

**Hebrews 2: 14-16; “That Christ Might Destroy the Devil”, Sermon # 10 in
the series – “Holding Fast our Confession”, Delivered by
Pastor Paul Rendall on February 19th, 2012,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

It is interesting that here at the beginning of this message we should be confronted with the truth of particular redemption, the doctrine that Christ died only for the Elect, but it is very plain when we examine the passage carefully. “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same...” Who are the children who are mentioned in this verse? At first glance you might think that they are all the children of men, all men who have descended from Adam the first man. I went to my Strong’s Concordance and I tried to find one reference to the word “children”, where it was referring to all men. Among the literally hundreds of references to the word “children” I found only one passage which came close to referring to all men. It was Psalm 115, verse 16. “The heavens are the Lord’s but the earth He has given to the children of men.” And even this verse may only apply to God’s Elect people in the final analysis, because it is the meek, Jesus says, who are going to inherit the earth; not all the wicked unbelieving people who have ever lived. No, the vast majority, if not all of the references to the word “children” in the Bible have to do with a certain very well-defined group of persons. Either it is children in a family, or children in a tribe in Israel, or the children of a some other particular group or nation. But it is not all men everywhere in every generation. If you look at the context, and especially verse 13, you will see who “the children” refers to specifically here. It is “the children whom God has given to Christ; meaning all of those Elect persons chosen before the foundation of the world by the Father; those whom He then gave to His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to save them from their sins. Christ partook of flesh and blood in His Incarnation that He might die for these children. Let me ask you as I begin this message, are you one of them? Are you a child of God? No one is a child of God except by faith in Christ. No one becomes a child of God except by adoption into the Father’s family. The Bible very clearly teaches that every person on this planet is either a child of God or a child of the Devil. I know that this truth may be hard for you to accept, but it is so clearly taught in the Bible, that we cannot escape the conclusion. It says in 1 John 3: 8 – “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil sinned from the beginning.” “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

We read here in verse 14 that Christ came into this fallen world of sin and darkness in His incarnation in order to die. He has partaken of flesh and blood; He has shared in our nature, that through death He might destroy the devil. It is this phrase that we want to examine more closely this morning. What does it mean that Christ through death might destroy the devil? Is the devil destroyed or is he not destroyed? During the next few minutes I want to show you the Scriptural truth that

the Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who has ever entirely overcome the devil, so that all of his works are destroyed in regard to all who will believe in Jesus. I want you to see that there has been a progression in this work of Christ's, in His destroying Satan's power over the Elect people of God. There has been a progression eschatologically in the devil's being destroyed; all the way from the beginning of the world until the present time. And this progressive destruction will continue until our Lord returns and judges the world in righteousness. And we will further see that there is a progressive destruction of the Devil's works in every true believer in Christ as well, because of His great power. So first of all we will look into the truth that the devil was the one who had the power of death. (verse 14) 2ndly – We will look into the truth that Christ through His death has taken away that power and released all believers from the bondage of fear. (verse 15) And 3rdly – We want to look into the truth that Christ because of His death and His resurrection does and will give help to the seed of Abraham. (verse 16)

1st of all – We will now look into the truth that the devil was the one who had the power of death.

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. The devil is a real spirit being. It says here that he really needed to be destroyed. Christ came into the world that through death He might destroy him. Why does the devil need to be destroyed? He needs to be destroyed because he himself is a great destroyer of God's intended purposes. He needed to be destroyed by Christ on the cross, and his works need to be destroyed today because he is the most sinful creature in the whole universe of God's created beings. He is the chief agent who instigated rebellion against the purposes of Almighty God. He needs to be destroyed forever, and he will be destroyed forever, because he himself was originally created a very beautiful and powerful angel, but he fell into the sin of pride, and rebelled against God. In doing so, he took other angels with him in this rebellion and they together form the kingdom of darkness into which all descendants of Adam are born. You see, the devil was originally created a good angel. He was given a great responsibility by God in relation to the first man and the first woman, and he rebelled against God's intention for him. Let us see what God's purpose and intention was for the devil originally. I want you to turn with me to the book of Ezekiel Chapter 28. What we have here in this chapter is a prophecy concerning the “prince of Tyre”. He no doubt was an actual prince of that day over that great city. But in the prophet's bringing his message to the people of that day, that of the judgment of God which was coming upon this prince because of his sin; the Lord God through the prophet also interweaves into it a history of Satan's fall. It is a history which is intended to take the minds of everyone reading it, far beyond the judgment on this ancient city. It is a spiritual history of how a glorious angel became the devil. It is a history which would reach down through the generations of the Old Testament and into the New. This passage teaches us that it is Satan who is behind the wicked kings of this world which oppose the purposes of

God. It is the devil Satan who came into the garden of Eden in the form of a serpent and deceived Eve into thinking that she would be wise if she disobeyed God's command not to eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil.

How did this beautiful angel come to be the devil? It is described for us here. Verse 11 says, "Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'thus says the Lord God: 'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.'" "You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold." "The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you." "By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones." We can see here that the devil before his fall into sin was appointed by God as "a covering cherub". His mission evidently was to watch over the garden of God in a holy way. Every precious stone was his covering. I take this to mean that he had, as a trust from God, many aspects of beauty and wisdom and angelic glory given to him in order that he should serve God in a glorious and mighty and wonderful way, to promote God's glory in every way. One of his special and particular services was to watch over the garden of Eden and God's highest earthly creation man. Obviously the king of Tyre was not in the garden of Eden in any sense in his lifetime. Obviously the king of Tyre was not "perfect in his ways from the day he was created". Obviously the king of Tyre was not an anointed covering cherub. Obviously this king of Tyre was not "cast as profane out of the mountain of God". But this angelic being was. And he was an angel who trafficked in an abundance of holy spiritual things. Somehow, in the midst of these great responsibilities he allowed himself to become proud enough of his own wisdom and his own beauty that he desired to have a higher position than the one which God had given him. Jonathan Edwards says, (Corol. 4., on Ezekiel 28: 16) "In another respect also Jesus succeeds Lucifer, viz. in being the covering cherub. The word translated cover often and commonly signifies to protect." "It was committed to this archangel especially to have the care of protecting the beloved race, elect man, that was God's jewel, his treasure, his first fruits, his precious thing laid up in God's ark or chest or cabinet hid in the secret of God's presence." "That was the great business the angels were made for, and therefore was especially committed to the head of the angels." "But he fell from his innocency and dignity, and Jesus in his stead becomes the cherub that covereth, the great protector and Savior of elect men, that gathers them as a hen her chickens under her wings [Matthew 23:37].

What was the particular sin of the devil that he should come to have the power of death over mankind in the garden of Eden? Turn with me over to Isaiah 14: 12. Here we find the name of this great angel before his fall. And once again we are in a prophetic passage where an earthly king and kingdom are being addressed. In this case it is the king of Babylon. But once again the history of Satan comes into the

words of judgment which the prophet declared would come upon the earthly king of Babylon; probably Belshazzar or if earlier, Nebuchadnezzar. “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” “How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!” “For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’” You can plainly see what the sin was, that he fell into. It was pride. He wanted to place himself in the position of God. He wanted to have the place of the pre-incarnate Son of God. He did not like the purpose and plan of God to at some point in the future exalt man to a position higher than the angels; he himself being the highest of the angels. Therefore he decided on a plan. And the plan comes to fruition in the garden of Eden when he spoke to Eve with these beguiling words. “Has God said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” “You will surely not die.” “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

This was the power of death that is mentioned in our text. He exercised this power he had, to tempt and lead Eve to the wrong conclusions about God’s holy word; to then eat the fruit so that she would die. And when she was deceived into taking and eating the fruit, and she did not physically die immediately, she gave some to her husband Adam, and probably said, “You see, I have not died.” “Go and ahead and eat.” “I have found real wisdom.” And Adam heeded his wife’s voice and ate, and they both died spiritually immediately. Now this is the power that the devil used to bring about the fall of our race. And he succeeded. We are all sinners because of Adam’s sin. And what is just as bad is that the devil continually tries to exercise this same power of death over people today. He uses the power of his own self-deceptive reasoning, so that we will perhaps listen to his lies and never come to know God or have everlasting life. The father of lies so reasons with you that you will try to become wise and powerful by your own reasonings apart from what God has said in the Bible. You don’t believe the Bible. You don’t believe that you need to trust in Christ to know God. This is the power of death. But God is opposed to this form of proud reasoning. He gives grace to the humble believer who will trust in His Word. This was why the pre-incarnate Son of God had to come and partake of flesh and blood. He had to take on human nature in order to crush Satan’s head. He had to crush and defeat Satan’s false and proud reasoning that he should be in the place of God, to rule over men by means of lies and darkness, and thus destroy them forever. The devil had the power of death over all men through the fall of Adam. Christ came into the world that he might destroy the devil.

2ndly – We will look into the truth that Christ through His death has taken away the power of death and has released all believers from the bondage of fear.

(verse 15)

“...and that Christ might release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” You see the deep and abiding interest of Christ in our

salvation in the giving of the first promise of salvation which God gave in the garden of Eden after the fall of Adam. But before we look at the promise, we must look at the fear that Adam had. Turn over with me to Genesis 3, verse 6. “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.” “She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.” “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.” “Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” So he said, ‘I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” Now, you will notice that immediately upon his eating this forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that Adam becomes afraid of God. He says that he was afraid because he was naked. The only way that he knew that he was naked was because his eyes had been opened to behold the shame of his nakedness. His realizing his own nakedness makes him feel that he is vulnerable to the punishment of death. And he does not know exactly what that is going to mean. He is afraid because he knows that he has sinned and he senses that he is now vulnerable to God’s judgment. He is afraid because he now has the knowledge of good and evil and has not been able to perfectly do the good, nor to keep himself from evil. He knows that he has not done what was right in this most important point of keeping himself from eating this fruit. His conscience condemns him. He has no way that he can comfort himself knowing that he has transgressed the covenant of works which God had made with him. He has lost his original righteousness so he clothes himself and Eve with fig-leaves. He has dealt treacherously with God, as it says in Hosea 6: 7. He had nothing to cloth himself with so that God would not see him as a sinner. This is why he was afraid.

Let me ask you whether you are a person who fears death? A person who does not have Christ as their Savior will always be subject to this awful fear. The person who fears death will all their lifetime be subject to this bondage of thinking about what it will mean for their soul to depart their body, and what it will mean to meet God who will be their righteous Judge. Some people try to dismiss this fear by trying to convince themselves that there is no God; that there is no judgment which is coming. But this is folly. It is the fool who has said in his heart, there is no God. Now, Adam and Eve knew that there was a God, for He had revealed Himself to them in his creation of them, His placing them in the garden, His giving them the institutions of marriage and the Sabbath day, but especially of His writing a law of universal obedience upon his heart so that he would love and desire to worship God and to have fellowship and communion with God. But all of that changed when sin entered their hearts. Fear came into their hearts where before there was only love, and child-like trust. This fear of what death will mean is a very reasonable thing, given the true knowledge of what the Scriptures say. “It is appointed unto men once

to die, and then comes judgment.” “Our God is a consuming fire” outside of Christ, and “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” It is a very reasonable question to ask yourselves whether you are ready to meet your maker. But it is very fearful when you realize that you are vulnerable to the judgment of God because you are a sinner in so many ways in your heart, if not in your actions, unless you know Christ.

May you hear me now. When you believe in Christ, when you take Him to be your Savior from sin, and Lord to rule over your life, you are released from the bondage of sin and the attendant fear that goes with it. Since God has created all things for His own glory, we must certainly ask ourselves whether we are living up to the purpose for which He created us? If we are not, we will find that we are in fear of what will come to us at our death. That attendant fear comes when you continue to walk through this world thinking that there is nothing wrong with your living life for yourself and for the world, and holding on to your sin. The gnawing, nagging fear is that God will judge you for not living for Him; loving Him pre-eminently, not serving Him with your time and your strength. That fear actually brings a real bondage which will last throughout your life unless you come to Christ for salvation. But when you come to Christ, because He suffered and died for sinners, He releases you from that bondage of the fear of death and the judgment which follows death. You will notice that in the garden, when the Lord came walking in the cool of the day, that the Lord Christ did not come to destroy Adam and Eve. He came to carefully investigate this matter of their sin, because His intention was to save them. He knew all the evil that was bound up in their sin, and all the terrible implications that would come to the whole human race because of their sin, and yet He calls to Adam and He says, “Where are you?” He could have come marching into the garden wearing a stern face of judgment, with no indication that he would show them any mercy, but this is not what he did. He first questioned them, and they in their fear blamed others for their own sin. Eve blamed Satan, and Adam blamed his wife, and yet the Lord will give them a promise because He was intending to deliver them from all their fears. This Lord God who was walking in the garden in the cool of the day was intending to become incarnate and to do for their sins. He would not give help to this angel, who had confirmed himself forever in his perverse unrighteousness, but He would give help to Adam.

Since the Lord knew that Satan was the one who had instigated this fall of Adam’s from his original righteousness, he speaks to him only in judgment, showing no mercy. He said in Genesis 3: 14 – “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on you belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.” “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise (or crush) your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” This was the beginning of the destruction of the devil by the Son of God. He is promising that He will come; He will take upon Himself human nature, in order that He could be born of the virgin Mary, suffer and bleed and die for the Elect children so that the power of what Satan had done in

relation to Adam and Eve could be broken over them.” He would come so that Satan’s head would be crushed through His death. He would come so that the ruler and prince of this world would be cast out of his position having this power in and through his being the ruler of the kingdom of darkness. He would come so that this murderer of men’s souls and deceiver of men’s minds would be destroyed and he would be rendered powerless in relation to deceiving God’s elect as to how they become wise. They are saved and they become wise unto that salvation through hearing and believing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Scriptures are something which you ought to know because they make you “wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,” it says in 2 Timothy 3: 16. But they are also intended, when you read them and believe them, in conjunction with prayer to God, to give you this saving grace, to take away all of your fears. Have you been delivered from all of your fears of death? You certainly can be through Jesus Christ your Lord.

Then 3rdly- We want to look into the truth that Christ because of His death and His resurrection does and will give help to the seed of Abraham. (verse 16)

“For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.” This book was written to the Hebrews who were and who are the seed of Abraham. When the text says that Christ gives aid to the seed of Abraham, the writer is bringing to their remembrance the promises that God gave to Abraham. In particular He would be reminding them of Genesis Chapter 24, verse 12 and following where the Lord spoke to Abraham after he had offered up his son Isaac on the altar. Abraham had been willing to slay his only-begotten son when God commanded him to offer him up. But the Angel of the Lord (the Pre-Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ) said to him, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” We have been talking about how when you believe in Jesus that He delivers you from the fear of death. When you are delivered from your sins and the fear of death, you are given the Holy Spirit and grace to fear the Lord. To fear the Lord is to have regard for all of His precious words to you in the Bible, praying for the grace to believe His promises, and to do and keep all of His commandments. This “aid” which comes to all believers, that is being spoken of in verse 16 that we are looking at, is something that both Jews and Gentiles both need in order to face temptation and to overcome it. They need aid which comes in the form of Christ’s grace in order to do and keep the least of Christ’s commandments. Jesus Christ died in order that the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles would be broken down, and that the two would become one in His Church. For Abraham is not the father of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles as it says in Romans 4: 11. “Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.” Both

Jews and Gentiles are saved from their sins and given aid to walk in the steps of faith of their father Abraham when they believe in Jesus. It is a faith which by grace leads on to obedience to God's word in every particular in relation to doing and keeping God's commandments.

In closing we need to understand what Satan's purposes have been and are presently in our day. We need to understand that our Lord Jesus Christ, in coming into the world, has fulfilled His and the Father's own promise to crush the serpent's head. All of Satan's strategy was to keep the Elect children, from ever being saved. Since Jesus has suffered and died, that strategy was defeated. None of the God's Elect, those believing and trusting in Jesus' death for them on the cross, can ever be held captive to do His will any longer. Once they believe they are released from bondage to sin and the fear of death. Since Christ is raised from the dead His resurrection power invades their life, and He continually is giving them aid in regard to all of their temptations and in regard to their working to keep His commandments. They are not saved by these good works, but these good works are there because of His aid to them. Their salvation is the free gift of God, and they receive the forgiveness of their sins and have Christ's righteousness imparted to them in justification from the moment that they believe. But they are made progressively holy by Christ's grace which helps them to prove that doing God's will by faith in Christ glorifies God. This truth has an eschatological aspect to it as well. The devil was destroyed in regard to the salvation of all of the Elect at the cross. And his supposed wisdom and power are destroyed in the believer's not trusting in their own wisdom or strength but in the finished work of Jesus Christ. God through Christ's Spirit's working effectually transfers the believer from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son. But this destruction of the devil's wisdom and power are also progressively destroyed, and his strategies in relation to all of God's Elect are defeated progressively by their being sanctified. We are saved, and we are being saved by Christ's great power. So too, in regard to Christ's kingdom coming to reign upon the earth, Satan's strategies were destroyed by Jesus' willingness to suffer and die from the foundation of the world, yea even from all eternity, He was willing to "partake of flesh and blood" and through his death to destroy him who had the power of death, and thus He began to put an end to Satan's kingdom here upon the earth. In John 12: 31 He says, "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out." Was he cast out from all of his evil activities and His kingdom completely destroyed at the cross? Yes, we can say that it was in regard to all the Elect being saved in all generations; it was certainly so. In regard to His kingdom of His saints reigning upon the earth it is not yet so. The conquering of the gospel among the nations of the world is yet to come. But the basis of this great advance of the gospel conquering among the nations, it is found at the cross. And in this sense we can legitimately say that Christ's present reign is progressively being worked out. His kingdom shall indeed come to reign upon the earth in a greater way than it ever has before, in the time of the Millennium. All of Satan's strategies to prevent this will eventually be overthrown. There is much more

of Satan's kingdom which remains to be destroyed. It will completely destroyed when our Lord Jesus returns. And there is much more conversion work yet for our Lord to do among many nations. There is much more that we can be involved in. So let us pray to be better soldiers of Christ in this regard, to help His kingdom forward by spreading the truth of the gospel and Christ's word to everyone around us.