



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Suffering Savior, Various

"Why Did He Die? The Answers of History"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Tonight we are beginning the first of three studies entitled, "Why Did He Die? The Answers of History". And as you can tell we are going to deal with the history of the doctrine of the atonement and this is within our series on The Suffering Savior, the Old Testament, and the doctrine of the atonement. And we are looking at some of the passages from the Gospel of Mark and then hesitating, stopping every now and then, and looking at some of the questions that have to do with the doctrine of the atonement. And I hope by the time we come to the end of our series that we will have seen the application of the things that we are studying in those specific passages of Scripture that we are looking at.

The subject that we deal with in this study directly touches the triple choice we seem faced with today in spiritual things. The alternatives today are belief, unbelief, and superstition. What is real in our occupation with Satan in this day in which we live? A few years ago we were exposed to a great deal of stress on fortune telling, false prophets such as Jean Dixon, the lady has been rather quiet recently. We were exposed to a great deal of emphasis on the mediums but now that Bishop Pike is no longer with us we have less emphasis. But nevertheless it's rather striking, I think, that it's 1974 and the things that we were interested in as a nation three or four years ago are still the topics of interest

today, maybe even more so. The Demoscopic Institute at Aulensbach in West Germany says that twenty percent of the population claim to have had some occult experience. The well known pastor and psychologist Cort Caulk [phonetic], who has written a number of books bought by evangelicals, estimates that in the meetings that he holds and some of them are rather large, that eighty percent of the people that come to his meetings are influenced by psychic powers. We have seen, in the last five or six years, ministers of Satan.

Now, we always knew we had ministers of Satan but in the days past we knew that they belonged to the Baptist church, or the Presbyterian church, or the Methodist church, or the Episcopalian church, or the Lutheran church, or the Catholic church. And also, some of them were in the independent churches as well. But now, they announce that they are ministers of Satan and do not make any attempt to deceive, that is some of them.

And we have Satanic marriages, marriages that are conceived not in heaven as we were taught many many scores of years ago but rather conceived in hell. Boutilier once made an interesting quip to the effect that the devil’s strategy in the modern world is, “To get men so to concentrate on the forked tail and the cloven hoof that they can easily deny the devil’s existence. Then,” said Boutilier, “the devil can do his work more efficiently as an undercover agent.” I don’t think a great deal of that’s necessary now from what I can tell. And, of course, we have the movie *The Exorcist*, which has a great deal of appeal to Americans evidently. I don’t know what the take is so far but I read several accounts to the effect that it may be the most profitable movie made for a long long time.

C.S. Lewis said in his day there were two common errors. One, to deny the existence of Satan, and the second, to have an inordinate interest in him. And I think that those who have an inordinate interest in him are more numerous than those who deny his existence, at least if you judge by those who attend the movie. It has a great deal of appeal and a great deal of appeal to Christians as well, but it’s a failure as a movie

because it is built around the doctrine of Christian demon possession, if you could ever call such a doctrine as that Christian. But it is Christian in the sense that it is taught in the Bible. But if you attend the movie, of course, you get the distinct impression that the casting out of demons in the name of Christ is not taken too seriously.

Well, as you can tell from these opening comments that I'm making what I am leading up to in this lecture in the history of the doctrine of the atonement is the stress that the early church placed upon the ministry of Satan in connection with the atonement. In the earliest stages of the Christian church, the doctrine of the atonement was related quite frequently to the ministry of Satan. In fact, I think that you could say that in the concept of the leaders of the earliest church, the sub-Apostolic church, that is the church that immediately followed the apostles as well what we would call the early church on up through the time of say Augustine, that they looked at the doctrine of the atonement and stressed the application of the work of Jesus Christ toward Satan.

Now, we think in 1974 that the work of Jesus Christ in the atonement is direct towards sin. But in the early church they laid a great deal of stress upon the application of the work of Jesus Christ to Satan and that is evident from a reading of the accounts, the writings of many of the leaders in the early church.

Now, there are a couple of things that I think we ought to note in connection with this. And I'm still in the introduction, which you are looking at above my head. First of all, the church never formulated a conciliar definition of the doctrine of the atonement. Now, what I mean by that is this. In connection with the doctrine of Jesus Christ the early church engaged in a number of controversies and ultimately in the councils, when leaders from the church met at particular places to discuss certain doctrines they arrived at certain decisions.

For example, at the Council of Nicaea certain facts were settled upon with reference to the person of Jesus Christ. There in the conflict, which has frequently been characterized as a conflict between Arius and Athanasia, the church settled in effect the

issue of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. They decided that the Lord Jesus was not simply of a like nature with God but rather was of the same nature with God. They decided that our Lord was homoousios, of the same nature with God, rather than homoiousios. The difference in Greek is one letter, an *iota*, like God in nature. Many perceive that that little controversy, which raged over one letter, was not nearly so unimportant as it might seem. Occasionally historians say it's a terrible thing to realize that the whole church was torn apart over a diphthong. But those who had more sense realized that that nature of Christianity hung in the balance, because if Jesus Christ is only a person like God and is not God then essentially we have an idol, another god, we have paganism again. But Athanasia stood with those who associated with him for the deity, the full deity of Lord Jesus Christ. As a result of that the Council of Nicaea is a kind of a landmark in Christianity, the history of the Christian church.

Then at Chalcedon the question of the Trinity arose and those questions were settled at that great council in the 5th Century, Nicaea had been in the 4th Century. Now, it's a rather interesting thing that the church has never had a council in which they settle the question of the nature of the atonement of Jesus Christ. That's a most amazing thing, I think, that the Christian church was so troubled over the manner in which our Lord accomplished the atonement that they settle the question of how our Lord died for sins.

Now that, I think, is an important thing to remember. Another thing to remember is that all attempts to formulate a theory of the atonement are attempts to explain the mystery of one little word, and it is the mystery of the word “must,” M-U-S-T. In Mark chapter 8 and verse 31 we have this “must.” Now, we have it in other places in the synoptic gospels but this is just one of the places in which it occurs. You'll recognize immediately that there are parallel passages that relate to this as well as other occasions in which our Lord used the same word. But in Mark chapter 8 and verse 31 we read, "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by

the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Now, there are passages in the New Testament in which we read, "Our Lord is prophesying that the Son of Man will die, will rise from the dead." Well, that is not the same thing as the word, "must". One speaks as a simple prophesy of what is going to happen. The other tells us that it is logically necessary. In other words, a necessity is involved, not simply a prophesy. And at the heart of that word "must" is the study of the atonement. Why "must" Jesus Christ die?

Now, if you say, "Oh, well he must accomplish an atonement," then I must say to you that that is exactly what we want to try to discover. Why "must" he accomplish an atonement and what is the manner of that "must"? How does he die? On what basis is there a necessity? To what does it point? Some of our modern critics have said that this divine necessity was not really in the original unfolding of the history of the Christian church at all. The Lord Jesus never said, "must." And the disciples never heard him say, "must."

What happened was this. They had, of course, thought he was going to be a great king, the Messianic king, and he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel. But what happened so completely bewildered them, so completely upset them that it was like a great catastrophe that happened to them. And they were so dispirited as a result of it that they went off into hiding like wounded animals. But their friends, and the ones with whom they had thought, pestered them about the fact that this one in whom they had trusted was taken by the Romans and by the Jews and put to death, and what answer did they have to it. And so in the light of what happened, embarrassed by this violent death, which was contrary to their ideas of the Messianic kingdom, they invented the idea of a divine necessity as an apologetic device to turn the tables on their enemies.

Well now, of course, there is nothing in the Bible to this effect you understand. And I must say that if it were true that it happened like this my regard for the apostles

would be increased because I never thought they were that quick on the trigger. As far as the New Testament account is concerned, you get the impression that they didn't understand a whole lot about what was happening either before or after until the Lord Jesus unfolded to them in the ministry after his resurrection the meaning of his ministry. They never did really grasp why he must go to Jerusalem and why he must suffer. And as far as I can tell they never grasped it until he taught them after the time of the resurrection.

So I think we can drop that. That is an invention of modern criticism not an invention of the apostles. The church has spoken often of the death of the Lord Jesus although it is never fully agreed on the precise rationale behind it. And so in these three studies we are going to look at what the church has said about the rationale of Jesus Christ's death. And therefore, we are going to look at some of the most prominent explanations in the light of the Bible. And so we come to Romans 1 in our outline, the patristic interpretation of the atonement. And by patristic we mean the interpretation that the fathers, the church fathers, not the apostles, those that followed the apostles, the church fathers, the interpretation that they placed upon the atonement of Jesus Christ. Bishop Aulen, a Swedish bishop, has written a little book called *Christus Victor*.

Now I put it, I think, on the list of books that I suggest you get and read. You can get a paperback copy of it and read it. And I think it is a good representative of some of contemporary theology, relatively contemporary. It's about thirty, forty years old now but it still represents the thinking of a section of contemporary theology. Bishop Aulen, speaking of the theories that conceive the work of Christ as terminating upon Satan in some way, claims that the classic theory of the atonement is the theory that the work of Jesus Christ terminates on Satan. In other words, it's Aulen's claim that the early church taught primarily that Jesus Christ died in order to defeat Satan. That is Bishop Aulen's claim. He says that this is the dominant view.

He begins by tracing through the sub-Apostolic fathers on into the Apologists and others that followed them, what they said about the atonement of Jesus Christ and concludes that that was the prominent view. I think that it's safe to say that he has exaggerated the influence of this view. Many aspects of the work of the atonement were present in the early writers but this surely was one that was primary in their thinking. The classic theory; that is his name that he gives to it because he thinks it is the view of the classic, the classic theory is one that we want to take a look at for just a moment and we're going to lay our stress on Irenaeus. He's one of the Greek fathers although we don't have his writings in Greek. We have the Latin translation of them at the present time. But what I would like to do for just a few moments is to take a look at Irenaeus' interpretation of the death of Jesus Christ. And then in a few moments we want to look at the Old Testament interpretation of the classic theory and the New Testament in the light of this classic theory. But first of all, a few words about Irenaeus.

Irenaeus, in his great work in which he discusses this, seeks to answer the question, "Why did he descend? Why did he come?" And he give this answer to it, "That he might destroy sin, overcome death, and give life to man." Now, that is a good statement and does not really reflect the classic theory with this exception. You'll notice that he says to overcome death. Now, since he conceives of Satan as causing death, there is in this a reference to what Irenaeus thought was one of the major influences of our Lord's work. He came to overcome Satan, and by overcoming Satan, overcoming sin and death.

Now, I want to read something from Irenaeus so you will get a kind of flavor of what a believing man who lived in the 2nd Century following the apostles, his dates are about 130 to 200 A.D. Now, listen to what he has to say. This is a book that he wrote against the heretics and so it was an apologetic work. "Man had been created by God that he might have life. If now having lost life and having been harmed by the serpent he were not to return to life but were to be wholly abandoned to death, then God would

have been defeated and the malice of the serpent would have overcome God's will. But since God is both invincible and magnanimous he showed his magnanimity in correcting man and improving all men as we have said.

But through the second man he bound the strong one, and spoiled his goods, and annihilated death, bringing life to man who had become subject to death. For Adam had been the devil's possession and the devil held him under his power by having wrongfully practiced deceit upon him and by the offer of immortality made him subject to death. For by promising that they should be as gods, which did not lie in his power, he worked death in them. Wherefore, he who had taken man captive was himself taken captive by God. And man who had been taken captive was set free from the bondage of condemnation."

Now it is evident from this that in Irenaeus' concept of the atonement, he thinks of man as being in the bondage of Satan and he thinks of Jesus Christ as coming to bind the strong one, spoiling his goods, annihilating death and bring life to man who had been subject to death. So he conceives of the work of the atonement as being directed directly to Satan and through our Lord's suffering on the cross man being delivered from the power of Satan.

Now, if we had a lot of time we could talk about some of the other Greek fathers but I'm afraid that you would be asleep by the time that I finish talking about all of them. And by thinking of Irenaeus as a representative of the classic theory, I think you can think of the leader, at least the leading man in the early church who held this view. And therefore, we can move on and just say a word about the Latin fathers before we look at the Bible in the light of this theory.

The Latin fathers who write in connection with the atonement are Tertullian, who was a North African lawyer. Unfortunately, Tertullian does not give us a great deal of help in the doctrine of the atonement. I think it would have been very nice if a lawyer had written in great detail on the atonement because you would think that he would

logical in what he would write. But he's not very helpful. Augustine, probably the greatest theologian of the early church, wrote in connection with the atonement. And in his writings he agrees that there is an element of this classic theory in the atoning work of Jesus Christ but at the same time also has elements of teaching, which have to do with the so called Latin theory of the atonement which is very prominent in evangelicalism today. And I just mention that because we will later come back to that. Some of the other Latin church fathers are Cyprian and Gregory the Great.

But let's think now, secondly, of this classic theory of the atonement in the light of what the Bible teaches. And I want you now, if you will, to turn with me to Genesis chapter 3. And we're going to look at the Old Testament and the classic interpretation of the atonement. Genesis chapter 3 verse 14 and verse 15. You know that Genesis chapter 3 contains the solution to the enigma of life with its problem of evil and suffering. There's probably never been a chapter in the Bible that has influenced western civilization any more than Genesis chapter 3 because in it we are taught the Fall of man. And the problems of evil, the problems of suffering, they are all related to Genesis chapter 3. It is impossible to understand the Bible if we do not understand Genesis chapter 3. I do not know a single theologian that would belong to Christianity who would not agree with a statement like that. Therefore, it is of the greatest importance that we learn Genesis chapter 3.

Now, you'll not learn it tonight because we're not going to look at all of the chapter, but I do suggest very strongly that you make this chapter the subject of a great deal of study on your part. This chapter makes it very plain that the serpent and the one who stands behind the serpent, Satan, are very real. There was once a little girl in an Indian mission who made an engaging prayer to God. She said, "Oh, God. I pray for the devil. He must have some good points but everybody down here seems to be against him." At least she agreed that he existed. And so, this chapter in the Bible is founded upon the doctrine of the reality of Satan.

And as far as we can tell from the New Testament writers' use of this Old Testament passage, they too thought that Satan was real. They thought that what happened in this chapter really happened historically. There is no evidence in the New Testament at all that they regarded the Book of Genesis as myth, that they regard the first eleven chapters, as some of our great theologians have, as myth. It's very evident that they did not regard it as Karl Barth regards the first eleven chapters, as saga. They thought of these opening chapters of the Bible as historical, and this chapter as well.

Now the context, of course, you're generally familiar with I know. But we want to look just specifically at the judgment and the promise that are contained in verses 14 and 15. Now, we have the serpent's judgment in verse 14, "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." The serpent is cursed. Satan, in verse 15, for a think we probably would all agree if we studied this in detail, that the seed of the serpent ultimately is Satan, that Satan is crushed. Isn't it striking that the serpent, so far as know, is the only animal that has a bony skeleton that goes upon its belly? It's almost as if it's a living testimonial to the facts of the Book of Genesis. The second judgment discussed is in verse 16, and we'll just pass that by with a reference to it. The woman's judgment is pronounced. Her true subordination to Adam is to be subjection because of her independence of action. Notice it well ladies.

And then third, the man's judgment in verses 17 through 19. The one thing that stands out in connection with the judgment of Adam is simply this, that as a result of his sin he shall die. Now, he is speaking particularly of spiritual death because in Genesis chapter 2 he had said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Now, it is evident that Adam did not die physically when he partook of the forbidden fruit, but he did die. Thus, he must have died spiritually.

So the penalty for sin is spiritual death. Now, that results in bodily or physical death and if there is no deliverance, ultimately in eternal death. So the penalty for sin is spiritual death, which results in physical death. And I say, if no deliverance, eternal death. The remedies for spiritual death, the remedy is spiritual life. The remedy for physical death is the resurrection. And for Christians who believe, they are delivered from spiritual death through their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ the moment that they believe. And that spiritual life will issue in physical life or a new body at the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

Now having given the judgment, we notice the promise in verse 15. "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman and between thy seed (the serpent's seed) and her seed; and he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This is the most comprehensive of all of the redemptive promises in the Bible. It really is the first comprehensive redemptive promise and it is the most comprehensive of all of them. It refers to the serpent and to the woman. And then it refers to the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. And ultimately, it refers to Satan and Jesus Christ.

We just notice a couple of points in passing. He talks about the seed of the woman. "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed (the serpent's seed) and her seed." There can be little doubt that he refers in the seed of the woman to the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately, for he is the seed of the woman. In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son born under the law, born of a woman. Rather striking because, you see, in order to establish the reality and the legality of a person's existence in Judaism reference to the father would have been the normal and natural things, and in fact the legal thing. But in the case of our Lord here, he is said to by Paul to have been born of a woman. That is not a prophecy of the virgin birth. That is not a statement of the virgin birth. But it is something that implies such and at least is in easy harmony with the doctrine of the virgin birth.

Now one other thing, you'll notice in verse 15 he says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; and he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This "thou" is personal. Thou. And that, of course, implies the same in the other line, that the "thou" of the seed of the serpent has a corresponding "thou" or personal being in the seed of the woman. We have a transition from the seed to Satan just as we have a transition from the seed of woman, from the woman to the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ.

Further, notice that he says, "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is evident that in the first part of this verse the Lord is speaking about the seed as a whole. But then suddenly he begins to talk about the head of the seed and the heel of the seed, respectively. And so he has individualized the seed. He has spoken of the seed in its plurality but now he speaks of it in its individuality.

One of the interesting things about this is that this is a promise that is addressed to Satan so it is evident that in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, implied in this first promise, is directed directly toward Satan. And so Irenaeus and the early church, when they laid a great deal of stress upon the so called classic theory of the atonement, were not out of harmony at all with the first of the promises in the Bible. For the first of the promises in the Bible is a word that relates the work of our Lord Jesus Christ to Satan. It's rather startling isn't it? Because you see it is not the emphasis of the preaching in the 20th Century.

Now, I'm not suggesting that you should have this emphasis. But it seems to me that in any kind of preaching of the gospel we should have some of this emphasis. And when we get through we're going to see that a large part of the preaching of the gospel should be in thorough harmony with the idea that Jesus Christ came to overthrow the devil. And if our preaching does not contain that element we are omitting one of the threads of the teaching concerning the atonement of Jesus Christ. This is called the protoevangelium of the first preaching of the gospel. And with that I agree. So we have

here then a kind of circle. We have a circle in which we have two other concentric circles within it.

The woman's seed. Now, the woman's seed, of course, in its fullness would refer to the whole of the world, all of the descendents. But there is also a sense in which the woman's seed relates to those who are believers. I've forgotten what I put. And then, of course, in the center is "the seed", Jesus Christ. So the whole of the human race is comprehended here. Then we have a special group composed of believers. And in the center our Lord Jesus Christ who is "the seed". I don't know whether I can get this back like we had it or not.

Now, to sum up what we've been saying here. It's evident from this that man was great in his fall but God was greater in his grace because he has made a promise of the coming of the seed of the woman who will be the means for the crushing of the head of the serpent. Now, you can tell also from that verse that the wound that Satan is to suffer is one that is fatal. For to bruise or crush the head, the Hebrew text has a word that means to crush, to crush the head is a fatal wound whereas to crush the heel is not necessarily a fatal wound. So when our Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross at Calvary the heel of the seed of the woman was crushed. But in the crushing of the heel of the seed of the woman the head of Satan's seed was crushed, fatally wounded, destroyed in the biblical sense.

Now, let's come finally to Romans 3, the New Testament and the classic interpretation. And we're going to look now at several New Testament texts in order to look at the New Testament use of this classic theory of the atonement. Each of these particular implies that Satan is the executants of God's judgment. And the first passage we want to look at is Colossians chapter 2 and verse 15. Colossians chapter 2 verse 15, the Apostle Paul is writing primarily of the frustration of the Satanic hosts through the saving work of Jesus Christ. And now let's read verse 15. He says, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

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Now, it is evident from this statement in Colossians chapter 2 and verse 15 that Paul is speaking about the victory that the Lord Jesus has accomplished over the Satanic hosts. He does not mention Satan specifically. He says, "And having spoiled principalities and powers," but principalities and powers refers to the Satanic hosts. And so here, Jesus Christ when he died spoiled principalities and powers. He publicly demonstrated that they belong to him. He triumphed over them in his cross. The metaphor that Paul uses here is a metaphor of a victorious Roman general, an imperator. It was the custom for Romans and Roman general, if they won great victories to come back to Rome and to march through the streets of the city in victory proclaiming to all the greatness of the army, the greatness of the Emperor, and ultimately the greatness of Rome. These were great parades.

Now, it was necessary for a general who returned victoriously, in order to have a parade, which was a great honor, it was necessary that he be the actual commander in chief in the field. It wasn't enough for him to stay home while his army won a great victory. That would not entitle him to a parade through the city, but he had to be the actual commander and chief in the field.

Now, of course, in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ the victory that he won was not a victory that he won by remaining home in base headquarters and telephoning out instructions to those who were his servants. But our Lord Jesus was there and on the cross, himself, won the victory. Furthermore, in order to have a parade the Roman general had to be successful. And our Lord, he was successful. And in addition, if a Roman general was to have a victory parade it was not only necessary that he be the commander-in-chief in the field, not only necessary that he be successful, but he must gain for Rome as a result of his victory, [indistinct] and by that they meant captives. And he must also gain new territory for the Empire.

Now in the case of our Lord Jesus, he was the commander in the field, he was successful for he overcame at the cross, and he also acquired for God and the truth all that Satan before had had as his kingdom. And so our Lord Jesus triumphed over him and them in it. So we can say by weakness and defeat he won the meek and crown, trod all his foes beneath his feet by being trodden down. It is evident from Colossians chapter 2 and verse 15 that Paul conceives of the work of the Lord Jesus as being directed toward Satan. Not only toward sin, not only towards death, but directly toward the enemy of the souls of men.

Now, let's turn to another passage, Hebrews chapter 2 verse 14 and verse 15, Hebrews 2 verse 14 and verse 15.

"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; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Now, notice carefully what the writer of the Epistle of Hebrews says about the saving work of Jesus Christ. He says first of all that he became incarnate, that God the Son took to himself an additional nature and came down in the midst of humanity. There are some, and we shall refer to them later on, there are some who think that the atonement was accomplished by the incarnation. The very fact that the Lord Jesus came down here and became a man is sufficient, according to the theory of some, to mean atonement. Now, that is not biblical, but at the same time we must stress the fact that the first step in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus is the incarnation, our Lord Jesus taking to himself an additional nature.

Now, remember that the Lord Jesus was a divine person. He existed before he took to himself this additional nature. He was a divine person, not a human person

raised to the power of deity, but a divine person who took to himself an additional nature so that he has his divine nature and he has his human nature. And yet at the same time he is one person, one person with two natures, the incarnation. Now, this is an amazing thing, Dorothy Sayers says in one of her books if anything has a right to be called exciting, then this has. Or if there is anything exciting, this is. Or whatever there is, this has the right to be called exciting. Anyway, she said something like that. And it is an exciting fact that God became man. It's a tremendously exciting thing to realize that God took to himself an additional nature and came down here in our midst.

Furthermore, our Lord Jesus is a true man. Now, we must never think of him in any other way than that he had true humanity. He was truly God but also truly man. He is no docetic Christ. He is not a person who merely looked like he had human nature, but really was a divine phantom in our midst. No, he was truly man just as you and I are truly men. There is no way in which we can say that because Jesus Christ is different he's not one of us. He is one of us, although he is different. But he is one of us in a complete sense. He possesses the human nature that you and I possess. And we cannot possibly say that he did not become one of us.

Furthermore, he is no Apollinarian Christ. He is not even a person without possessed a human body but had a divine spirit, as Apollinarius said. He is completely human. That's what we read when we read, "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself, likewise took part of the same." But it isn't enough for Jesus Christ to be a man. It isn't enough for him to be the godman. It isn't enough for God to take to himself an additional nature and come down in our midst. The God-man must die. The alabaster box must be broken. And so the one who came as the God-man died. "That through death," our author says, "he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."

What is the power of death that the devil possessed? It apparently was a power that was gained in Eden. It was taken because of the fact that he was the means by

which man fell into sin. It was he who tempted Adam and Eve and it was through his testing that Eve fell and through his testing that Adam fell. And as a result of that he, because he is the executant of the judgment of God, gains within his kingdom those men, us men. So the devil had the power of death. As far as I know, there is some indication in the Scriptures that he is still is used to execute judgment, though Jesus Christ has won the right to execute God's judgment as a result of the cross.

For example, you remember in 1 Corinthians when Paul speaks about some of the Corinthians who were sinning and out of fellowship with God. He says that he was going to turn them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. He speaks in 1 Timothy chapter 1 of the same thing, about delivering a person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. And so it is evident that Satan still has, under God, certain powers. Now, these powers were his, perhaps, as a result of the fact that he was the angel that covers the throne of God, protects it because he was Lucifer. Perhaps they had to do with his original constitution. But at any rate the Scriptures seemed clear that he did have the power of death and evidently still under God, within God's power, has certain powers that he exercises, though the right to them now belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So as a result of what happened when the Lord Jesus, having taken human nature to himself, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is devil. We are now delivered legally from the power of Satan. I'm not trying to suggest at all that any of you are going to prison. Apparently there are some prominent people in the United States who stand in jeopardy of observing first hand the inside of some of our prisons. But I know this about the prison, that if a person is legally in prison it's impossible for him legally to attain release until the jailer has been given a legal release. And we are held, I'm speaking as men, we are held in prison as long as there is no legal release.

Now the Lord Jesus by suffering on the cross at calvary, gained legal release from the prison for Abraham's' seed. He talks about that in just a moment. He says in verse 16, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels," he didn't take hold of angels to

help them, the Greek text says, "But he took on him the seed of Abraham," to help it, them. And so our Lord Jesus by dying upon the cross has accomplished a legal release for those who are held by sin. That's what our author speaks about. Now, it is evident that this author, though he never had a chance to read Irenaeus, would have been in agreement with what Irenaeus said. He would have said, "Yes Irenaeus. The work of Jesus Christ does have relationship to Satan. It has a very definite relationship to Satan."

Now, let's turn to one final passage, 1 John chapter 3 and verse 8. Now, I'll just read this text because we don't have time to do anything more than that. I want to say a few words by way of conclusion. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Now, we've seen that the Apostle Paul relates the work of Jesus Christ to Satan. The writer of the epistle of the Hebrews, whoever he was, relates the work of Jesus Christ to Satan. And now here, John the apostle who leaned on the breast of our Lord Jesus relates the work of Jesus Christ to the devil.

Now, of course, they learn this from our Lord Jesus himself because he said that he was going to enter the house of the strong man and he was going to bind the strong man and plunder his works. He used that figure. So all of their teaching is derived ultimately from the teaching of Scripture and the teaching of Scripture then very plainly teaches that the seed of the woman has triumphed over the serpent. The strong man's goods have been plundered. Satan has been defeated and those who were held in captivity by him, the seed of Abraham, may go free for the legal release has been offered for them.

Now, may I conclude with this? Jesus Christ has overcome the occult world. That means that for all who are in Jesus Christ, they have not one thing to worry about from the occult world. Our Lord Jesus has overcome the occult world. He has the keys of death and Hades. This same John who wrote this text that we are talking about, sometime later perhaps on the Isle of Patmos, had a vision of the Lord Jesus and in that

vision, this tremendous vision, at the conclusion of it John fell down before the feet of our Lord as if he was dead. And he felt the Lord Jesus reach out his hand, the one whom he had seen in this vision, and he heard him say, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen. And have the keys of death and Hades."

So Jesus Christ has overcome the occult. He has the keys of death and Hades. He is the Lord of the upper world because he is the eternal Son and he is the Lord of the underworld because he has accomplished deliverance through the cross. And has gained for himself all of Satan's kingdom and the time is coming when is going to personally judge it.

Now, the Bible makes it very plain that our Lord Jesus is going to be exhaled and all in heaven, all on earth, and all under the earth are going to acknowledge that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And all of the spirits of the universe are going to come gravelling out and acknowledge, "Jesus Christ is Lord." You know, it's going to be great when you get to heaven to hear the "Hallelujah Chorus" of the saints. But I think I'm going to enjoy the "Hallelujah Chorus" of these demons when they sing the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ to the spirits of the universe. That's going to be a great time. I think that the Lord is going to allow us to lord it over them a little bit there. [Laughter]

So the savior, as a result of what has done, has the giant's head in his hand and he has carried the witness of victory to the right hand of the throne of God. One of the great heroes of Spanish literature is El Cid. The Cid was great warrior. When he was killed in battle his followers knew that they were not going to be able to do so well with Cid dead. And so they managed to deceive, for a little while, the enemy. They set the dead Cid on a horse and they put him in the forefront of the ranks as they attacked the enemy because they knew if the enemy looked and saw the Cid they might turn and flee.

Now, the king that we have is no dead Cid. He is one who lives forever and ever. As John said, he laid his hand upon me and he said, "Fear not I am the first and the last.

I am he that liveth and I became dead, and behold, I am alive forever more." Our king is a living king. We need not fear the occult. We need not fear the Satanic.

Now, as a result of that then we must adore the greatness of Jesus Christ and trust in his provision. So you wonder about some of things in the past, he says, "I'm the first." He's the Lord of the past. If you worry about the future, he says, "I am the first and I am the last." He's the one who is going to be there all through the future. He is the first and the last because he is the eternal one and therefore all of our lives are under his presence and existence.

So you have fear? The Lord Jesus say fear not. "I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth." I became dead for a time. So you fear death? I became dead. And so you fear all of the future? You know you can look at your past? It is covered by the Lord. Your death in the future that is covered by our Lord because he has entered into that experience. And then all beyond that death, he's the one who lives forever and ever as the king of those who belong to him. So all of those little problems you have, they are covered by one who is the eternal one.

People say we're living in days in which Christianity is a rather dreary kind of thing and cannot stand up against the philosophies and the ideas of the world in which we live. It's even said that we are living in the post-Christian age. Yes, we are if the kind of Christianity we have is the Christianity of a God who is dead. But if the Christianity that you have is the worship of the Son of God who lives forever and ever, then Christianity is no failure. It is no dreary thing. Our Lord Jesus is a living Lord and controls our destiny and will bring us to certain victory. There is no reason in the world why a Christian should be defeated. Time's up.

If Jesus Christ were here and you saw John's vision, what would you do? Why, the first thing you would want to do is to fall upon your face before the Lord Jesus and worship him. Isn't it? Well, my Christian friend, the Lord Jesus is in our presence. The

Lord Jesus is a living Son and a living king, and may God help us to realize that and in our hearts to fall upon our faces and worship him. Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he has overcome the world of Satan, of sin, of death. By reason of the fact that he suffered for sin, he has laid the basis for the overthrow of the strongman.

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]