

Risen With Christ

In the Book of Colossians, Paul is writing to the Church at Colossae. Although he uses slightly different words, he says the same things he has said to the Ephesians about God's plan of redemption. He doesn't preach a new or different message to the Colossians.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

“15 [Jesus] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

In the second chapter, we see that Christ was quickened by God the Father:

COLOSSIANS 2:12-15

“12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Verse twelve says we were raised with **Christ "through the faith of the operation of God."** Notice it was the Father who did this work. Verse thirteen tells us that God not only quickened us at the same time He quickened Christ, but He also forgave our sins!

When Jesus the Righteous yielded to death, the bond of the law against us was paid. The Father then blotted out the broken laws and commandments which had stood between Him and us. He nailed this canceled bond to His Son's cross.

Paul is saying here in Colossians that it was God who formed the plan of redemption. It was God who raised Jesus from the dead. It was God who gave Him a Name above every other name. And it was God who spoiled the demonic principalities and powers who opposed the resurrection of Christ.

Death is the penalty for sin. Therefore, when Christ bore the world's guilt on the cross, the satanic powers of the air sought to exercise their rights and hold Him under their power.

The Keys of Authority

The Bible says Satan had the power of death—but Jesus conquered him. Jesus says in Revelation 1:18, **"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."** Jesus Christ took the keys away from the devil, glory to God! Keys belong to the Authorized One. Those are the keys of authority.

We must remember that physical death is not of God; it is of the enemy. Death is still an enemy. The Bible says it is the last enemy that will be put underfoot. Thank God, that day's coming, but you don't have your new body yet. You'll meet people who believe they are going to live forever down here in the flesh but notice none of them ever do. One fellow argued about it with a bible teacher on this belief, and he replied, "If Paul never made it, you might as well forget it."

One can't understand how anybody could be that stupid and believe he's going to live forever in the flesh—in his present body. No, that body's got to be changed. You can't live forever in this present body. The Bible tells us when it will be changed: when Jesus comes. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the bodies of us who are alive then will be changed and become immortal. Until then we have only a limited power over death.

After stripping the demonic powers of the authority that had been theirs, Christ **"made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it"** (Col. 2:15).

Paul's statement here refers to the fact that Christ was elevated above His enemies to the right hand of the Father, a subject that Paul writes about in the Book of Ephesians, as we saw earlier. Again, Paul is stressing the Father's work in the overthrow of satanic powers and the defeat of Satan himself.

In Ephesians we also saw that the Son is seated above these powers and has the authority of the throne of God. But this is precisely where the church world as a whole has failed. It has understood that Jesus Christ is the Supreme Head of the Church, but it has failed to understand that the Head is totally dependent on the Body for carrying out His plans; that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places; and that His exercising authority over the powers of the air has to be through the Body.

Now we can understand as never before what Jesus meant when He said, (Matt. 18:18). ***"...Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"*** That's using His authority upon the earth.

A few of us get a little glimpse of authority once in a while; some of us have sort of stumbled upon it and exercised it without realizing what we were doing. The thing that got me started studying along this line was when I asked myself the question: "Do we have authority that we don't know we have?"

When one preacher began to study the subject, he found that we do have authority, thank God. He also found that heaven will back us up on what we refuse and what we allow. We've allowed a lot of things, but we just haven't exercised our authority. That's why things are as they are many times: We haven't done anything about the situation. We're waiting on God, and He's waiting on us, and He won't do anything until we act.

There were times when a well-known preacher was praying about a loved one near death, and the Lord said to him, "I'll do whatever you tell Me to do." In one instance he asked the Lord to give the person two or three more years. He replied He would, just because he had asked Him to. He told him, "No earthly father desires to do more for his children than I do, if my children would just let Me!"

Some people think that God's a tyrant sitting on His throne holding a giant flyswatter in His hand. The minute you do something wrong, they believe He's ready to smash you to smithereens. But that's not a true picture of the Father.

The Lord is hindered in His plans because His Body has failed to appreciate the meaning of Christ's exaltation and the fact that we are seated with Him at the right hand of the Father. We have a part to play in this: We must cooperate with the Lord in faith.

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit, who comes to dwell in us when we are born again, would guide us into all truth. A preacher once picked up a Bible and threw it to the floor, declaring he didn't need it because he had the Holy Spirit. But he did need the Bible, because you can't follow the Holy Spirit into truth apart from the Bible.

When you get out beyond the written Word of God, you're getting out too far. Stay with the Word.

The Word of God is from the Spirit of God: Holy men of old wrote it. The Word of God is of utmost importance. But you'll never understand it with your head; you must understand it with your heart.

Don't put the Spirit above the Word. Put the Word first and the Spirit second, and you'll be safe. The well-known Pentecostal editor Stanley Frodsham, the author of Smith Wigglesworth's biography, brought out the fact that Wigglesworth was, first of all, a man of God's Word, and second, a man filled with the Spirit of God. That's an excellent combination.

THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE - The Armor of God

The believer must continually be arrayed with spiritual armor. **Ephesians 6:10,11** says, ***"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."***

The Christian who puts on this armor and engages in spiritual warfare is marked. By spiritual warfare we simply mean doing the works of Jesus and taking our authority over the devil as we go about our daily lives. I am not talking about purposely trying to go head-to-head with Satan in some kind of prayer combat. The devil will do everything in his power to keep you from coming into this knowledge of authority over him. He'll fight you more over this than any other subject. Then, after you have come to the knowledge of this authority, he'll oppose you and try to steal it from you. There will be tests, and sometimes people fail those tests. The devil wants you to throw up your hands and say the authority of the believer won't work for you.

A man once came to a preacher in a meeting where he was preaching on this and said the authority of the believer wouldn't work for him. The preacher told him if it doesn't work, God is a liar. (This man was, in essence, calling God a liar.)

I'd rather die than say God's Word doesn't work. If it doesn't work, it's because I don't work it. We may fail, but God's Word doesn't fail. I believe His Word is true.

The enemy will resist your interference in his sphere, because he's exercising authority over the powers of the air, and he wants to continue to do so. When you interfere with Satan's kingdom by exercising your spiritual authority, he will attack you in an attempt to get you to back down from using that authority. He will concentrate all of his forces against you in intense, bitter warfare.

If you successfully resist Satan's attacks in one area, he will come against you in another area. You may as well get ready for these attacks, because they're coming. In other words, your privileged spiritual position makes you an enemy to the devil.

No truth encounters the opposition that the authority of the believer does. We have known good people whom the devil has tried to overthrow in any way he could. They have either been taught these truths or they have not been taught these truths. They have endeavored to act upon them. Many times, they have been overthrown in body because they could not be overthrown in spirit.

You see, the devil realizes he cannot hold in bondage a believer who knows his authority in Christ Jesus. Such a believer is aware that he is seated with Christ in heavenly places and that the devil is a defeated foe under his feet (Eph. 1:15-2:6). Furthermore, this believer is convinced that no work of the enemy can prevail against him in carrying out the will of God on the earth.

How To Remain Undefeated

If believers had taken advantage of the spiritual armor provided for them, the enemy could not have defeated them. I don't believe that anything that's of the enemy should be able to defeat those of us who are members of the Body of Christ.

The believer must continually be arrayed with this armor. The Holy Spirit prayed through Paul that the eyes of the people would be opened to know this full provision that has been made for their safety. Spiritual armor is outlined in Ephesians 6:

EPHESIANS 6:10-17

“10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might [not your might].

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [or wicked spirits] in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [If you put on the whole armor of God, you'll stand.]

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 ABOVE ALL, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. [Not one fiery dart should get through to your body, soul, or mind, because you've got the shield of faith.]

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

The different parts of this armor symbolize spiritual truths which belong to the believer. Wearing this armor, the believer is protected and unhampered in his ministry of authority. All he needs to be concerned about is keeping his armor bright and well secured about him. Now let's take a closer look at this armor:

John A. MacMillan, who was a former Presbyterian layman that later became a missionary, writer, editor, and professor with the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church wrote in 1930's on the Authority of the Believer. He taught, that:

- First there's the girdle of truth, which represents a clear understanding of God's Word. Like a soldier's belt, it holds the rest of the armor in place.
- Second is the breastplate of righteousness. This has a twofold application: Jesus is our Righteousness, and we put Him on first. It also shows our obedience to the Word of God.
- Third, our feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. This is a faithful ministry proclaiming the Word of God.
- Fourth is the shield of faith. A shield is a covering for the entire body. This represents our complete safety under the blood of Christ, where no power of the enemy can penetrate.

- Fifth is the helmet of salvation, referred to in **First Thessalonians 5:8** as the hope of salvation. The hope of salvation is the only helmet able to protect the head in these days of turning from the truth.
- Sixth is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This shows that the Word of God is to be used offensively. The other parts of the armor are mainly defensive, but the sword—the Word of God—is an active weapon.

Ephesians 6:18 says, ***“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”***

Do you see why the prayer fight doesn’t work many times? It is because we do not have on the armor of God. We are ready for the prayer fight when we have the armor on. Praying in the Spirit gets the job done!