

Captive's Corner



"Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:5

Jail Impact Ministries ECS Ministries P.O. Box 1028, Dubuque, Iowa 52004-1028 www.ecsministries.org

Resurrection Life

(how it relates to sickness and adversity in God's resolution of the angelic conflict)

In light of the fact that the believer has been created by God, purchased by the blood of Christ, and given unsearchable riches in Christ, his chief aim and purpose is to glorify God in all he does, all he has (including time, resources, and talent), and in every lot of his life (Isaiah 43:7; Romans 1:21; 11:33, 36; 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 10:31). For the believer, sickness and other adversity is an opportunity

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to glorify God in several ways because of its relation to how God is currently resolving the angelic conflict which began with the angel Lucifer coveting the glory of God. Lucifer's desire for self glory resulted in his fall with a third of the angels. The earth is his domain now, which means a present aspect of the conflict is being worked out on the earth beginning apparently in the garden of Eden. Thus, the church is now involved in this

conflict because it is the body of Christ on earth. Christ's conflict is now our conflict because we are in union with Him. This conflict, in its future earthly aspect, culminates near Jerusalem after the millennial reign of Christ (Isaiah 14:13-15; John 10:10; Ephesians 3:8-10; Rev. 20:7-10; 1 Peter 1:10-12).

As men in flesh bring glory to God by being content to trust Him in adversity, Satan is reminded of the One Man in flesh Who perfectly did all the Father's will and glorified God on the earth (John 1:1, 4; 17:4). Since the resurrection life of Christ now abides in every believer and is manifest when the weakened believer, sustained by His life, sets his heart and mind on things above instead of being occupied with the weakness of his body, guess what Satan is also reminded of?! He is reminded that the source of that life, Jesus, the Victor, the God-Man is in heaven! Alive! He must be alive if His life is being actively manifested in believers today. Alive! Alive! Alive forevermore! My Jesus is alive! God has always known the beginning from the end. He always had in mind a heavenly man (Eph 2:6; Col 3:1-4; 2:9). He made an earthly man so that He could display aspects of His character which otherwise would be veiled in mystery to the angels. Jesus was "full of grace and truth." Jesus said, "I am meek and humble." This shows the angels that God is very unlike the pride of Satan. Satan said, "I will ascend. I will be like the Most High." In contrast, Jesus "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of man. 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" (Is 14:13-15; Phil 2:6-11). Jesus triumphed over Satan on the cross, disarmed principalities and powers, and made a spectacle of them to the angels. He did this by canceling out the believers' sin debt so Satan could no longer accuse the brethren in God's court. He also triumphed by rising from the dead and ascending through them into glory to the Father's right hand despite their efforts to keep Him in the tomb. (Gen 3:15; Rev 12:10-11; Col 2:14-15; Eph 1:19-20; 4:8).

This same Jesus is now making a spectacle of Satan through the life of every believer who depends on the Lord as his portion in adversity and, thus, displays the character of grace and humility as the God-Man (Jesus) perfectly displayed. The angels are gazing in at the church to view the wisdom of God at work in resolving this conflict (Eph. 3:9-10). God is triumphing over Satan through believers (Colossians 2:15), with a view toward the Lake of Fire (the final display of Satan's defeat and the completing of the angelic conflict – Rev 20:9-10) - Heb 2:7-8; Acts 2:36; 10:36, 42; Matt 28:18.

One of Satan's comments in Job 2:4 gives us further insight into how God can be glorified in the midst of the believers' trials. Satan said, "All that man has he will give for his life." I believe this is so telling of how Satan thinks about every believer in Christ today. He is in denial of the resurrection life within the believer because the resurrected Christ spells his doom. Job knew that after death he would be with his Redeemer and live so that he need not cling to his temporary life on earth (Job 19:25-27)! God proved Satan the liar and loser he is through man, even through sickness. Through the weakness of man, God's strength is shown perfect or victorious

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and the angelic conflict further resolved. Satan's statement stands in stark contrast, not only to Job's response, but also to the testimony of Jesus, his Conqueror: "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him (God) Who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell" (Matthew 10:28) and "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies" (John 11:25). Wow! There it is, the truth set against the lie! The believer will not give all he has for his life because he looks forward to life after death in the presence of God. Job said, "I know that

my Redeemer lives" and "After my skin is destroyed, this I know, that In my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:25-27). Oh death (and therefore Satan) where is thy sting? One of Satan's principle lies to man is that man needs to hang on to his life because this is all there is. Satan desires for the world to be occupied with itself instead of God because it robs God of glory which is to be "passed on to Him" (just like Satan's first sin—Isaiah 14:12-16; Ezek 28:11-19) and because believers are changed into the image of Jesus Christ as they are occupied with Him. We become what we set our affections on. Satan tries to convince unbeliever and believer alike that true life is

found in material possessions (wealth) and, therefore, they should be pursued as our chief aim in life. Yet, the truth is, "To live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21), "Life is not found in the abundance of material possessions." (Luke 12:15), "If you have the Son, you have the life." (1 John 5:11-12), and "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). Jesus came so that we could have life in abundance (John 10:10b), not only possessing it but experiencing it in our daily lives despite being in a corrupt body in a corrupt world. We escape the corruption that is in the world by partaking of and increasing in the experiential knowledge of God. As we yield to God's Spirit instead of

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the flesh in our daily walk, He forms Christ (His moral character) in us and manifests Him through our members in the fruit of the Spirit. When we bear His fruit, we are experiencing Him (2 Peter 1:1-9). The believer has already passed out of the sphere of death into the life in Christ and will in flesh be with the Lord in glory forever (John 5:24). True abundant life is not found in a healthy body or material wealth on this earth while the true Lover of our souls is in heaven. In fact, adversity in its various forms, which can include sickness or living by humble means, results in an increasing in the experiencing of true life for the believer who depends on the Lord's strength to sustain him in his weakened state. This body and our material possessions will perish and never leave this earth. Peter said, "The laying aside of my earthly dwelling (body) is imminent" (2 Peter 1:14). David said, "I will be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness." (Psalm 17:15). Therefore, do not cling to that which is perishing and temporary. Like Job, Paul, David, and Peter, in an imperishable body we will be with our Redeemer in heaven, swallowed up by life, experiencing it to the full (1 Cor 15:54; 2 Cor 5:4). There, there will be no sickness or

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tears because there will be no Satan and no sin there. To God be the glory. Therefore, when the believer, in a weakened state, chooses to have this eternal view of temporary trials, looking to the unseen and not the seen instead of clinging to that which is attached to this temporary earth, including his body, Satan is reminded that although every believer has a temporary body which sin decays (1 Peter 1:24), which he can attack (Eph 6:11-12; 1 Pet 5:8), and which bears the brunt of untold number of trials (John 16:33), even persecution in this world (Luke 6:22; 1 Peter 2:19-22), no weapon formed against the believer can prevail against his destiny with immortality and glory (the position and glory Satan

coveted in ages past in Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Isaiah 14:12-16). Nor can he prevent us from experiencing and manifesting life and godliness on this earth now as we yield to God's Spirit because the Source and guarantee of it all is Christ—Satan's Conqueror and Judge (Isaiah 54:17; 2 Corinthians 4:11; Galatians 5:22-25).
However, some are looking for their satisfaction in the things of this earth. but the true Lover of our souls, the Source of the spring that if drawn from will cause one to never thirst again for life and godliness, has left the earth. Yet, we are in union with Him by His Spirit. This is a living union by which we share in all the spiritual blessings of Christ (eternal, un-searchable riches and a Spring of abundant life (Eph 1:1-14). So, the One Who satisfies to the full is Christ. He is in heaven, and true life is in Him. The fact that He has left is proof that true satisfaction cannot be

found in anything on this earth. Only when he returns will we be entirely satisfied by something on this earth. In union with Him by His Spirit we have died to this world, the

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lusts of the flesh, and the allurements of Satan for us to hang on to this earth, including this body which is attached to this earth and no doubt has an appointment to return to it in death (Hebrews 9:27). As we have shared in His death, so too we share in His resurrection life by His Spirit (John 6:63; Colossians 2:13; Eph. 2:5). Thus, in Christ we have, in a very real sense, passed from this corrupt scene (this sin-corrupted body and world—Satan's domain). Our life is now hid with God in Christ, and when Christ appears we shall appear with Him. We will then realize fully the future tense of our salvation, the redemption of our bodies (Col 3:1-4). Yet, when we view God's promises through the lens of faith, it is like looking through binoculars. Faith brings what is far away (future) right up close. Read Hebrews 11. These believers never saw the promises fully realized on this earth, yet by faith the promises of God were sure. Our true satisfaction must be in the Giver and not the gifts He chooses to give or not to give while sojourning on this earth. We should come to His table because He is there not because of what is on the table. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ in bodily form, and now we are in Him and He is in us. We are complete in Him. There can be no doubt.

My personal testimony is that God has made me very spiritually fruitful in my affliction. Job said to the Lord, "I have heard of thee... but now I see thee" (Job 42:5-6). As a result of my illnesses and daily adversities in life I have learned

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experientially (yet have much more to learn) that the Lord is more than sufficient. The lesson and fruit it bears is priceless, incomparable to the "cost" of the trial. I have found Him to be my All in All. I had heard, but now I see clearer than ever that He is and always has been Beautiful Beyond Description. He is more beautiful than any of us know Him to be today. He perfectly satisfies and completes me. Now I love the truth and know it experientially instead of simply inwardly. In light of this, God is more glorified through me and Satan proved the loser as a result of my affliction. Therefore, adversity is not a toil but a joy. Christ is now my life, and as death works in me, life works in others. To God be the glory, He is

victorious and true! (Genesis 41:51-52; James 1:2).
I hope these thoughts will help you to have a true Biblical perspective regarding sickness and adversity so that God's victory over the evil one will be proclaimed through your life and God alone will be glorified as men and angels observe your life through the many trials to come. Remember, "God is good and does good" (Psalm 119:68).

P. S. Two other Captive's Corners that give further ways God is working out the angelic conflict through believers' sickness and adversity. Their titles are "Sickness & Adversity" and "The Harder the Training the Stronger the Soldier." God's purpose in resolving the angelic conflict to His glory is not the only reason for believers' sickness. At least five other reasons for sickness are given in the Captive's Corner "Why Believers Get Sick and Die." For more information on the angels' interest in the church and the glory of God you can read "To God Be the Glory."

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