

OPERATING IN THE COURTS OF HEAVEN

Hebrews 4:12-16

July 25, 2021

This is part II of last week's message as we are continuing looking at what is taking place in the spiritual realm of heaven and how it affects our Christian walk. Last week we looked at the many books God keeps in heaven. God's library in Heaven is filled with numerous books – books about churches, businesses, cities, nations, and there is also a book in God's library with your name and my name on the cover. Last week we concentrated on **Psalm 139:16**, which tells us that God keeps a specific book in heaven on each one of us, ***"Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."*** The Bible clearly tells us that from the beginning of time, long before we were conceived, God wrote down in a book the destiny and Kingdom purpose that He had for each of our lives, and the battle we face each-and-every day is to get what is written within that book accomplished on this earth before we leave this earth. We are not here by accident. God had planned for us to be born at a specific time in history and to live in a specific place on this earth to fulfill His Kingdom purpose at this time and in this place. Some will fulfill their divine purpose and receive rewards once they get to heaven; then unfortunately, others will not fulfill their God given purpose and suffer loss. God sent His Holy Spirit and ministering angels to help us fulfill our divine purpose!

The Bible tells us that each person was born with a God given identity, and God has given us specific talents and gifts to accomplish that divine calling and Kingdom purpose. And it's up to us to discover what God had placed within our heart and fulfill all that He has for us with the help of the Holy Spirit. So, we get to choose! We get to choose to serve and follow Christ in this short time He has given us here on this earth or go our own merry way. Every person on this earth has been given the same opportunity to choose what direction they go. But there are consequences according to **2 Corinthians 5:10**. The day will come when we will all appear before God our maker and give an account of how we spent this time He had given us, ***"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad!"*** On that day when we stand before God when our book in God's library in Heaven is taken off of the shelf and opened, we will come to understand how we spent our time on this earth. Did we spend our time

wisely in serving Him, or did we spend our time foolishly, wasting our time on things that didn't count towards our eternal rewards in Heaven.

We need to understand that Heaven is a highly active place – there is activity taking place there that affects us here on this earth. So, as we are living in both a spiritual unseen world, as well as this physical world, so much more is happening around us than we realize, and our enemy and God's enemy the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion preventing us from stepping into our Kingdom purpose and do massive damage to the evil empire that he is trying to build upon this earth in the short time he has left. That's why as God's army, we need to always keep in mind that our battle is not against that person in this physical realm that is causing us all kinds of grief, but our real enemy is in the spiritual realm who is out there influencing and controlling people like puppets on a string. Paul tells us this in **Ephesians 6:12**, ***"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*** Our adversary the devil is operating in the spiritual realm not only here on this earth, but also in Heaven. The devil is manipulating events and people against us, so whenever we pray, we are entering into this spiritual battle between the forces of light and darkness!

That is why we need to be a praying church! Prayer is key to a victorious life and is essential in seeing God's will done on this earth, and when we pray, we are not only engaging with the Lord our God, but also engaging the spiritual powers of darkness. When we pray, the devil will come against us and try to resist our prayers that are rising to the courts of Heaven, so we need to learn how to play his game and win every time. The first thing we need to realize is that the devil is a legalist, pointing his accusing finger at us, trying to disqualify us from coming before God with our requests. The devil is our accuser day and night, pointing out our faults, our sins, and our shortcomings. A good example is found in the Book of Job, as the angels come to present themselves before the Lord, Satan comes with them after roaming the earth looking for victims. That's why we need to learn how to fight the devil in the courtroom of Heaven to have our prayers answered and to have God's will done in our lives and the lives of our loved ones. So, whenever we pray, we need to follow courtroom protocol, very much like in a courtroom here on this earth.

Various books of the Bible give us a glimpse of Heaven. They show us God sitting on His throne in heaven holding court where decisions are being made pertaining to activities here on this earth. For example, Daniel came before God in prayer and saw this scene taking place in heaven in **Daniel 7:9-10**, ***“As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from beneath him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.”***

In this vision Daniel is taken to a courtroom scene in Heaven and as God’s court comes into session, various books are opened. This scene indicates that what is written within God’s books takes courtroom activity to put into reality here on this earth. We can easily understand going before God in prayer, but few believers know a whole lot about coming before God as the presiding Judge in a heavenly courtroom and how that courtroom operates.

When Jesus died on the cross it was a legal transaction. Because of the cross Satan no longer has a legal right to hold sin against believers in the courts of heaven.

When Jesus said on the cross, ***“It is finished,”*** He was declaring to both the seen and unseen world that by His sacrifice and shed blood, He met every legal requirement that held mankind captive to sin and death; thereby, humiliating Satan and beating him at his own game. This fact allows every believer the legal right and authority to come against the devil with boldness and confidence and win every time. This is according to **Revelation 12:10-11**, ***“Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of God, and the authority of His Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuse them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.”*** Make this verse personal, ***“I triumph over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the work of my testimony.”***

The devil has been defeated and overcome by the blood of the Lamb of God, so there is power and authority in Christ’s blood that is available to every believer to overcome anything and everything that Satan throws our way. Satan doesn’t have the legal right to stand against anything that is covered by Christ’s blood. All because Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, Satan has lost all of his authority. Jesus got the keys back to this earth that day on the cross, giving the authority over this world back to us!

YES, we have an enemy that hates us and wants to destroy us, our loved ones, our church, our community and our nation; however, we have been given access to come boldly and confidently into God's holy presence and plead our case before the courtroom of heaven, as we are told in **Ephesians 2:4-6**, ***"Because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."*** Being seated with Christ in the Heavenly realms means we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to take what Jesus did on the cross and put it into place in our lives and into the lives of those we have authority over. Husbands as the spiritual head of the family have authority over their wives and their entire household; fathers and mothers have authority over their children; pastors have authority over the members of their congregation; churches have authority over their community and surrounding area; believers have authority over Satan and the demonic realm. Unfortunately, most Christians don't understand or take advantage of the authority they have been given to bring issues before the courts of Heaven, and see God render a verdict to have His will done on this earth as it is in Heaven!

When Jesus walked this earth, He had such a close relationship with His Heavenly Father that He knew why He was sent to this earth and what He was to accomplish. Jesus knew what was written on the pages of His book in God's library. He knew His identity, His purpose and His divine calling, and the demons also knew who He was and the authority that He had been given by His heavenly Father and that's why they trembled in fear in His presence. Because of that authority given to Him by His heavenly Father Jesus had the power to heal the sick, to open the eyes of the blind, to cause the deaf to hear, to cause the lame to walk, to bring the dead to life, and cast out demons. Jesus effectively used the authority He had been given because He knew how to operate within the courts of heaven and win every time. As a result, God's will was done on this earth during those few years Jesus walked this earth. And then, before He ascended back to Heaven, Jesus passed all of His authority to His followers to equip them and empower them to carry on the Kingdom work He began. **Matthew 28:18-20**, ***"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"***

On the day that the Holy Spirit fell on Jesus' disciples in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost, the church was empowered with all the authority of Heaven to continue the work that Jesus began. This must have been a huge surprise and shock to Satan, because when Jesus returned to Heaven, the devil must have thought that now that Jesus was gone, he could once again rule this earth without hindrance, but on that day of Pentecost, Satan's greatest nightmare began. Not only did Satan have 120 Holy Ghost filled followers of Jesus to deal with, doing what Jesus did and even greater things, now Christ was being multiplied each-and-every day. Not only were there 120 little Christs, hindering the devils work on this earth, but on that day that Peter preached to the gathered crowd, it multiplied to 3120 little Christs, hindering the devils work. And that number will continue to grow until Jesus' returns and the devil will be bound with chains and banished from this earth for 1000 years, until his final judgment, when he his demons are cast into the lake of fire. For the time being, Satan and his demons are still roaming this earth using sickness, diseases, physical and mental disability to defeat Christians; however, we have been given authority to deal with Satan and his demonic realm, but we need to know how to use that same authority and learn how to rebuke Satan in God's courtroom, and when we do, Satan must flee!

Whenever we are advancing the Kingdom of Heaven or carrying out the destiny that God has put upon our lives, there will always be backlash from the devil. To deal with this backlash, we need to first realize that the devil can't do what whatever he wants, he is being held back by God to follow legal protocol. **1 Peter 5:8** tells us that, ***"Our enemy the devil is our adversary who goes about seeking who he may devour,"*** but the devil can't go about devouring at will. The word *"adversary"* comes from the Greek word, *"anti-decos"*, which means one who brings a lawsuit. In Greek, the word *"anti"* means against, and the word *"decos"* means rights, and together they mean one who comes against our rights. So our adversary is required to bring a lawsuit against us before God's courtroom to come against us and deny us what is rightfully ours, and Satan will not hesitate in doing so. We get a picture of this in **Zechariah 3:1**, ***"Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him."*** In the physical realm the high priest would have been dressed in beautiful garments, but in the spiritual realm the high priest is seen in filthy rags in God's courtroom because of his sins. However, when God forgives his sins Joshua is dressed in beautiful garments in the spiritual realm as well,

taking away Satan's accusations so that Joshua can be used by God. God took away the legal right so Satan could not devour Joshua and had to flee!

Do you often wonder why we are not getting all of the blessings that are recorded within the pages of the Bible, and why God is not answering our prayers, and why we are lacking peace, contentment, and joy in life? It is because the devil has a case against us in the courts of Heaven that needs to be dealt with. So, if we don't first go to the courtroom and get all of the legal things put in place, the enemy is going to resist us, he's going to bring backlash against us, and he has a legal right to do so. We need to come humbly before our Heavenly Father, repent of our sins, and then make things right by forgiving others that have come against us and deal with our past to come against our accuser in God's courtroom. All sin, past, present and generational must be dealt with. The process we are to follow is described in **James 4:7-10**, ***"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded. Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."***

As we come before the Lord, what we often miss is *"the submit yourself to God"* part, and the *"wash your hands and purify your heart"* part, and the *"grieve, mourn, and wail"* over your sins part, along with the *"humble yourselves"* part, which are the requirements in having our cases heard in God's courtroom. So, we first need to have the Holy Spirit search our heart, and then come clean before God with a repentant and broken heart for the sinful part that the Spirit reveals to us. In other words, we need to agree with the accusations of our accuser and immediately repent. Never fight against the accusations that Satan is bringing against you, just agree, saying, YES I'm a sinner, YES I did so-and-so, YES I said so-and-so, YES I neglected to obey, and then repent, and the wind will immediately go out of the accuser's sails and shut him up. Then, we can come before God with clean hands and a clean heart, because we have an advocate who will stand up for us within the court room of heaven, who is none-other than Jesus the Christ, our High Priest before God's throne.

When we have done our part, Jesus our High Priest allows us to approach God's throne of grace with boldness and confidence, all because of what Christ has done for us according to **Hebrews 4:14-16**, ***"We have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God...For we do not have a high priest***

who is unable to empathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Jesus is our High Priest in Heaven right now! He is before the throne of God right now, offering His shed blood, so God has a legal right to bless us and meet our needs once we have met His conditions of repentance and holiness, having dealt with all accusations Satan may have dug up against us.

By His shed blood Jesus has overthrown the powers of darkness, so our enemy can’t accuse us once we have carried out the legal requirements of confessing and repenting of our sins. The cross was a legal transaction that is available for all who believe Christ is the Son of God and accept His sacrificial death to atone for their sins. It’s the cross of Christ that grants God the legal right to forgive and cleanse us of sin in the courtroom of Heaven. Without our acknowledgment of sin, and our confession and repentance, restoration can’t take place, and we will stand guilty in the courts of Heaven, and the accusations of Satan will stand against us and remain in place!

John 13 gives us the account of the Last Supper. After Jesus washes the feet of each of His twelve disciples they gathered together to celebrate this final Passover Meal, and we discover that Satan was present in that gathering making sure God’s plans would be hindered in some way. According to **John 13:21, 26-27**, Satan’s first victim was Judas Iscariot. *“Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, ‘Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me’...Then dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.”* Judas’ unconfessed sins allowed Satan to use him! After Judas’ betrayal was exposed, and he left to carry out his plan to betray the Messiah to the Jewish leaders, we find that Satan was looking for yet another victim. This time Satan singled out their leader Simon Peter. After Peter boldly proclaims that he would lay down his life for Jesus, Jesus answers him. *“Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times”* (John 13:38). And how do we know Satan was present at the Last Supper, because **Luke 22: 31-32** tells us so, *“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”*

At the Last Supper, Satan demanded that Peter be put on trial and have God's court find Peter unqualified to carry out his destiny as the leader of the early church. Satan knew what Peter's destiny was, and his goal was to prevent Peter from fulfilling what God had written in Peter's book in Heaven by attacking his character. Satan's goal was to have the courts disqualify Peter because of this issue of betrayal, deny His Saviour three times. Satan accuses Peter in God's courtroom making his case – How could Peter be trusted to become the future leader of the church? However, Jesus stood up and defended Peter, by the authority He had over His disciples in the heavenly courts. As Peter's advocate, Jesus was saying, *"I went to court for you Peter, I stood up for you before God in Heaven's courtroom, and you are going to get the destiny God has ordained for you from the beginning of time."* Later that night Peter is humbled and heart-broken by his betrayal, but after Jesus' resurrection Peter is restored and reinstated as the leader of the Apostles. Preaching a sermon on the Day of Pentecost at which 3000 become believers, and then years later becomes a martyr, giving his life for his Messiah was proof that even though Peter at first faltered and failed, he fulfilled his divine destiny, all because the accusations against him were dealt with by Jesus in God's courtroom, so Satan had no choice but to flee!

Today Satan continues to be before the throne of God, presenting evidence in the courts as to why we should be disqualified from what is written within our book. Satan wants to stop us at any cost from stepping into our identity, our destiny and our God-given purpose, and it's our job to answer these accusations and silence our accuser. That is why we must constantly allow the Lord to test us and see what is within our heart, as King David the Psalmist cried out to God in **Psalm 139:23-24**, ***"Search me God, and know my heart; test me and see if there is any wicked ways in me."*** To stand before God in the courts of heaven and win every time, we must come with a clean repentant heart, or our accuser, Satan will resist us every time. As Satan is constantly walking this earth trying to find who he can devour, we need to understand that Satan can only destroy those he has a legal reason to destroy. This could possibly explain why we see bad things happen to some good people; somewhere in their lives or past history, or ancestry, the devil has found a legal right to bring destruction upon them. And that's why we need to constantly ask the Holy Spirit to keep searching our heart and our past to reveal anything that needs to be dealt with. And then, we need to keep short accounts with God and repent of everything and anything that the Holy Spirit brings to our attention, even those generational sins that haven't been dealt with by our ancestors. The devil

will go back to the sins of our parents, our grand-parents, and as far back as he has to, to dig up anything against us to disqualify us from fulfilling our divine calling and destiny. The devil needs evidence against us in God's court, so don't give him any!

To have an audience in the courts of heaven – we must appear there with a humble spirit and a broken contrite heart, and we can only do that through repentance, not only for ourselves but for our past generations as well. John the Apostle told us in **1 John 1:8-9** to stop making excuses for yourself; instead, confess your sins, ***“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*** Our words of confession and repentance are powerful forces in the courts of heaven, by them the accuser is silenced and his hold on us is broken. And this is promised to every one of us according to **Colossians 2:13-15**, ***“He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”***

God is not just our Heavenly Father; He is also a King who has a Kingdom. In addition to this He is a Friend, He is Lord, but He is also Judge in His Courts in Heaven. **Isaiah 33:22** tells us, ***“For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King; it is he who will save us.”*** God is not only our Lord, our Judge and our lawgiver, but His desire is to save us! God sits as Judge because He wants to save us, not to condemn us! The purpose of His laws, His Word, His commandments, and righteousness is to save us and to judge on our behalf all the evil taking place around us. When we think about this amazing fact it should give us great comfort and hope that our Heavenly Father loves us so much that He will discipline us whenever we disobey and stray from His path, but will be waiting with outstretched arms for our return and welcome us back as His beloved son/daughter. YES, God sits as Judge, but we can approach God's throne of grace with confidence because Jesus is our lawyer, and the Holy Spirit is our advocate in the courts of Heaven. The foundation of God's throne are righteousness and justice, a place where grace rather than judgment is being released for those who love and serve Him. The Good News of the Gospel is that even though we all died in Adam, we all have the possibility to come alive in Christ as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 15:22**, ***“For as in Adam all die, so in***

Christ all will be made alive.” In and through Christ we are alive, redeemed, justified, sanctified, cleansed, purified, lifted high, taken care of, forgiven and have risen to new life!

Some of you may have missed your destiny, some of you may have lost sight of your destiny, but as long as you are still alive, there is hope. All that you need to do to achieve your God-given destiny and step into all that God has called you to be is to repent, come clean before the Lord, and then take your case with boldness and confidence before the courtroom of heaven, and God will hear your case and answer your prayers in your time of need.

In closing I want to lead us through a prayer to start us off on this journey of operating in the courtroom of heaven:

Heavenly Father, I thank you for making provisions for my deliverance from every form of bondage. Lord, in Jesus’ name, I repent for my sins, transgressions, and wickedness, and the sins of my ancestors that have led to any form of bondage or stronghold over my life, and I break it all in Jesus Name. I claim the promise of Colossians 2:13-15 – that anything held against me, any accusation, anything that’s contrary to me which stands against me and condemns me, has been taken away. So, I am nailing it to your cross, Lord Jesus. And Lord, according to your word that accusation is now removed by the blood of Jesus, and I am covered and protected by Your precious blood. And Lord, I grant you as Judge, the legal right to render a verdict on my behalf in the courts of Heaven. So, that I can have the destiny that was written in God’s book in heaven about me and start living it out to the best of my ability with the help of the Holy Spirit. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen!