumb man spoke. And the multitudes marveled in saying, 'Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel.'" Here, very clearly, this man could not speak, and he could not speak because a demon prevented him from doing it.

Matthew 12:22-24 was another example: "Then was brought to Him (to Jesus) a demon possessed man who was blind and dumb, and He healed them so that the demon spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and began to say, 'This man cannot be the son of David, can he?' But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This man casts out demons only by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons.'"

Clearly, again, Jesus proceeded to cast out a demon, and when He did, the physical defect went with it, indicating that the demon indeed caused it. You may pursue this further on your own in Mark 5:2-15 and Mark 9:17-27, where you have very explicit association between a physical ailment and the action of a demon in that person.

Luke 13:10-13: "And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath (that is, Jesus). And, behold, there was a woman who, for 18 years, had had a sickness caused by a spirit (a demon). It's very explicit there. A demon spirit caused this sickness: "And she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, 'Woman, you are freed from your sickness.' And He laid His hand upon her, and immediately she was made erect again, and begin glorifying God." What Jesus did was remove the demon who was causing the problem.

This priest summed up his desire in life to see a society in America in which there is equality totally between men and women; where there is a place for homosexuals and lesbians; where there is the acceptance of all races; and, where there is freedom for people to do their own thing. He referred to the fact that he had three daughters, and he wanted them not to be inhibited and intimidated in any way as they went through life. This priest, in his own antagonism toward the authority of the Bible, was speaking for the devil. That man does not speak for God. Regardless of any claims he may make to that end, and however people may look to him as one who can teach them about God, he is speaking for the devil when he attacks the written Scriptures, the Word of God.

**False Prophets**

Yet, we know that that's the way it works. The Bible has alerted us to that. 2 Corinthians 11:13: "For such men (as this Episcopalian priest) are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ (messengers of Christ). And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their deeds." I'd hate to be in that man's shoes when he comes up and faces God.

**Pat Robertson**

However, this problem is equally disappointing, relative to the attitude toward the Bible, within areas where we would expect Christians to know better. Interestingly enough, I also managed to see a little part of Pat Robertson of the 700 Club program. People were sending in questions for him to answer. And a question was asked about the problem of women pastors and preachers, as is common in the charismatic movement. The question was: how can that be justified in view of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, where the apostle Paul says, "Let the women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. But let them subject themselves, just as the Lord also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is improper for a woman to speak in church;" that is, in terms of standing in a pulpit and instructing a mixed congregation.

Now, this is very clear. Of course, this is what the Episcopalian priest was referring to in part. This was a tough question because Robertson is a charismatic. The people who support his program, and send in those millions of dollars, are people who go to a church where a woman stands up as their pastor; where women are their instructors in spiritual things; and, where women exercise authority over men. And he responded that the women in New Testament churches were particularly prone to get noisy and disruptive. So, the apostle Paul was trying to tone them down in their conduct in church by this principle. He summed up his views by saying that he believed that the teaching was pertinent only to the culture of that day.

So, ladies have a riot. Take off, and do your own thing spiritually. The feminists are right, after all. Robertson presents a lot of good information. He gives insights on current events that are very true. I'm sure that he does a lot of good. But when it came to speaking to all of those women out there who are out of line with the Word of God, he just couldn't get himself to speak the truth. Instead, he condemned the Word itself.

Now, by logic, how can he take anything that the apostle Paul has to say (or that anybody else has to say) in the Bible, and say, "This is the Word of God?" He has just made a judgment to eliminate a part of it in order to get himself off the hook of a problem in his denomination which is a serious violation of Scripture. That was basically no difference between Robertson, at this point, and the Episcopalian priest.

**Women in the Military**

A little while later, I saw the Reverend Otwell of Fort Worth. I didn't do anything this week, but just watched television, so I have a lot of this stuff here. He was on a TV talk show, and the subject was: should Americans be sending women (mothers) in the military to Saudi Arabia? He stated the basic biblical principle of male responsibility to care for the woman as the one who, by God's creation, is in the weaker body, and is designed to be one who is to be esteemed, and who is to be cared for by the superior strength and ability of the male.

1 Peter 3:7 says, "You husbands likewise live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman. And grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life (equality in spiritual benefits), so that your prayers may not be hindered." He stressed that, in the Bible, men are appointed to go into combat in war, and not women. He didn't make this very explicit. I was a little sorry that he didn't come on right off the bat, from a biblical frame of reference: "The Bible says; the Bible says; and, the Bible says." Instead, he just told us what the Bible said, and did not refer to this crowd here who was viewing this as: your opinion / my opinion. He did indeed point out that, in the Old Testament, God gave a very explicit doctrine of warfare for the Jewish people on how they were to conquer the land of Canaan, and that it was very explicit that women were not to be involved in that combat. He pointed out that God's order in society is for the woman to be under the authority of her husband, who is her head.

Well, by that time, the audience was howling and sneering and booing, and one man finally screamed out at him: "You just show us any place in the Bible where the woman is under the authority of the man." Unfortunately, he got a little emotional in the process, and started shouting back instead of maintaining a cool dignity. But he said, "I'll show you." He turned to 1 Peter 3:1-2: "In the same way, you wives be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of them are disobedient to the Word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."

Then he quite properly turned to Ephesians 5:22-24: "Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."

Now, of course, immediately they wanted to raise the point of: "Well, some despotic husband could really abuse his wife." But of course, the rest of the story is in verse 25. The Bible gives it the whole issue tied together in the balance. While that is the woman's role, it is the husband's role, in verses 25-29, to love his wife (no mental attitude sins). That means that he nurtures her; he cuddles her; he esteems her; and, he cares for her, just as Christ does with the church. He gives himself up for her as Christ gave Himself for us, so that she may be cleansed and washed with the water of the Word. This presents the church in a glorified picture. So, as he nurtures his wife, she is a glorified creature. So, verse 28 says, "So, the husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church." So, there was a balance.

He didn't point that out. He really should have. Otwell was not careful to distinguish, unfortunately, between wives and mothers in the military as over against single women in non-combat roles. I don't think that we can say that we do not need the nurses; we do not need the clerical help; or, that we do not need the support ministries that women can perform in the military. But there he had men in the audience who were saying, "My wife has just been taken off. I have three children at home, and I'm home. She's in Saudi Arabia, and I'm taking care of the children." He was one of these sophisticated New Age people, and he just thought it was wonderful.

Another young woman raised her hand and said, "I've been six years in the military because my father insisted I go in. I am single, but I have been in close contact with women who had children who have been in the military. And I'm here to tell you, it's done nothing but devastate their homes; tear up their lives; and, eventually put unbearable, unimaginable pressures upon them, all apart from the emotional tension of being in a combat zone."

Otwell was not careful to avoid the debate on the personal opinion level. He just kept making statements of opinion instead of saying, "This is what God says," so that people would have been forced to face the Scriptures. That man that shouted at him, "Show us in the Bible," never said another word once he did that.

Well, how true indeed are the works of the Lord Jesus in Mark 6:34 and in Matthew 9:35-38 where Jesus looks out and says, "People are like muddling sheep milling about without a shepherd to guide them." The world is a harvest which is ready to be brought in, but where are the Christians with the Word of God – the information to explain the truth of God. I dare say that most any one of you who've been around this place for any time, and have sat here with sincere mental, in-gear paying attention could walk into the average church in this city, and sit down with a little group of people, and speak to them of the most elementary things of the relationship to God, like how to stay in fellowship with God, and not lose your salvation, and you would blow them out of the water. They would be so awed that they could not believe that this is in the Bible. You would be looked upon as practically a god, and they would want to know how these things. There are no shepherds out there teaching people these things, so that there are no harvester's to go out in the field to bring in the people who are ready to learn.

**The Authority of Jesus Christ**

The human race does not like to be subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the God-man. In the book of the Revelation, the saints in heaven at mid-tribulation express their joy that the time has arrived for Jesus Christ to impose His authority on rebellious humanity, which has been thumbing its nose at Him for many centuries.

1. **Christ's Authority as the Messiah**

So, in Revelation 12:10, we have seen that Jesus Christ is going to exercise at this point shortly, His authority as the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one of God.

1. **Christ's Authority to Interpret Scripture**

The Lord Jesus Christ has received instruction from His Father in His humanity. So, He has the authority to interpret Scriptures and to teach dogmatically (Luke 20:1-2, Matthew 7:28-29). We've looked at that.

1. **Christ's Authority of Deity**

Furthermore, we pointed out that the authority that Jesus Christ has is the authority of deity, which enables him to forgive the sins of mankind (Matthew 9:6-9). We have pointed out that Jesus Christ gives a lost sinner the authority to believe the gospel, and to be saved. John 1:12 very clearly says that. It is using every time this Greek word "exousia," very explicitly, which means "authority" – the right and the power to do something. Can you believe it? Until Jesus Christ gives you the authority to believe the gospel, you are not going to believe it, and you're not going to take it seriously. Now, that's the authority. The Lord Jesus Christ is the final authority in all spiritual matters because He possesses the mind of God (Matthew 11:27).

1. **Christ's Authority is Supreme**

Here are some other areas of authority that we should point out. Basically, the Lord Jesus Christ has supreme authority in both heaven and on earth. He is the one who is in charge. Matthew 28:18: "Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Ultimately, this authority is going to be exercised, and He is going to take charge of both heaven and earth. He is the one that you must account to. So, don't let other people bug you about the things they don't like about what you're doing. Maybe they're right. Maybe they're wrong. The privacy of your own priesthood enables you to live your life before the Lord, and to account to Him alone, because only He has the authority. Other people do not have authority over you, but Jesus Christ does. He is the supreme authority.

1. **Christ's Authority is Expressed in His Commands**

Secondly, the authority of Jesus Christ is expressed in His commands. Matthew 8:8-9: "And the Centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof, but just say the word and my servant will be healed.'" This centurion has come to the Lord; talked about this servant lying paralyzed at home; and, asked Jesus to heal him. The Centurion says in verse 9, "For I too am a man under authority (a military man) with soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my sleeve, 'Do this, and he does it.'"

The Lord Jesus marveled that this gentile had such a grasp of the principle of authority; that this gentile knew that Christ has the authority; that He is the one that we come to and that we look to; and, that His authority is expressed in His commands. Those who obey the commands of Scripture are obeying the authority of Jesus Christ.

Look what happens in Matthew 8:11: "And I say to you that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the kingdom." Please notice that He is speaking of born-again people, referring here, particularly to the Jews: "The sons of the kingdom who will not obey the commands of God (even though they're going to heaven, just as Christians who will not obey the commands and thus the authority of Christ) are going to be cast out in outer darkness in a place where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus said to the Centurion, 'Go home. He is healed. Your request has been granted.'"

Jesus left them with this terrible picture of this wonderful banquet hall all lit up. The party is here. The sons of the kingdom who are obedient to the commands of Christ, and thus to His authority, are in here enjoying the banquet. Outside, people are coming up (also saved), but looking through the window, and wishing that they had been subject to the authority of the commands of Christ, so that they could be in here now, being rewarded.

1. **Christ has Authority over the Demons**

The authority of Jesus Christ extends to the demonic world. The demons are subject to Him. For example, Luke 4:33-36: "There was a man in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 'What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are. The Holy one of God.'" This is a demon speaking to Jesus: "Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be quiet, and come out of him.' When the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him without doing any harm, and amazement came upon them all. And they began discussing with one another, saying, 'What is this message? For with authority ('exousia') and power, He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.'"

The Lord Jesus Christ is in total command of Satan's demonic world. Satan is merely having his day. Do not misconstrue that as victory on Satan's part. Because we know this from Scripture, we have no hesitancy to declare that Satan is going to be the loser.

1. **Christ has Authority to Judge Mankind**

Another area of authority that our Lord has is to judge all mankind relative to who goes into heaven and who goes into hell. John 5:27: "And He gave Him (Jesus) authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man." "The Son of Man" is a technical term from the book of Daniel, which identifies Him as the Messiah Savior.

Also notice John 17:2: "Even as You gave him authority over all mankind; that to all to whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life." It is the Lord Jesus Christ who has authority to determine who has the authority to believe the gospel, and who has the authority, as the result of that, to enter into heaven, or to be left out as a result of not believing it.

1. **Christ has Authority over His Own Life**

Another element of authority in Christ is that He has authority over His own life. Nobody took His life. He truly laid it down in full mental attitude love for the sins of the world. In John 10:17-18, Jesus says, "For this reason, the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. (I have authority to lay it down. I have authority to take it up again.) This commandment I received from My Father." He has authority over His life.

**Our Resurrection is Inevitable**

And do you know what? Because you are in Christ, you have authority over your life. You do not have authority over the day when you will die, but you have authority over the fact that you will not stay dead. Because you are in Christ, you are positionally possessing the authority of Christ, which determines when you will arise. So, through Him, resurrection is inevitable.

1. **Christ has Authority over Death**

The Lord Jesus Christ also has authority over death, and someday He's going to totally reverse death by resurrecting all people who have ever died – born again, or lost. John 5:28 indicates this authority over death: "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tomb shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: those who did good (that is, the good of believing the gospel), to the resurrection of life; and, those who committed evil (that is, the evil of rejecting the gospel) to a resurrection of judgment." He has the authority to raise the believers.

So, with this brief review of the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the saints in heaven have a frame of reference where they are expressing their joy that Christ is about to exercise His rightful authority when they see Satan cast out of heaven. Christ as the authority over all the earth and its inhabitants. To do what? To reorganize the world.

**Jesus Christ will Reorganize the World**

Is this world ever going to be reorganized? The first thing Lord is going to do is get rid of that Episcopalian priest. That guy is going to lose his job. This whole world is going to be reorganized in ways that you wouldn't believe. Well, yes, you would. You can imagine how things are going to be changed, and all of the nonsense, and all of the stupidity is going to be exposed for what it is. And you people who go around now as the dog's tail in our society, are going to suddenly find yourself in a position bearing the authority of Christ. These people in heaven understand that, and they said, "Oh, God, go, Lord Jesus, go." And pretty soon, all of heaven, I imagine, will be resounding, "Go. Go. Go." It will be like Texas Stadium when the time has come for Christ to really give it to them, and He has the authority to do it.

This authority is going to be so impacted upon the human race that Philippians 2:9-11 will take place before our very eyes: "Therefore, also God highly exalted Him (Christ), and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth (in hell), and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father." It is the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ that entitles Him to be recognized as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. When He exercises that authority, things are going to be changed.

The last part of Revelation 12:10 says, "For." This is introducing the reason for this rejoicing of the people in heaven. The idea is "because." Why are these people happy? Because it identifies the sign indicating that God the Father, is on the move in these areas. They rejoice over this sign of Satan being cast out because of: "The accuser." This is the Greek "kategoreo." "Kategoreo" means one who speaks against someone else. It connotes speaking against a person specifically, interestingly enough, in a court of law.

For example, it is used in Luke 6:7 to accuse a person of sinning: "And the scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him (that is, Jesus) closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath day, in order that they might find reason to accuse ('kategoreo') Him." They wanted to be able to accuse him of a wrong doing.

In Mark 15:4, this word is used: "And Pilate was questioning Him again, saying, 'Do you make no answer. See how many charges (accusations) they bring against you." Jesus being accused of things which were not true. But it's the idea of accusing somebody of a wrongdoing.

Acts 22:30 illustrates this: "But on the next study, wishing to know for certain why He had been accused by the Jews (there it is again), He released Him, and ordered the chief priest and all the counsel in assembly, and he brought Paul down and set him before them."

The accuser that is referred to in Revelation 12:10 is Satan: "The accuser of our brethren" refers here to fellow Christians, specifically to Christians who are still alive on earth with their old sin nature is intact. That is, he is referring to people such as you and I. It says, "The accuser of our brethren has been thrown down." This is referring to what we read earlier about Michael and his angels defeating Satan and his angels, so that Satan has been cast out of the third heaven. This word "thrown down" is the Greek word "ballo." This word is in the aorist tense, so it indicates the midpoint of the tribulation, a very specific point in time. It is passive, meaning it's done to Satan. If there is one thing Satan doesn't want to do, it is to lose access to heaven. This is passive voice, so this is done to him.

Satan to this day has access to God's throne room. He can call attention there to your sins, and that's what he's doing. He calls attention to the sins of the saints before the heavenly court. No doubt, Satan will do this especially for those of you who have a place of particular spiritual significance and authority and of influence on earth. He makes these accusations in heaven, and he calls the attention of the heavenly court to our sins in order to prove that God is unjust in permitting a sinning Christian to enter heaven while excluding Satan and his demons for their sins.

**The Security of the Believer**

Satan's argument is repeated many times by people who argue against the eternal security of the believers. Why does anybody argue against the Christian being able to be born again once for all? Because the Christian still sins. We're back to this marvelous little truth about the concentric circles. You can come out of the inner circle of temporal fellowship by sinning. However, you can never leave the outer circle of eternal fellowship by sinning. People argue against the security of the believer because they argue that sin, on the part of the believer, takes him out of his salvation.

**Satan Accuses Us**

So, Satan in heaven points to the believer's moments of sinfulness in order to prove his unworthiness of salvation at some point in time. If all of us had to be born again, and then stay perfectly free of sin, we would be in a terrible condition. None of us would make it. So, Satan today is using his access to God's heavenly courtroom to slander, in effect, the justice of God. That's what he's doing. He is saying, "God, You're not just. You're letting Joe Schmo over here get away with something. He's a Christian. You've given him salvation, but look what he's doing. He's sending like any unbeliever, and yet you're going to take him into heaven?

Well, God the Father defends His sinning child because Jesus Christ has been appointed as our advocate (our lawyer) in heaven. And because Christ has paid for the sins of mankind once and for all, there is nothing that you and I can do, no matter how heinous it may be, to get us back out of the family of God. When you're born into something, you cannot be unborn.

Hebrews 9:27-28 tell us: "Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment. So, Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation, without reference to sin, to those who are eagerly awaiting Him." Jesus came the first time to settle the issue of sin. He's going to come a second time, apart from the issue of sin. Nothing more has to be done about that. His death has permanently taken care of our need for atonement.

In John 5:24, Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you: he who hears My Word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." Those who have Christ have eternal life. They have passed out of judgment. They can never again be brought into it.

Then there is the startling verse in Romans 8:1, which certainly clinches it when Paul says, "There is, therefore now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. That is a statement of permanency. Once you're in Christ Jesus, no matter how much of a dog you may become in evil, you can never again be under condemnation, because all of those sins that follow have also been covered.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven is our lawyer. He pleads our innocence. How? On the evidence that He has. He holds his hands out. He shows the evidence of the wounds, and in His feet, and in His side, which are associated with His sacrifice upon the cross for the death of the sins of the world. That payment has been permanently made.

**Propitiation**

In 1 John 2:1-2, we have this precious doctrine. John says, "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin." John says, "I'm writing to you, little children." That means that they're Christians. This whole book was written to Christians. It's important that you understand that. There are some people who take 1 John 1:9, and argue that that's a salvation verse. It is not a salvation verse. It is a temporal fellowship verse. We know this because it is in a book that speaks to Christians. He says, "My little children, you're in my family as Christians. I'm telling you these things so that you don't sin. But I want you to know that if anyone sins, we have an advocate (a lawyer) with the Father – Jesus Christ, the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins?" What does propitiation mean? Satisfaction. He is the satisfaction to the justice of God for all of our sins.

You cannot do anything that poses a problem for God relative to your sin. Did you get that? *You cannot do anything that poses a problem to God relative to your sins.* "He is the satisfaction for our sins, and (wonder of wonders) not for ours only, but also for all those of the whole world, including the people who said, 'No' to the gospel, and are now in hell." There are folks who think that they are going to make it on their own righteousness and their own morality. The Lord Jesus Christ will never die again because the debt has been paid once for all. It's not necessary for Him to die. So, He'll always be there to act as your defense lawyer. He will never be absent.

The sinning Christian has not stepped out of the outer circle of eternal fellowship of salvation. He is permanently in Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "For we are baptized by the Spirit of God into Christ." The Christian has stepped out of the inner circle in time. When he does, that Christian needs to use 1 John 1:9 to confess that sin and get back into fellowship with God the Father.

The accusations that Satan brings against God's children may indeed be true. They probably are. But those accusations have been paid for, so we are inevitably declared by God, the judge, to be not guilty. Ephesians 1:7 says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace," not according to riches of your works and not according to riches of your rituals; and, not according to the riches of your promises, but according to His grace.

The saints in heaven are very glad that they will not have to listen to Satan's abuse of believers any longer. The Christian may be guilty of sin, but that cannot frustrate God's salvation, which is received as a gift of grace based upon God's own payment for our moral guilt. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear that it's a gift of grace, not of works.

Satan can lodge nothing legitimately against us that would deny our right to spending eternity in heaven with a holy and righteous God. Romans 8:33-34 say "Who will bring the charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died; yes, rather, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." There is another element of His care. Not only does he act as our defense lawyer (our advocate) in heaven, defending us against the accusation of Satan, claiming that we should be sent to hell, and to have us removed from the rolls of salvation, but furthermore, he tries to make it unnecessary for him to have to plead our cause. This is like any good lawyer would try to deal with the client, and try to make it unnecessary for him to defend this person against some illegal act again.

Our Lord Jesus intercedes for us. Can you imagine what kind of people we would be if we didn't have the Son of God interceding for us, praying for us a prayer that is always going to be answered, and that will never, never fail?

Well, how intense is statement about this? How serious is he about this role of accusing believers in heaven? How determined is he? And what is the absolute basis of our assurance that we will always be declared not guilty? In the book of Romans, Paul says, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Next time, we will show you the basis of that inevitable position of security of those of you who have trusted Christ, and have once for all been covered by His atonement.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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