

The Greatest Battle
Ever Fought

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

The greatest battle ever fought is described in Colossians 2, referring to the time when all the forces of God met with all the forces of hell. The place of that battle was the hill of Golgotha, preceded by the Garden of Gethsemane. That battle was the battle of all the ages. It was the battle of battles. Here is the scenario: If Jesus Christ were to remain dead, Satan would succeed in ascending above God. But if Jesus Christ were to come forth from the dead, then Satan would be defeated, and Jesus Christ would be God and Lord over him and over everything he produced.

Let me repeat that. If Satan were to win the victory, then he would succeed in ascending above God, and he would be lord above all (Isaiah 14:12-14). But if Jesus Christ were to come forth from the grave and win a victory over the thing that made Satan victorious (up to that point), then Jesus Christ would be the Lord of all

and the God of all. Positionally, from the standpoint of eternity and the perfect oneness of the Trinity, this is not true. Experientially, however, because of His commitment to identify with us, it is true. In one sense, once He committed Himself to identify with us, Jesus Christ was not Lord of all until after the Cross.

Do you understand it? From the standpoint of His omnipotence and from the standpoint of His omniscience, He was not God of all until He actually defeated all that Satan caused and had done away with all that Satan produced. This message will reveal that, of all the battles that have been fought, even those by men with right motives to set people free, the Cross of Christ was the scene of the greatest battle ever fought.

Chapter One

SIN ENTERS THE PICTURE

This is the story. This is the earth-shaking battle of all the ages. Sin entered into the human race through a woman, Eve, because of Satan's subtlety in the Garden of Eden. Sin completely corrupted and polluted all of her seed, and since then, every person born was born of a corruptible seed. And since then, each one goes astray as soon as he is born (Psalm 58:3). Psalm 51:5 says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Iniquity is Satan's sin that produces sin because of man's sin. Any sin that is derived from that iniquity is equally bad, but in order to relate to something that identifies completely and absolutely with Satan, we use the word "iniquity." Ezekiel 25:18 tells us that "iniquity was found" in Satan. What was the essence of his iniquity? It was a desire to exalt himself. Five times he declared that he wanted to exalt him-

self and be like God—and not only to be like Him, but to rise above Him (Isaiah 14:12-14).

What did Eve want? She desired something that she was not supposed to have, in order to be like whom? In order to be like God. Do you get the point? That is iniquity. Iniquity is simply the first sin. There are many sins that derive from the first sin, but iniquity was Satan's sin, and it was Eve's sin also.

Eve reproduced herself, and she produced children who sinned. Because of God's justice, it takes an individual's free will to commit the act before he is classified as a sinner. Nevertheless, the inherited nature, which is sinful, makes it certain that every single person will choose to sin with his free volition, inasmuch as the only nature he has is a sinful nature.

Satan Wins One

What was Satan's victory? It was simply this: "God, You placed a man and a woman, both free of sin, in the Garden; but You gave them free volition," Satan said. "I simply came along and tempted them, and they followed me. And the moment they obeyed me, You had to step out, and I stepped in. I not only won control of the first woman You made, but I won con-

trol of her husband too. I knew that if I could get to her, I could get to him because he was one with her. I deceived her, and, because of his desire to be one with her, he followed in her sin.”

Eve was a helpmate, made from his own rib, and Adam didn’t want to be detached from the only helpmate that God had given him on earth. When Eve sinned, part of Adam sinned, because Eve derived from Adam.

Follow this carefully. God created a man and a woman. They were created without personal sin, but with volitions that could choose to go against God if they wanted to. If they didn’t, they would glorify God. If they did sin, they would be separated from God (Genesis 2:16-17).

God Takes Responsibility for Adam’s Sin

Adam and Eve were created in a perfect environment, with perfect hearts, but with a choice. And the responsibility that came with that choice left God with the consequences of that choice.

Inasmuch as they were made by God, for God, and through God, if they sinned, God had taken upon Himself a personal responsibility to take care of the consequences for what they did. Why? Because He made them. “But,” you say,

“He made them perfect.” That’s right. Nevertheless, He did make them, and that included a free will, with an ability to make a choice. It was His plan, and if something happened in His plan, He must provide for the consequences of a wrong choice. They were derived from Him because of His love, and His love would make possible a provision if they went wrong on the negative pole of human volition.

So, they went wrong. At that point, because Eve was taken out of Adam’s side, and because she was absolutely a part of him, Adam had a responsibility. His responsibility was that if she went wrong, he would identify with her. Why? He couldn’t help it. She was a part of him. She was his other self. He loved her as himself, and she went wrong. Loving her as himself, Adam found he must identify with her when she went wrong. He was not deceived as the woman was (1 Timothy 2:13-14), but Adam was willing to sell all he had with God to identify with his other self. Was she guilty? Yes. Did she go against God? Yes. Was Adam willing to go against God to identify with her? Yes.

Christ Became Sin for Us

Jesus Christ created us. Were we guilty when

we sinned with our own free will? Yes. Did we go against God? Yes. Was He willing to become sin to identify with us? Yes. That is how deeply He loved us. He was willing to become sin, to become everything that we are, in order to redeem us. He felt the responsibility for the consequences of our negative choices; therefore, He who knew no sin became sin, just as Adam who knew no sin became a sinner.

He created us in His own image, even as Eve was made in Adam's image. Eve was taken out of Adam and produced in the image of Adam, and we were made by Jesus Christ in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Therefore, though we had a fallen image, God said, "I must identify with my fallen image to get them back through Redemption and restore them back to the correct image."

God wanted men to love one another as themselves, even as the Trinity loves each member as themselves with a coequal, immutable love. Adam was to love Eve as himself, and Jesus Christ loves the Church as Himself; therefore, He must do to the Church what He wants her to do to Him. He absolutely entered into identification of total love and total commitment to restore that which had been lost.

Separated from Fellowship

So, Satan said to God, “You said the wages of sin is separation. You created men for fellowship, but, according to Your own spiritual laws and Your own moral attributes, You have no right to fellowship with them because they are sinners.

“The very purpose for which You created man has been lost. I charge You with Your own Truth that You have no right to fellowship with this man that You made, because the man You made violated the spiritual law that You are.”

Chalk that one up for Satan.

“Secondly,” Satan said, “You said that the day they partake of the fruit of that tree, they will die. Well, they took it, and “death” means to be separated from You—and separation from You means fellowship with me. Just keep that in mind! God, that is according to Your own Truth, so leave my crowd alone!”

And Satan went on, saying, “God, You said You cannot look upon iniquity (Habbakuk 1:13). What did Eve do, God? She committed iniquity, which was my original sin. And even as iniquity was found in me, and You had to kick me out of heaven, iniquity was found in her, so You have

to kick her out. She was out of fellowship with You, so now, because she is the mother of all living, all are out of fellowship with You."

"In other words, God, they are all mine. You created them for your pleasure (Revelation 4:11), for Your glory (Isaiah 43:7). But now You must admit, they are not Yours at all. They are all mine. The very purpose You created them for has been dethroned and absolutely nullified. You have got to admit, God, that I have risen above you on the basis of my victory!"

According to 2 Corinthians 4:4, God could see that Satan was the "god of this world." Satan was telling the truth. The whole world is under Satan's government (1 John 5:19). The Lord says that this is true; therefore, He has nothing to do with Satan or the world's system (John 14:30).

All of this prepares the stage for the greatest battle ever fought.

Chapter Two

THE TRINITY MOVES

All the Old Testament sacrifices did not cleanse the consciences of those that brought them, because the battle had not yet been won. It was only a theoretical truth that Satan challenged. The reality was that, experientially, the greatest battle had not yet been fought.

Satan challenged God. "Go ahead with the blood of animals, but that will not produce cleansed consciences. God, You are operating on a theory with your religion for Israel. The religious rituals and ceremonies, I don't buy them! You haven't proven a thing!

"I will show You that You haven't proven a thing. When You come unto them, they won't even receive You. The world that You made won't recognize its Creator (John 1:10), and Your own people will reject You.

"They will not receive You, and that should prove to You that I am in control. And with all

Your blood animals and all of Your substitutes and all of Your religion, I will prove to You that it doesn't redeem, that it doesn't deliver, and that it is not effective! It is just a theory. I am really their god, and you know it! I am their god on the basis of truth. They have chosen me and rejected You."

The Plan

The plan of the determinate counsel of the Trinity (Acts 2:23) had its day and its hour. They made their move, and I thank God that it is behind us. Not only can we have the consciousness of the Throne in its victory, but also the cleansing of the Blood of Christ in our experience. This is something that Old Testament saints could never have, and that is why each succeeding generation since the New Testament covenant is so responsible for the privilege of having Jesus Christ's Person for total personal victory.

This is what happened. God had His time, God had His appointment, and the Cross came into being. Jesus was born of an incorruptible seed and born of a sinful woman, who was a virgin chosen among women not above women (Luke 1:28). She was a beautiful and pure

woman, and she called Jesus Christ her Savior, in Luke 1:47. She was a sinner, and she needed a Savior. She was pure, and she was a virgin; but she was also a sinner, and she needed to be saved.

You and I were born of corruptible seed through Eve. Jesus Christ was born of a woman who had a sin nature, but His seed was incorruptible because it was of the Holy Spirit, not of Adam and not of Eve.

Consider God's amazing victory. Satan tried to defeat God through a woman, and God, in return, used another woman, or a second Eve, in His plan to defeat Satan. God used that which was natural to introduce the supernatural, and Satan, who had a supernatural origin, used the supernatural to introduce the natural.

We thank God that Mary was pure and chosen, not above women, but among them. Through her, God brought an incorruptible seed, Jesus Christ, with no personal, inherent sin but with a free volition.

I thank God that Jesus Christ had a free will, and in that free will He was tempted in all points, just as we are (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore, with His free will, Jesus said in the Garden, "Not my will but thine be done." If for one second He

had thought anything outside of the Father's plan, He would have fallen, and we would have been plunged into hell with no hope. He could not afford even to think against the Father.

Every single thing Jesus did was "not my will but thine be done." Because of that relationship to the Father, He did not stray outside of God's plan with His free volition. Adam trusted his perfect humanity. Satan trusted his perfect angelic creation. But Jesus Christ wouldn't even trust His own perfect, sinless humanity. And if He had, it would have been against the Father, and it would have been all over for the universe.

Had Jesus Christ made one single decision apart from the plan of God, there would be no family of God, no Bride, no Church, no heaven for us. He did not sin, though He was surely tempted.

The Assault at Gethsemane

So, the greatest battle ever fought now began in the Garden of Gethsemane. All the forces of Hell were ushered in from the four corners of the earth.

"This is it," Satan said to his legions. "We are going to kill this One who claims He is the Messiah. We will crucify Him. We will show Him up

against the people by finding Him guilty. He will be tried and found guilty. They will call Him a winebibber, a friend of the prostitutes, a friend of publicans and sinners. We are going to destroy Him before our own angels, and we will destroy Him before the angels of God who are watching. We are going to destroy Him right in front of God.

“He doesn’t have a chance because my entire world’s system is joining me. My entire host of demons and every person in the universe are all going to join me. All of their sins and my supernatural power will become one, and we will kill Him.”

The strange part of it is that it was our sins, also, that figured in to this battle. He deserved to die, but only because He identified with people who were guilty. He was pure, perfect, innocent, and just. But because He chose to identify with us, He deserved death. On the basis of Truth, because Jesus identified with wicked sinners, Satan had a right to have Jesus killed.

God had to turn His back (Matthew 27:46). Satan proved Him guilty before the Father. He proved Jesus guilty because He identified with the guilty, as the guilty, because of love.

Up to this point, Satan had his victory over

God based upon Truth. Satan was still operating in Truth from the standpoint of the Kingdom.

The Darkness Descends

Can you comprehend the darkness? Can you see the forces of Hell gathering around the Garden of Gethsemane? Demonic spirits, millions of them, were celebrating and shouting in the invisible atmosphere of that night, filling the environment with their presence.

Can you imagine the demons in the Garden doing everything in their supernatural power to kill Jesus before He reached the Cross? If they had succeeded, that would mean that He could not die for the sins of the whole world. It would have been a death that could not be considered redemptive because it would have been apart from the Cross.

Can you see His face as the blood poured out of His pores, and He came within an eyelash of dying? Can you imagine how Jesus felt? The demons said, "We've got Him!" Satan said, "Look at Him. We've got Him! His disciples are asleep, and He is just as good as dead. We have almost defeated the very best God has to offer." Oh, how they partied.

But Jesus got up. You know why He got up?

Because God the Father heard His prayer.

On to Calvary

God let Jesus walk up the hill of Golgotha with His Cross. In weakness, He could not carry it all the way on His own. This is a picture of Jesus Christ, as our representative, needing us to help Him make that Cross a resurrection victory over the devil. Literally, this was the true physical condition of His body, mind, and emotions. He was almost dead, premature to Calvary. But the reason, spiritually, that He didn't carry His Cross alone is that Jesus Christ wanted us to be a part of carrying up His Cross. That way, when He was resurrected, everyone who would take up that Cross would be resurrected with Him. It was His Cross. Yet, it was not only His Cross because it was my sin He bore. Therefore, it was my Cross, too.

Finally on Mount Calvary, the spikes, the nails, the wagging tongues, the crown of thorns, the spitting, the scourging, the cat-o'-nine tails—all had taken their toll. The Son of God was getting weaker and weaker.

The Angels Could Only Watch

Can you imagine how the angelic forces of

God hovered over the Cross saying, "Can't we save Him?" But the Father responded, "I am not even looking."

"Let us go and take Him from the Cross. One of us can do it. Let us do it!" the angels pleaded, I'm sure.

And the Father said, "I can't even look upon Him. He is guilty!"

Can you imagine how the angels felt when they saw God the Father turn His back upon Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son? They had to realize that Jesus Christ was guilty of death because He had chosen to become one of us. It was His choice. Therefore, He had to pay the consequences because He too, as a man, had free volition. He had a right to choose, and He did choose. And because of His choice, He had to pay.

Jesus experienced public shame, public defeat, public frustration, and public weakness. Finally, before the public, God died—as a man—before their eyes. As *they* saw it, Jesus the man died—not God, but the man. The man, representing men, was God. But as a man, before men and before God, for God and for men—He died.

Can you imagine the amazing parties—the shouting and the victory cries of the demons?

Can you imagine the unbelievable satisfaction of Satan? It was all over, and they were successful, or so it seemed.

Because of Truth, sin killed Jesus because He identified with men. In other words, Satan said, "He got what He deserved because He became one with them. Now I am not only god over all the people, but at the Cross I proved I was an equal match with Jesus. Truth convicted Him, and Truth condemned Him, because that was what the Father said sin should do. It should kill, and that is what it did. I am the victorious one, and I am still the god of the world. The whole purpose of creation has been altered and handed over to me.

"I caused the storms to come up," Satan continued, "and I caused Judas to do what I told him to do. I caused the disciples who walked with Him three years to forsake Him. I did all of that. I caused the crowd to find Him guilty, because they walked by sight, and I gave them all kinds of sight to walk by. I even completely fooled Jesus. He didn't know that what He experienced in the Garden would be as bad as it was. I proved to Him that I was god, and He had to beg for mercy. He almost died prematurely, but we got Him anyway."

Chapter Three

A SEEMING DEFEAT GIVES WAY TO VICTORY

The greatest battle ever fought. When Jesus died, it seemed as though He was finally being judged. It looked as if the One who could redeem the world had lost, and He was the only One qualified to do it. When the second day rolled around, it looked as if He had lost His case in His effort to redeem man. It looked as if mankind had no other way out.

It also looked as though Satan would be in control forever. The devil appeared to have ascended above God, defeating God's plan and interfering with God's Person by overcoming God's purpose. That is how it appeared. The whole earth was filled with gloom.

Consider this: Those on the earth were so confused that even the words of God seemed to have no effect. The things that Jesus had said about how He would rise again had no effect.

Why? Because it was Satan's world—that's why. Satan, at this point, appeared to be victorious, and the entire creation, including God's people who had followed Jesus, had accepted the lie that the Savior was not the Savior and that this was a hopeless cause. Jesus was now dead. It was all over. And they were filled with fear, gloom, darkness, bleakness, sadness, heartache, sorrow, and frustration. Not only was Jesus judged and found guilty, but we were found guilty, forever, with no hope. That is how it was.

Resurrection: The Ultimate Victory

Then, it happened. In Romans 1:4, the Holy Spirit, who is God (Acts 5:3-4), went to work and raised up the body of Jesus Christ, the man, from the dead. He had gone into hell and announced His victory, then He came forth from the tomb and appeared to Mary Magdelene. After that, He appeared to the disciples and then to the five hundred. He said, "Here I am! Peace."

Can you imagine how Mary's heart felt? It was not over! It was not hopeless. Hell and death and sadness would no longer reign. He who had won and was now alive from the dead appeared first to a woman. It was a woman who fell in the Garden of Eden; it was a woman who

was used to bring Him into the human race, and it was a woman to whom he first appeared after the Resurrection.

Can you imagine how she felt when He said, "Mary"? Can you imagine her heart leaping? Can you imagine how Peter and John and James felt, in John 20:22, when He passed through the wall into the room where they were assembled together for fear of the Jews? Can you imagine how they felt when He said "Peace be unto you"? Can you imagine how Thomas felt as Jesus went to him on the second Sunday and said, "Reach hither thy finger" (John 20:27)?

Can you imagine how each one felt when they realized they now had victory for eternity through a personal Lord who became a personal deliverer as their personal Savior? Can you imagine how they felt when they saw Him ascend into heaven (Acts 1:11)? Can you imagine, in Matthew 28:16, when they went back into Jerusalem with joy, praising God and waiting in that upper room? Imagine them saying, "We are not lost. We are living! It is not hopeless; we are saved. It is not death; it is life. It is not sorrow; it is Jesus. It is not fear; it is love!"

Jesus didn't condemn the disciples for forsaking Him. He said "peace" to them because

His was a message of peace and not condemnation.

Satan's Judgment Revealed

In the greatest battle ever fought, what appeared to be a judgment that would never end for man was placed upon the God-man, Jesus Christ. The judgment intended for us had turned around and become Satan's eternal judgment. Now there is no hope for Satan. What appeared to be a hopeless case for Jesus Christ and the human race was now a hopeless case for Satan and all the demons. For them, it was over forever! They shot their last bullet, and it was over.

All have sinned. Yes, Satan, that is right. The wages of sin is death. That's right, Satan. But there is more Truth to it, Satan: The just died for the unjust and paid for all their sins, and you can never accuse or condemn or judge again, because they have been judged in the death of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, Satan, when Jesus came forth from the grave on the third day, you were judged. All of the accusations are over. No longer can you abide in Truth. Anything you say now is a lie. The sins of the human race are paid

for.

He died in our place, once and for all (Romans 6:9; Hebrews 10:10). The demands of holiness were met for us in Jesus Christ. We are hid in Him. In Him, we are saved, redeemed, restored, and delivered.

Satan, there is nothing you can do. All you have left are emotional lies. You have been judged, defeated, and crushed. We reign and rule with grace, according to Romans 5:21. We are more than conquerors. We are always going to triumph, and not a single thing can defeat us. The only ones who will be defeated are those who accept your lie.

The tables were turned, and Resurrection reversed Satan's decision completely. Had Jesus remained dead, He would have proven Satan's victory, but the Resurrection has further proven the devil's defeat. It proved that Jesus Christ is God. There is no other name to bow to. It is not Buddha or someone else. Only Jesus Christ is God, and He is the only one who paid for our sins. He is the only one who ever identified with us and came out of it alive.

Since the moment of the Resurrection, all Satan has been able to do is to lie against the truth, against God's life, against God's way, and

against God's Body. All Satan has to offer are lies, whether they come by feelings, mental problems, or circumstances, but his lies can never stand against God's truth.

That is why we live and are sanctified by the Word of Truth (John 17:17). That is why we live by every Word of God (Matthew 4:4).

CONCLUSION

Before the Cross, Satan could tell the Truth; but since the Cross, all he has is a lie. The Redeemer has come—and Satan no longer has a theoretical argument. Once and for all he has been experientially defeated, and it is all settled.

We are living in the divine establishment of the eternal Truth, through the eternal Blood, in the eternal Person, for eternal Joy. No one can touch us. We are out of the devil's reach. We are out of death, fear, condemnation, and lies. We are seated in a victory that is forever. Therefore, there is now no condemnation. Our prayers are answered, and we can never be overcome (Acts 5:39). Jesus Christ is the eternal Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. For us, He overcame the enemy by His Blood, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and He won the greatest battle ever fought.