



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 John 2:1–2; Exodus 28:12, 29

"An Advocate with the Father"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] It is a pleasure to see you this morning, those of you who regularly attend. Those of you we haven't seen since Christmas, [Laughter] we're happy to see you as well. [Laughter] And we hope you enjoy the ministry of the word. It turns out that, by the providence of God, our message today on "An Advocate with the Father" is very suitable for an Easter Sunday morning because it has to do with the ministry of our Lord at the right hand of the Father as the risen mediator. So we're turning for the Scripture reading to 1 John, and we're reading two verses. I want to also mention that when one turns to 1 John chapter 2 verse 1 and verse 2, not only do we have a statement with reference to the advocate, or advocacy, of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we also have a very significant statement on his propitiatory work and the extent of it. And since so many are interested in the extent of this propitiatory work what we are going to do is we're going to take two messages on 1 John 2:1-2. The subject today will be "An Advocate With the Father." Then in our next study, it will be "The Propitiation for Our Sins." And that way we can handle, in some depth, these important statements that John makes here in 1 John chapter verse 1 through verse 2.

Now let's read beginning with the 1st verse of chapter 2 of 1 John. The apostle writes,

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

I think, since we have a moment, I'd like to turn to the book of Exodus chapter 28 and read 2 verses from this particular chapter, verse 12 and verse 29 of Exodus chapter 28. You'll recognize that this has to do with the Lord's instructions with regard to the garments of the High priest, and in verse 12 of Exodus chapter 28 we read,

"And thou shalt put the two stones," (in the context there were two onyx stones mentioned in verse 9) "thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial."

In other words, "two stones", written in each were the names of six of the tribes so that as Aaron carried out his work, he had the names of the sons of Israel on his shoulders. Now in verse 29, speaking of the breastplate of judgment, we read, "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually." And again, the names that were on the breastplate were the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob's sons, the twelve tribes, in four rows of three names each on the breastplate. That's very significant. We'll say something about this as illustrative of the advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May he bless the reading of his word, and let's bow together now in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we give Thee thanks for this beautiful Easter day. We thank Thee for the remembrance of a risen Savior and that he is alive at this very moment. That we do not

simply look back to a risen Savior, but we know that he is alive and therefore we are free to turn to Thee through him at this very moment, so many centuries after, on that first day of the week, he rose from the dead in the land. We thank Thee that as each of these first days of the week roll around, not simply this Easter day, we remember a risen Savior who lives to secure the benefits of all that he has accomplished in shedding his blood for sinners.

And we thank Thee Lord for the privilege of remembering the whole church of Jesus Christ, those whose names he still bares upon his shoulders and heart as our great High priest. We ask Thy blessing upon other assemblies where the name of Christ is preached today, and we pray they may be fruitful in their ministry. We thank Thee for the blessings that are ours, but we pray that the blessings may be the blessings of the whole body of Christ today.

We thank Thee for our country. We pray for the land in which we have our living.

We especially remember those who have requested our prayers, quite a few names, we have burdens and trials and difficulties. And we remember them Lord. We pray that Thou will minister to them in a way that will be in thorough harmony for Thy will for them and give healing if it would be Thy will.

We thank Thee too Lord for the way in which Thou hast laid Thy hands upon this assembly, its elders and deacons and friends. We thank Thee too for the visitors that are here. We pray that the ministry of the Chapel may continue to bear fruit for the name of our triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Bless all of the activities of the chapel, its radio ministries, publication ministries and particularly the tape ministry and the many who volunteer their service and faithfully carry on that ministry that others may hear the word of God and be saved and grow in the faith.

Bless now as we sing together, as we hear the word of God. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] This is the fourth of our series of messages in 1 John, and we're beginning the 2nd chapter, and our subject is "An Advocate With the Father." We have been trying to make the point in the earlier messages that John writes in 1 John not primarily to bring sinners to salvation but

to bring God's sons to assurance of life, to fellowship with one another and with God in that life, and to, what he calls in chapter 1 and verse 4, a "completed joy."

Now John just as any minister of the word of God was confronted with heretics. And in the course of his dealing with the believers, he dealt with some of the heresies that they were exposed to, so he attacks them. He even speaks of them very sharply. He speaks of them as liars, if they say they have no sin. He says for some who claimed, evidently, that they had not sinned that they made God a liar. And then he will even use such terms as, "Anti-Christ" of them. The heretics, it seems, were, to use a technical term, neosorinthians, claiming the possibility of life and fellowship with God without the Lord Jesus playing any significant part in that fellowship.

We tend, I think at times, if we read something like this, to think well they had problems in those days that we do not have, but the Christian church, and I'm speaking of the believing Christian church, has the same type of problem. Sometimes the words are different, but actually the heresy may be essentially the same. But we have these dangers within the professing Christian church for there are many, and many leaders within the church, that still think that one may have a true relationship with the God of Scripture while rejecting the Lord Jesus as the only way, not realizing that it is our Lord himself who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me," or else rejecting that, or sometimes being ignorant of the exclusiveness that the Scriptures set forth in talking of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now John has also made the point in the opening chapter that there are two conditions for divine fellowship, walking in the light with the accompanying purification that is provided by the ministry of the Lord Jesus. In verse 7 he wrote, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanseth us from all sin." The second condition that he has set forth is confessing sin. We tried to make the point last week that the Christian life is not a sinless life, nor is it a life in which we indulge in our sins, leaning upon confession for restoration, but living a self indulgent life. The Christian life, we tried to say, is a sin judged life.

We pointed to the Apostle Paul and stated that the apostle's analysis of his own life in Romans chapter 7 is true of the kind of life that we ourselves live. He says, for example, that the things that he wanted to do, he was unable to do. The things that he did not want to do, he found himself doing. Even spoke of the wretchedness, as a Christian ought to, of the fact that this condition brings in his life, "Oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death." He gives a one word answer which he will spell out in more detail in chapter 8. He states, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But summing up his experience, he says, "So then with the mind I myself am serving the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin."

We tried to make the point that God desires truth in the inward parts, and we pointed out that there should be no compromise, no concealment, but confession should characterize the Christian, and he should have the spirit of the Psalmist who said, "Search me O God and see if there be any wicked way within me." That is the kind of Christian attitude that should characterize each of us, I believe.

John may have been told that his doctrine of confession and forgiveness suggested license for sin because, after all, someone might say, "Well John we have sinned, you say, so we cannot say we do not have sin, and then we have this remedy of confession of sin, so why should we not just live and then when we sin confess our sin," and thus using that as a cover for a self-indulgent kind of life. You can see, I think, how the doctrine of confession and forgiveness might suggest license to sin.

I think of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 5 where speaking about the Lord Jesus and the law, he said, "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." So what the apostle says there is, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." So why should not a person who was not amenable to the word of God suggest, as evidently it was suggested, for the apostle meets this objection, why not just sin, and let the grace of God cover your sin. And thus, the grace of God

would be abounding and God would be glorified in the manifestation of his grace and sin on so that more grace would be exercised in the forgiveness of sin and God be further glorified by the outpouring of further grace.

Well the apostle, knowing that this might be a suggestion of a rationalist who knows something about the words of Scripture, says in the 6th chapter and the 1st verse, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" and answers it, in the translation of some, good heavens no. So the apostle did speak about grace. He did speak about forgiveness, but at the same time, he made it very plain there is no such thing in Christianity as license for sin.

Now, we are going to turn to what evidently the Apostle John was faced with himself, as a result of, his doctrine of confession of sins and God's faithfulness and justice in forgiving sins. So in the first clause or so, verse 1 of chapter 2, to meet the objection, he shows the real design of confession of sin, and he shows the grounds of the restoration in Christ's work of advocacy, totally contrary to any kind of licentious abuse of confession by a practical antinomianism, doing what you please. He says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

It's striking that the apostle, at this point, introduces his statements with "My little children." That indicates a break in the thought, but it also indicates the affectionate concern and the appeal of a loving master, as someone has put it. The apostle was an elderly man. His readers were no doubt much younger than he, and he addresses them in this familiar way, "My little children." Later on, he will use a slightly different word to speak of the children of God, but this is a very intimate word that he uses. But he says, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." You might think that since he said in chapter 1 we have sinned, and he's also said if we confess our sins he's faithful and just to forgive our sins that what John might write was, "My little children, these things I write unto you that you sin as little as you are able to with the recognition of what the Lord Jesus has done." It's not as little as you can, but he says not at all. "My little children, these things write I unto you that

you sin not." The construction the apostle uses is a construction that suggests just that that you sin not at all.

So what is the attitude that one should have at this point? You remember the apostle has four more chapters of material, we should not take this out of its context in general, but should remember this, we recognize sins pervasiveness. We do have sin. We have sinned. And yet the goal of the believer is not sinning. That's our legitimate goal. He's talking about things that have to do with sanctification and progressive sanctification. A believer comes into a relationship to God. He possesses eternal life and then begins the sanctification that characterizes most of his life. We're in process of growing. There is a moment when we enter into life, the rest of our Christian life is spent in sanctification, concluded either with the coming of the Lord or with our death, in which case, we pass into the presence of the Lord having been eradicated as to our sin nature.

People tend to think of sanctification as simply the pulling up of weeds. Since this is a beautiful time of the year and the horticulturalists are out trying to pull up weeds, and others of us are just looking at them and remarking upon how beautifully they grow. [Laughter] People tend to think of sanctification as the pulling up of weeds. The extirpation of the things which are displeasing to the Lord, but sanctification is also the imparting of good seed, the planting of plants and the cultivation of the plants as they grow on towards maturity and blooming, so that we should think of sanctification not simply as the pulling up of weeds, but as growth in Christian experience and ultimately growth into the likeness to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It's not strange that he should write, "My little children, these things I write unto you who have sin that you sin not," that's a legitimate goal for us, and wonder of wonders, one day we shall actually reach it, but not until we enter the presence of the Lord. But the responsibility remains. There is always a tendency to forget, as we talk about the grace of God in what Christ has done, to forget our responsibility. I know people like to talk about the purpose of Christ's death and responsibility and like to say, with reference to those who believe in the sovereign grace of God, that they forget human responsibility. That's foolish. They don't forget it but they love the sovereign

grace of God and like to emphasize that. But the same thing holds true in sanctification. We don't forget our responsibility. It remains. That's our goal that we sin not at all, and our hope embraces the future, when actually, when the Lord Jesus returns as Paul says in Philippians chapter 3 and verse 20 and 21, when he shall actually accomplish this,

"For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

So we look forward to that as a goal. And by God's help, the Holy Spirit indwelling us we seek to sin not at all. And we recognize our responsibility when we do sin that we have damaged our relationship to the Lord. It touches our communion with him and then we should confess our sins being open, no compromise, no concealment, asking him to search our heart that we may grow. That is that the plant may be cultivated, the life may be cultivated, not simply the weeds taken out, but growth in grace.

Now having said that, speaking about the purpose of the preceding section, for he says, "These things write I unto you that ye sin not," he mentions the possibility of failure. He says, "And if any man sin," now again he's talking about the act of sin. He's not talking about indwelling sin. We have indwelling sin. The sinful habit is against the true tenor of the Christian life. The Christian who persists in sin, who has as the tenor of his life, sin is only a professing Christian. The Scriptures make very plain the fact that a believer, a true believer, cannot go on in sin. What kind of salvation do you have if you still go on in sin? Christ is no Savior. So if we're talking about indwelling sin, we have indwelling sin, but as our bent of life, as the true tenor of our life, we do not go on in sin, though we may sin. The acts are possible.

Now that's very important, and it's important for us to realize because occasionally people will say, "But I know someone who has been going on in sin." Well, you can do that for a little while. The Bible makes plain, however, that the Father is a disciplinarian and, just as any good father or mother should do, the discipline begins to fall upon the disobedient child. As Paul wrote to

the Corinthians who were having difficulties at the Lord's Table, he said, "For this cause some of you are weak, some are sickly, and some have fallen asleep," physically. They didn't lose their spiritual life. They lost their physical life. Discipline is very certain. So it's possible for a time to live in such a way, but God brings an end to that, and the individual discovers that, while he is good enough for heaven, to put it in our language, because of what Christ has done, he's a reproach to the Lord God and the church of God on earth, and therefore he is taken to heaven.

Now it's possible, as one has said, to be too lenient and too severe towards sin. These two occurrences of the word sin must be kept in proper balance. "My little children, these things I write unto you that ye sin not." We remember that. That's our goal. But he goes on to say, "Now if any man sin." So we don't want to be too severe toward sin. We recognize we have indwelling sin, but at the same time, we don't want to be too lenient to it and recognize that our true purpose in life, our goal in life, is to sin not at all. I haven't attained it yet, incidentally. But that is a legitimate goal for all of us to seek to avoid sin.

Now then, we come to the third part of this verse, which has to do with the advocate, the believer's comfort and confidence. He returns for the third time to the question of the forgiveness of sin. He had said in verse 7, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanseth us from all sin." Verse 9 he said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now he says, "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous and he is the propitiation for our sins."

Now here is the remedy for failure to realize our goal. Let me, first of all, say just a few words about the office of advocate. This is a very common Greek term. In fact, believe it or not, it's not simply a New Testament term, but it's an Old Testament term and even a Jewish term. The *parakletos*, or Paraclete, translated sometimes "comforter", here translated "advocate", was a term that was familiar in Jewish literature. And it, in some of the Aramaic Targums, is transliterated, in Hebrew, and that is an Aramaic, and even sounds just like *parakletos*, except it's *perakletos*. So the

point that I want to make is that this is a function that was well known in ancient times. The priestly mediatorial function is referred to by the term advocate.

Now remember that a priest in Israel performed three offices, first of all the office of representation. He represented the people of God before God. He alone had ultimate access to God. On the Day of Atonement, that great day in the life of Israel, only the High priest could enter into the Holy of Holies. That was a token of the fact that it was the privilege of only the High priest, as a representative, to enter the presence of God, perform the act of expiation and propitiation by which the covenant community was maintained in fellowship for another year. So the thought back of the priest as a mediator is that he has access to God. The priestly work of the Old Testament priests and all priestly work for that matter in biblical language is something that belongs to the realm of grace. That is it doesn't belong to other realms at all.

One of the interesting things about this is something that Hugh Martin once wrote about the subject of priesthood. He was rather upset over the fact that in modern language people had begun to talk about priests of science, priests of art, we even see priests of literature and that kind of language is designed to represent individuals who are really high up on the scale and particularly skilled in these areas. The priests of science say this. The priests of art suggest this. The priests of literature say this. He was very upset over that and he wanted to point out the fact that it's in the realm of grace that priesthood operates and only in the realm of grace, and he put it very vividly. He says that he would as soon think of transferring the language of geometry and algebra and botany and talking of the hypotenuse of a flower and the square root of a tree or a differential coefficient of a convolvulus.

Now in case you don't understand what a convolvulus is, those of you that are not horticulturalists, the rest of you I know are, you understand exactly what a convolvulus is. But it's a morning glory [Laughter]. That is it's a member of the morning glory family. So he says the coefficient of a convolvulus. He'd just as soon speak of these things as to speak of the priesthood of nature or of letters. Priesthood is something that has to do with grace. The priest represents a

certain people before God. A priest offers a sacrifice that is for those whom he represents. He brings offerings. And then a priest exercises intercession as a result of what he has done. The Apostle Paul alludes to this in Romans 8:34 where he says, "The Lord Jesus constantly prays for us." He is exercising the high priestly function.

Some years ago I was in a chapel at a theological seminary nearby and Dr. Carl Armerding was speaking that morning on Melchizedek. Not too many people speak on Melchizedek. He liked to do it because people were astonished usually when he spoke on Melchizedek. But he told the story of an experience he had as a young boy. Dr. Armerding grew up among the brethren, among the exclusive brethren as a matter of fact and he grew up attending a little gospel hall. If you travel in Scotland today, you still see the gospel halls. They were stores originally which Christians took either rented or leased or bought and then put the sign outside Gospel hall. They converted the store into a place of worship where a local church met. They loved to speak of their Gospel halls as converted for converted people. That was the way they spoke of it.

Well, his friend and he made a little bargain as a young man, actually as a child, they agreed to attend each other's church and then to make comments on what they saw and felt as they did. His friend was a Roman Catholic, and so he attended the Catholic church and he said he was very much impressed by the fragrant incenses the elaborate ritual, the strange language, or in those days Latin was the language. And then his friend attended his church. It was just like a little storefront where people gathered together to remember the Lord with the Lord's Table and that's all it was. People would stand up and give ministry of the word or prayer or whatever, and when his friend attended and afterwards, he asked his friend how he enjoyed it. And his friend said, "Oh well it's all right for those who like it, but you ain't got no priest."

Well it upset Dr. Armerding so he went home and reported this to his father who said to him, "But we do have one." And Armerding said, "Where is he? I've never seen him." His father proceeded to show him from the Epistle of the Hebrews that he not only had a priest, but he had a high priest, and further, not only a high priest, but a great high priest. So Armerding said, "What

does he do for us?" And his father went on to explain to him he represented us, he offered offerings for us, and also he interceded for us. And when Armerding told his friend, his friend asked the same question he'd asked his father. "What does he do for us or you?" And Armerding explained, "He prayed for us, he prays for us constantly." And he said his young friend said wistfully, "It must be wonderful to have someone constantly praying for you." He didn't know anything about that evidently. That's one of the activities of the priest.

Advocacy is one of the special activities of the priest. It has to do with his ministry with reference to sinning believers. "If any man sin we have an advocate." Now this was a civil law term. In fact, today unfortunately, you cannot say without a sort of a negative connotation, the term advocate means something like lawyer. [Laughter] So I guess it would be better, the British term is better, a barrister. That sounds more significant than lawyer doesn't it. Pardon me lawyers, we're just having a little fun, [laughter] and you may confess your sin now [laughter] and receive forgiveness. [laughter] But now the important thing about this term advocate is this, the advocate in ancient times was often and generally in many cases no hired person. In other words you didn't go out and hire a lawyer. There was a very strong family clan relationship recognized in ancient times and usually the families were very large and within them there would be an advocate, so that the advocate was a member of the clan. In fact he was generally the member of the clan who devoted himself in his legal work to work that had to do with the whole of the clan.

That's so special I think for this. For that's precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ is. He's the barrister for the whole clan of the people of God. He's the advocate. And just as the advocate was a member of the clan, so he is a member of the clan of the children of God, the sons of God. He's one of us. He came, took to himself human nature, becoming one of us. And he represents us.

You can also think of your insurance companies who do a work of advocacy too. When you have accidents and your children are growing up and their having fender benders and things like that, you may have to call your insurance agent quite frequently. I can remember in my case with my children the insurance agent George McCormick we came to be on first name basis [Laughter] as a

result of calling in. And I would say, "George it's me again." [Laughter] Happy to know I had an insurance policy so that insurance company would represent me and my possible liability. So we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Now the fact that he is called Jesus Christ, the righteous means that he has the character and the competence to do for us what is needed to do. He is Jesus the historical person, he is the messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is the just one. Even that is sometimes a Messianic title, probably not here. So he has the character and the competence to act with a gracious hand and with a mighty voice in our behalf, those who belong to him. And further the judge before whom we are brought is the Father. He's no implacable foe. He is the Father. And as the commentators often point out, "It's not a case of love pleading with justice, but it's a case of justice pleading with love." Father incidentally suggests that sin may break the link of communion, but it never breaks the link of union. We have an advocate not with God, but an advocate with the Father, we're still in the family if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and when we sin we do not lose that relationship. He is still our Father. That's a very important word for those of you who may think that it is possible to lose that salvation that you have when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the method of the advocate is interesting. Pardon is not obtained on bare asking. In other words, it's not because the Lord says, "So and so has sinned, let him have pardon." It's not on bare asking even with the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not on account of his interest in us. It's not on account of the merit that he personally has. In the New Testament and this is of course said in the Old Testament as well, but the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews makes the point, that's the Great Epistle of Priesthood, he says with reference to a high priest that he must have somewhat to offer.

In other words, a priest cannot do his work if he doesn't have some offerings. He has to have something to offer because it's only on the basis of shedding of atoning blood that the benefits of access to God, the forgiveness of sins and other benefits are ours. He must have somewhat to offer. The Lord Jesus cannot secure our forgiveness on bare asking terms. He must have something to offer. And so that's why John says, "And he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only,

but for the sins of the whole world." So he has a propitiatory sacrifice that he has accomplished and it is instantly effective. The moment we sin, we have an advocate. Not the moment when we confess our sin, the moment when we sin. "If any man sin we have an advocate." It's not, "If any man confesses his sin we have an advocate." But the advocate operates instantly upon our sin.

Now I'd like to say just something that I think is very important, and I'd like for you to remember that we read from Exodus chapter 28 verse 12 and verse 29. The work of Aaron the high priest particularly on the great Day of Atonement was to offer sacrifices that maintained Israel in their covenantal relationship. He made the offerings of the bullock, taking the blood into the Holiest of All. He also killed the goat, the furriest goat that made up one offering, the two goats, took that into the Holiest of All, sprinkled it onto the mercy seat, confessed the sins of Israel over the second, sent the goat off into a land uninhabited, as the Authorized Version renders it, or into the wilderness. So the priest was responsible for representing the community making the necessary offerings and then interceding with the Lord God to bring the benefits of the covenant to the nation Israel for one more year. All typical of what Christ would do forever. That is for us forever. So the priest maintained covenantal fellowship by his intercession in blood, the blood of the bullock, and the blood of the goat.

Now, Aaron in his work, we said, had the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his shoulder, the place of strength and upon the breastplate of judgment, upon his heart, the place of love and affection. Everything that he did in his priestly activity was something he did for the twelve tribes. He didn't do it for the Gentiles. He didn't do it for those who were outside of Israel. He was a priest for the people of God. That's what our Lord is. He's a priest for the people of God. He said, "I pray not for the world." He intercedes for the people of God. He offers sacrifices for the people of God. He acts as a covenantal representative for the people of God. Read the Old Testament, ponder it, and you'll understand the light of which the apostles of the New Testament write what they are writing.

He's our advocate then. He enters into the dock for us. He pleads against the accuser of the brethren before the presence of the throne of God in pictorial fashion, of course. I couldn't tell you what happens in heaven. He doesn't have to remind the Father of what he's done. He doesn't have to remind the Father of what you have done. But using human illustrations, using human pictures, the Lord Jesus enters the dock for us as our advocate. He pleads contrary to Satan who would accuse us because of our sin and seek to plunge us into hell forever. He pleads with the Father his finished work, or to put it even more significantly, he pleads the eternal covenant of redemption, the purpose of the ages the plans made between the persons of the trinity the details of which we don't know, we simply know that is true. Paul speaks of the promise of life. The Lord Jesus speaking of his death and how he goes to the cross and voluntarily gives his life for the sheep says, "this commandment have I received of my Father." So he was carrying out the will of God as the mediator, our great high priest, having somewhat to offer.

And now he prays, intercedes on the basis of what he has done. He's our representative. The ground of it I suggest is the eternal covenant of redemption. I wish it were possible to go into a little more elaborate explanation of what that would mean, but let me suggest it was something like this to use a human kind of likeness. You can imagine the persons of the trinity as the eternal purpose was consummated, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

What are the duties of the Father as Scripture reveals? It is the Father who covenants with the Son and with the Spirit to select or elect a people. It is the Father who covenants to give to the Son a people, a specific people. Read John 17, my Christian friends. Read them. The Lord Jesus speaks of those that the Father has given to him. So the Father gives a people to the Son. And he promises to keep those people forever.

John 17 again the Son, what does he covenant? Of course a lot of things could be said, but he covenants to become incarnate. To take to himself an additional nature, which he did at the incarnation, coming, as someone has said, "undressing all the way," the eternal second person of the trinity taking to himself a human nature, what condescension, what humiliation actually to take our

nature. He covenants to make an atoning sacrifice, once and for all. He covenants also to come again in the future and complete the mediatorial work and to hand it over to God the Father that God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit may be all in all.

And as for the Holy Spirit, he covenants to regenerate the people the Father gives to the Son. He promises to bring them to repentance and to faith, giving them that faith. He promises to sanctify them, to keep them, to preserve them, bring them into likeness to the Son of God, and to guide them, but he promises with the Son to present this people to God, holy, without blemish and without spot. Hallelujah.

What a marvelous purpose. And just as on the names of the shoulders of the High priests were the names of the tribes of Israel and the names on the breastplate of judgment so our names are upon the shoulder and the heart of our great advocate in heaven, known just as much to heaven as the sons of Israel were known to the High priest who exercised that High priestly activity.

Well if we were [to] look at this as if it were a human kind of thing, a court scene, the Father behind the desk with the gavel in his hand, the accuser of the brethren who's the prosecuting attorney, the Lord Jesus as the defendant. You can imagine that after he presents his case, the Father takes the gavel in his hand and bangs it upon the desk, typically saying, "Acquitted," every one of us. If we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. "Though the restless foe accuses, sins recounting like a flood, every charge our God refuses, Christ has answered with his blood." "What though the accuser roar, of sins that I have done; I know them all, and thousands more, Jehovah findeth none." My Christian friend, how marvelous it is to have an advocate with the Father. Nothing could be greater, a Great High priest who carries out this activity.

Our time is up I should stop and give a word of warning and admonition for the wondering, there is safety in salvation through Christ, there is joy in fellowship and there is uneasiness and anxiety when we sin. As David discovering this prayed later, "Restore unto me the joy of my salvation." Nothing really is worse for a Christian than to be out of fellowship and communion with the Father, to know specifically that you have sinned against him, you cannot be happy. You cannot

have anything but a sense of angst, anxiety over that particular sin. You know of course what it may be if there is such.

As my old theology professor said, "Keep short accounts with God." But there is a word of welcome for those who have not come to him or for those who wish to come to him having wandered far from him. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he's the propitiation for our sins. If you're outside of Christ, we invite you to come to him and receive him as the one who has offered an atoning sacrifice for sinners. That's what you are. And for those of us who are believers and out of communion with the Lord God, come to him, confess your sin, no compromise, no concealment, pray, "Search me O God and see if there be any wicked way in me."

Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are awed by the greatness of this magnificent priestly work that the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished for us, our representative, our advocate, who has somewhat to offer, that once and for all sacrifice by which we have the forgiveness of sins and who now lives in heaven to secure the benefits so necessary of what he has done.

Lord if there are some here in this audience who have not come to him, may at this very moment they turn to him in their hearts and say, "Lord I know I'm a sinner, if Christ died for sinners, he died for me and so by Thy grace I receive him as my own Savior too." May God help you to come to him.

And for the saints here who need...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]