

The Greatest Theme in the World

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CHAPTER SEVEN

SATAN AND CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

The atonement of CHRIST affects Heaven, earth, and hell.

Heaven is satisfied with the atonement of CHRIST. Ample provision is made for earth's sin in it, and hell is defeated by it.

There is one expression, which is frequently used in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that is, "**The blood of bulls and goats.**" Whenever this expression is used, the reference is to the offering on the great day of atonement. The blood of the bullock was offered to the Lord in making an atonement for Aaron and his house, and the two goats are associated in making an atonement for the sins of the people. Only one of the goats was killed, and the other goat was to be for Azazel [as tradition has it], states in Leviticus 16:10, for the scapegoat.

Many theories have been advanced as to what is meant by Azazel, the consensus of opinion being that it has a reference to Satan. Some of the fathers even went so far as to say that CHRIST in His death met a certain claim of the evil one. But he, being a usurper, there was no claim to be met; still, since he had gained power over man through sin, that power had to be annulled, and this could only be done by CHRIST's sacrificial death.

1. The Head bruised.

The prophetic statement given by the Lord to Adam in the garden was that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). It is masculine and not neuter. [98]

Many have thought that a reference is made to this declaration in Psalm 40:7, and the Septuagint Version of the verse lends colour to it, "In the first roll, at the head of the beginning of the book, it is written of Me, to do Thy will, My God."

The completeness of CHRIST's victory over the evil one is indicated in the word "**bruise.**" Parkhurst, in his Hebrew lexicon, says upon this verb, "It means '*to cover,*' '*overwhelm,*' as with a

tempest or darkness." Job 9:17 - "**Who will overwhelm me with a tempest.**" Psalm 139:11 - "**Surely the darkness will cover me.**" This latter text, compared with the context, appears to me to fix the meaning of the verb, and, therefore, according to the common reading, I am obliged to understand it in the same sense in the only remaining passage where it occurs, namely, Genesis 3:15, which, in this view, will contain an allusion to that outer darkness to which Satan should finally be condemned, as well as to that darkness of death and the grave to which the mortal part of the promised Seed should be reduced, when the power of darkness prevailed against Him (Luke 22:53).

Satan seemed to overwhelm CHRIST when he focussed all the powers of darkness upon Him at the Cross. But he was only bruising the heel of CHRIST. CHRIST by means of that very death has overwhelmed the power of darkness, and covered it with eternal confusion. Satan has bruised the heel of CHRIST, but CHRIST has fetched him such a blow on the head that he will never get over it.

II. *The Spoiler spoiled.*

"He shall divide the spoil with the strong," or, as Lowth paraphrases it, "He shall take the spoil from the strong." [99]

And we are given the reason why He shall accomplish this, "**because He hath poured out His soul unto death**" (Isaiah 53:12).

Satan was the strong man armed that kept his goods in peace till CHRIST the Stronger overcame him, taking his armour from him. and dividing his spoils (Luke 11:21, 22).

The Old Testament opens with the temptation of the first Adam, and the New Testament opens with the temptation of the last Adam. But what a contrast! In the former we behold defeat and ruin, but in the latter victory and redemption. In both temptations we see that Satan uses three weapons: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Lust of the flesh-

"Tree was good for food" (Genesis 3:6).

"Command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:3).

Lust of the eyes-

"Pleasant to the eyes" (Genesis 3:6).

"Showed Him all the kingdoms" (Luke 4:5).

Pride of life-

"Desired to make one wise" (Genesis 3:6).

"Cast Thyself down" (Matthew 4:6).

Eve met the temptations with her own words, but CHRIST met Satan's suggestions with

the Word of GOD.

Our first parents were alone in the garden of Eden when beguiled by the evil one, but our Saviour, ere He went into the wilderness, had passed through the waters of death, and had received the anointing of the Spirit's power. The secret of His victory in the wilderness is found in that He had first died in the waters of Jordan. [100]

III. *The Powers stripped.*

"Having spoiled principalities and powers He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15), that is, the Cross. The thought that is suggested is that CHRIST's victory over the powers of evil was by means of the Cross.

Here the thought seems to be that of the powers and forces of evil gathering around CHRIST, but He puts them off from Himself, as a man would put off a garment which impedes his action. The word "**spoiled**" is used in Colossians 3:9, and is there rendered "**have put off**"; while a cognate noun is found in 2:11, and is translated "**the putting off.**" It means either having *put off from oneself, or having stripped others for oneself*. Liddle and Scott say that the expression is used in relation to one who puts off his clothes for combat. CHRIST stripped the principalities, as one might be stripped of his clothes.

Dr Maclaren remarks, "We see the whole process before our eyes - the victor stripping his prisoners of their clothes, of arms and ornaments and dress, then parading them as his captives, and then dragging them at the wheels of his triumphal car."

The powers of hell are degraded and humiliated by the death of CHRIST. They thought they degraded and humiliated Him when they fixed Him to Calvary's Cross, but He transfixed and degraded them in that very degradation. He stooped to conquer, and He conquered by means of His stoop. [101]

IV. *Death's Authority overthrown.*

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

There are two thoughts among others which are suggested by these words.

First, *the power Satan had.*

He is described as having the power of death. Satan evidently had great dominion and strength before CHRIST's death. The Greek word "*kratos*" suggests this. It is rendered "**dominion**" in I Peter 4:11; 5:11; Jude 25; and Revelation 1:6 in ascribing dominion to GOD. It is rendered "**strength**" in Luke 1:51, and "**power**" in Ephesians 1:19 and 6:10, in speaking of the power of GOD's might. This very word being associated with Satan, at once suggests the greatness of his domain and might.

The second thought is that: *CHRIST has taken away this power by means of His death.*

The word "**destroyed**" is translated "**loosed**" (Romans 7:2), "**done away**" (I Corinthians 13:10), "**put down**" (I Corinthians 15:24), "**ceased**" (Galatians 5:11), and "**abolished**" (II Timothy 1:10). Each of these words might be read instead of "**destroyed**," and may be employed by way of illustration in showing how completely CHRIST has conquered.

- CHRIST has loosed the spirits of the Old Testament saints from the dominion of Satan.
- He has done away with the crippling power of hell.
- He has put away the greatness of the authority he once exercised.
- He has put down the authority of evil. He has made to cease that which prevailed before He died, and
- He has abolished the power of death by means of His own death, so that CHRIST stands before us and says, "**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**" (Revelation 1:18). [102]

"A fisherman, when he casts his angle into the river, doth not throw his hook in bare, naked, and uncovered, for then he knows the fish will never bite, and, therefore, he hides the hook within a worm, or some other bait, and so, the fish, biting at the worm, is caught by the hook. Thus CHRIST, coming to perform the great work of our redemption, did cover and hide His Godhead within the worm of His human nature. The grand water serpent, Leviathan, the devil, thinking to swallow the worm of His humanity, was caught by the hook of His Divinity. The hook stuck in his jaws, and tore him very sore. By thinking to destroy CHRIST, he destroyed his own kingdom, and lost his own power forever."

What does CHRIST's victory mean to us?

We have to do with a conquered foe. CHRIST's conquest is a pledge of our victory. Let us by faith remember that He has delivered us from the power of darkness that we might walk in the light (Colossians 1:13); He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, therefore, let us allow the Spirit of GOD to fully accomplish that purpose in us (I John 3:8); GOD's command is, Resist the devil, and he will flee from you, and flee he will if we resist him with the truth (I Peter 5:9). He charges us to have on the whole armour that we may stand against the contending forces of evil (Ephesians 6:10-18). He assures us that Satan shall be bruised under our feet (Romans 16:20); and as we keep in the power of His death, we shall have victory, like those we read of in the Word, who overcame him because of the Blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony (Revelation 12:11).

[103]

~ end of chapter 7 ~
