

# The Power of Righteousness

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Jesus' righteousness is our sure deliverance from and safeguard against the works of the devil. Listen to this prophecy over Israel:

"He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has He seen wickedness in Israel. The LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them. (22) God brings them out of Egypt; He has strength like a wild ox. (23) For there is no sorcery against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel. It now must be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'Oh, what God has done!' (24) Look, a people rises like a lioness, and lifts itself up like a lion; it shall not lie down until it devours the prey, and drinks the blood of the slain" (Nu. 23:21-24).

The children of Israel were the dread and the envy of the nations during the time of the giving of the above prophecy. As Balaam looked out over the encampment of Israel in the valley below, he caught a glimpse of a people upon whom God's favor completely rested. The Spirit of God came upon him and he spoke forth this revelation as it filled his heart. He understood that no nation on earth could withstand Israel and no curse could vex them. They had the shout (authority) of the King of kings among them.

Oh, but this story has a dark side. While such insight could have served as an invitation from God for Balaam to become one of His people, he instead used it against them. He understood that the above was only true as long as God did not observe or see iniquity and wickedness in their camp. So, Balaam, in his greed and wickedness, used this knowledge against Israel and taught Balak, king of Moab, to seduce them to step outside of God's favor and blessing. He taught this desperate, wicked king how to turn God against Israel in judgment. The children of Israel, in their naivety, were seduced into compromising their high position in the Lord. Their shout no longer had clout with God. It took the zeal and godly fear of Phinehas to restore God's authority, favor, and blessing back to Israel.

There are no people in the earth who can compare to those who are righteous before God—people to whom God does not accredit sin. Absolutely nothing can harm them. No army can defeat them. No one can successfully bring a charge (accusation) against them. If God is for them, then who can be against them? If He has blessed them, then who can curse them? If He is protecting them, who can even come near them with evil intent? Anything that would bring sickness, disease, harm, or calamity into their lives is held back because of the righteousness that is of faith. However, *if they begin to strive in their flesh, lean to their own understanding, and not entirely depend on the righteousness that is of faith, then this will give the devil a habitation or a vantage point of oppression in their lives.* Listen to Solomon:

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; (6) in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (7) Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. (8) *It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones*” (Pro. 3:5-8).

Otherwise, you will not have health to your flesh and strength to your bones.

When we look away from the Author and Finisher of our faith, our great vantage point over the powers of darkness will slip away from us. What is this vantage point?

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, (5) even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (6) and raised us up together, and *made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, (7) that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4-7).

We *are* seated with Christ in the heavenly places *now*. This is not a future event. This great vantage point is a place of immunity that can only be realized and experienced by our surrendering to grace and walking by faith. Only by grace through faith will we enjoy the benefits thereof.

Listen to the psalmist:

“Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes my salvation. (2) He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; *I shall not be greatly moved* [to totter, shake, slip]. (3) How long will you attack a man? You shall be slain, all of you, like a leaning wall and a tottering fence. (4) *They only consult to cast him down from his high position*; they delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah” (Ps. 62:1-4).

Notice that he said in verse two that he would not be *greatly* moved. For some reason, he did not have complete confidence in the Lord or else he would have stated that he would not be moved, period. Something had taken place that left his faith in God in a weakened state. Then he turns and addresses his enemies (vs. 3-4), as if he had received a revelation from God. He realizes that there had been an attempt by his enemies to “cast him down from his high position.” After he regained his focus on the Lord, the psalmist was then able to see his enemies for what they really were and not what they appeared to be. The psalmist turns to his enemies, addresses them accordingly, and then afterward worships God and declares, “I shall not be moved!”

On a National Geographic television presentation entitled *The Great Barrier Reef*, a big fish of some kind came up to a much smaller one, inhales, and the smaller fish disappears. However, within a matter of seconds, the big fish spit out the smaller one. Why? Because the small fish had the ability to inflate at least twice its size. This ability serves as its main defense, thus making it impossible for some bigger fish to swallow. The whole point here is that the smaller fish was able to appear much bigger than it really was. Likewise, the powers of darkness can appear to be more powerful, intimidating, threatening, and oppressive than they really are. How do you think that the devil went from being a serpent in the book of Genesis to a dragon in the book of the Revelation? It is not a case of, “Honey, I blew up the devil.”

No, the devil is able to inflate himself through the fleshly pride of men who are trying to be like God apart from God. Scripture testifies that such wickedness would increase in the last days. Even so, the serpent's appearance has bloated to deceive the masses of people.

The archenemy of our soul seeks to undermine our faith so that we will slip, totter, or be shaken from our high position in Christ, thus making him in appearance to be as a dragon that flies overhead instead of a serpent that is under our feet. All of his attacks against God's people are ultimately designed to accomplish this. This is why we are to always have a resistant, sober, and watchful attitude towards the devil and his direct assaults against us (1 Pt. 5:8-9; Jas. 4:7-8). If we stay submitted to God, He will cause us know deeply that the devil is an already judged and defeated foe. As the result, we will triumph over him and his works in every sphere of life from a position of resting in Christ's finished work and victory (the heavenly places in Christ). In submitting to God, He will give us a strategy on how to deal with the devil. The devil will flee as the result, taking his destructive works with him without exception. If we meet God's conditions and follow His instructions, He *will* fulfill His promises.

"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Ro. 5:17).

Over what are we to reign in this life?

Well, what did Jesus reign over?

His flesh and the works of the devil, of course.

We must obtain an abundance of grace and keep a firm grasp on the gift of righteousness in order to walk in continual victory as Jesus did. *Since God only gives grace to the humble, then only those who walk humbly with God are qualified to reign in this life over everything contrary to His perfect will—everything Jesus came to destroy.* His will toward us was proven through Christ's ministry on earth and made surer through His death and resurrection.

Abundant grace enables or empowers us to reign, and the gift of righteousness gives us the right to reign.

We must, therefore, make sure that we are not treating others contrary to the testimony of Christ's blood in Heaven. Through His blood alone are we made righteous before God. It always speaks in our behalf and never against us. Consequently, our lives must bear the aroma of His sacrifice, displaying His redeeming love. Anything less is self-righteous, and we will, as the result, forfeit our right to reign in life through Christ.

Our high position in Christ corresponds with our becoming the least or most lowly in the earth—servants of all. We must take on the mind of Christ, "...Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, (7) but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (9) Therefore God also has highly

exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, (11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Php. 2:6-11).

Our high position in Christ has nothing to do with showing disrespect toward the powers of darkness, calling them degrading names, or having a haughty attitude. Even Michael the archangel, who is far more powerful than we are, does not bring reviling accusations against the devil (Jude 1:9). No, if we will remain in the place of brokenness (softness of heart), the love of God will become our immunity against anything the devil can throw at us. When God’s love flows out of us, nothing can swim upstream and we will walk in an authority to which all Hell will bow the knee. That love cannot flow if our peace with God is undone within us (Rom. 5:1-2). If we are caught up with how messed up we are, then we have lost sight of that blessed state accredited to those who believe that Jesus is alive from the grave.

We must remain in the shadow of the cross, God’s love revealed, if we are going to love in the same way. Those who lay down their lives out of love for others, even as Jesus did for His enemies, will experience the full blessing of their high place in Christ. Otherwise, our confidence in the Lord will totter. Jesus’ greatest defeat over the power of darkness was not by direct confrontation but by His death. That death was love revealed in its greatest splendor. Perfect love defeated supreme wickedness.

This is why we must have an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness in order to reign in this life. Notice, and this is important, we do not *achieve* an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. We *receive it* instead! Yes, we have to rightly position ourselves to receive it but we must first be convinced of its availability and accessibility. It takes an abundance of grace in order for us to walk in love toward all, laying down our lives, and thus maintain our confidence, and our high position in Christ. If our heart condemns us, because of our not remaining in Christ’s love, our confidence will falter (see 1 Jn. 3:16-24). We must, therefore, default to the finished work of the cross to retain peace with God, *with ourselves, and our fellowman*.

Have you become weary in maintaining your high position in Christ? Do you feel comparable to a “leaning wall and tottering fence?” Has the devil been trying to wear you out and cast you down? Be encouraged this day for greater is He that is in you than he who is in the world. Look unto the Author and Finisher of your faith, and then, as did the psalmist, you will see that all your enemies are like leaning walls and tottering fences. You will know without doubt that the prince of this world is judged (Jn. 16:7-11). Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, He alone is your righteousness, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts (Ro. 13:14).

*Began now to praise Him for His gift of righteousness, and you will come into an abundance of grace.* Give thanks for the Lamb who has taken away your sins. By so doing, your enemies will totter and fall! You will be able to say with full assurance and finality as the psalmist, “I shall not be moved!”  
Roarrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr! The shout of the King will be restored to you.

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotes are from the New King James Version