



Romans 8.<sup>31-34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

<sup>33</sup>Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

<sup>34</sup>Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

As we briefly noted in our *meditation* based on Luke 24.<sup>50-53</sup>, to detail the activities by which Jesus "wrought" the Atonement through suffering and death, and then ending it with resurrection, is to leave things unfinished. Without ascension and enthronement at the right hand of God, his infinite and eternal Atonement remains incomplete. The latter are as essential to Atonement as the former.<sup>1</sup>

Sitting enthroned at the right hand of God as Jesus does, all "angels and authorities and powers" are, according to Peter's language, "subject unto him."<sup>2</sup> In the thought and language of Paul, in setting Jesus "at his own right hand in the heavenly places," God had given him power "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." God had "put all things under his feet..."<sup>3</sup>

There are, scripture teaches, many angels, many authorities, many powers not only on this celestial planet but out there in the cosmos. Not all of them are benign. Some of them are downright evil, threatening, and deadly. One of those powers is a fallen angel, who bears the name, Lucifer. He is, certainly, a tempter. But he is also, according to John the Revelator's testimony, "the accuser of our brethren... which accused them before our God day and night."<sup>4</sup> No doubt, one of the temptations that the accuser uses is the temptation of hopeless self-recrimination. We often need protected from ourselves as much as we do from Satan. One author has said it like this.

"Satan is thus not merely a mythological character invented out of whole cloth; the 'adversary' is that actual inner or collective voice of condemnation that any sensitive person hears tirelessly repeating accusations of guilt or inferiority. And indeed, there is often a degree of truth in the charges. But Satan's demand for strict justice, untempered by mercy, can crush the spirit of a person or a people."<sup>5</sup>

Accusation of and prosecution for guilt—imagined and real—are, indeed, threatening things from which we require protection. From his seat at the right hand of God, Jesus offers this protection, standing

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<sup>1</sup> We have asserted elsewhere that, in fact, there is no activity in which Jesus engaged during his earthly ministry that is not, itself, an act of at-one-ment.

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Peter 3.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See Ephesians 1.<sup>19-22</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Revelation 12.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, p. 12-13

between us and “condemnation.” He plays the role of defender against inner and outer condemnation. Jesus himself spoke of this role in one of the most beloved Gospel passages.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,  
even so must the Son of man be lifted up:  
That whosoever believeth in him should not perish,  
but have eternal life.  
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,  
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,  
but have everlasting life.  
For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;  
but that the world through him might be saved.  
He that believeth on him is not condemned:  
but he that believeth not is condemned already,  
because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”<sup>6</sup>

We see Jesus acting in this role as defender from guilt everywhere we turn. We see it in his earthly ministry. We hear tell of it in Paul’s writings. We hear tell of it in the Book of Mormon, nowhere more powerfully than in Alma.

He, it was, who “was racked with eternal torment... harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all [his] sins.”<sup>7</sup> He it was who “cried within [his] heart: ‘O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death.’” He it was who then “could remember [his] pains no more; yea, [he] was harrowed up by the memory of [his] sins no more. And oh, what joy,” he exclaims “and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!”<sup>8</sup>

The latter-day Church had hardly emerged from the womb before its members found Jesus at it again. In a revelation given in April 1830, Jesus, on the self-same day, spoke to Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel Smith, and Joseph Smith, all of whom constituted about half the Church membership at the time. To Oliver, he said,

“Thou art blessed, and art under no condemnation.”

To Hyrum, he declared,

“Thou also art under no condemnation.”

To Samuel, he announced,

“Thou also art under no condemnation.”

And to Joseph, he repeated the now familiar refrain.

“Thou also art under no condemnation.”

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<sup>6</sup> John 3.<sup>14-18</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Alma 36.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Alma 36.<sup>18-20</sup>

This absence of “condemnation” was not due to there being no cause for condemnation. These men were not perfect. They were far from sinless. Rather, this absence of “condemnation” was the result of Jesus’ character and his acting in his role as defender. In Christ neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor dominions, nor ourselves can level a “charge” against “God’s elect.” Yea, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Indeed, “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loves us.”<sup>9</sup> We are citizens of the kingdom of God, as John sees in his great Apocalypse.

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: *for* the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.’”<sup>10</sup>

That is one huge three letter word: ‘for.’ “Salvation,” and “strength,” and “the kingdom of God,” and the “power of his Christ” are all found in casting down the accuser and annihilating all condemnation, all accusation, and all prosecution of guilt.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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<sup>9</sup> Romans 8.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Revelation.<sup>10</sup>