

Third Angel's Message Series



LESSON # 22

"...our contest is simply the contest that has been waged from the beginning between the two spiritual powers, between the legal and the illegal powers, between the power of right as against might, and the power of might as against right. The contest is between these two spiritual powers."

ALONZO T. JONES, GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1895

Our lesson tonight will begin with Ephesians 1, verses 19-21. The lesson is still the study of what we have in Christ where He is. This is the part of that prayer that **"ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,"** or heavenly existence, as we have had in the second chapter and sixth verse. And that same thought is given in Phil. 3:8-10:

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection."

That is the same thing that the Lord desires that we shall know, as recorded in the text, **"That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead."** Now says Paul, **"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection."** That is, not His power alone in raising Paul from the dead after he had died and gone into the grave. That is not it. But it is to know the power of His resurrection now while we live; that is, the power which is brought to us by Him, by which we are crucified with Him, and are dead with Him and buried with Him, and then made alive with Him and then raised with Him and

seated with Him at the right hand of God in heaven. That is the power which He referred to.

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead [or out from among the dead].”

He wants to know the power of Christ's resurrection in order to attain for Himself unto the resurrection out from among the dead. The man who in this life never knows the power of Christ's resurrection will never know it in the other life. True, He will be raised from the dead, but He will not know *the power* that raised from the dead, so that whoever does not get acquainted with the power of Christ's resurrection before He dies will never know the power of Christ's resurrection from that death.

There is the Lord's prayer, that I might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward the man that believes, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him there. In Him we know the power that raises us from deadness in trespasses and sins along with Him, and seats us with Him in the heavenly existence. Now Eph. 1:20, 21:

“And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 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.”

This power of God which raised us in Christ above all the principalities and powers and might and dominion that are in this world, is what we are studying tonight. Therefore we must study

first what is the nature of these principalities and powers which are in this world. Before this, however, let us notice once more that there stands the fact that in Christ we have and are to know what is the power which raises us in Him and with Him, above all principalities and power and might and dominion that are in this world. There is a separation of church and state; there is a separation from the world, that puts us in the place where we have better protection than from the powers of this world. There stands this fact of faith.

Now as to the nature of these powers, read right on into the second chapter for further connection:

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

There is a spirit that works in this world in the children of disobedience and that spirit is the spirit of this prince of the power of the air. The German says, **“after the prince that in the air rules; namely, after the spirit that to this time has worked in the children of unbelief.”**

Formerly, when we were dead in sins, **we “walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the” world.”**

Now from that word "prince" comes the idea of principality. In monarchical forms of government there are principalities, dukedoms, kingdoms, and empires. A principality is the jurisdiction, the territory, or dominion, of a prince; a dukedom is the dominion of a duke; a kingdom, the dominion of a king; an

empire, the dominion of an emperor. In the text Christ has raised us above all principality and power and so on, that is in this world and that is of this world. He has raised us above the rule of the spirit that rules in the children of disobedience.

We can be glad, therefore, and thank the Lord that in Christ we are raised above this prince and all his jurisdiction and all his power. That is the thought, for in Christ He has raised us far above all principality and power and might and dominion that are in this world.

Now the sixth chapter of Ephesians, beginning with the tenth verse:

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Now who is it against whom the Christian is to contend in this world? As relates to the principalities and power and empires of this world, who is it with whom the Christian is to contend? The devil, **“That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”**

Then when any government is set against any Christian and interferes with him and persecutes him, is the Christian wrestling with that government? Is he contending with it? No. He is wrestling with the devil. That is what we want to get our minds upon. We are to understand that when governments, kingdoms, emperors, and rulers persecute the Christian, persecute us, we have nothing to do with *them* as such. We are not warring against them. We are not wrestling with them. We are wrestling against the devil and warring against *him*.

And this suggests a testimony that came last spring in which it was stated that the ministers should never forget to hold before the people everywhere and all the time that the strifes and commotions and contentions and conflicts that are presented outwardly in this world do not come simply from this world and from the things that we see but they are only the result, the outward workings of the spiritual powers that are out of sight, that all these elements of evil that are working up and that we see coming so fast are simply the outworkings of that power, of that spirit, that is back of them. And the instrumentalities that we see spreading abroad the Lord's message and carrying forward his work, demonstrate on this side that these are simply the outward workings of the Spirit and power of God that is back of these. And the word is given that we ministers see to it that we call the attention of the people to the fact that all these commotions and conflicts and contentions between right and wrong are simply the contentions between Jesus Christ and Satan--that it is the great controversy of all the ages.

It is so easy for us to get our mind upon men and governments and powers and think we are contending with them. No. We have no contention with governments. We are not to do anything against governments, because it is written, "**Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.**" We are not to contend against the government. Every Christian will always be in harmony with any right law that any government can make. So he never raises any question with himself as to what law is going to be made, this way or the other, in this respect, so far as the government legislates within its own jurisdiction. He does not care what laws are made there, because his life as a Christian, in the fear of God, will never come into conflict with any right law that is made--with

any law that Caesar may make within his own jurisdiction, which God has set to him.

When Caesar gets out of that place and gets beyond his jurisdiction into the kingdom of God, then of course every law he makes the Christian will be in conflict with, because he is right and the other thing is *wrong*. The Christian has not changed his attitude, but the other power has. Therefore, we are not to have our minds upon whether we are contending against the government or not. We have nothing to do with that. We are to have our minds upon the fact that if the government gets out of harmony with right and takes such a course that it conflicts with us, we are not then contending with it--we are always contending against the devil. We wrestle not with flesh and blood. Governments are flesh and blood. Men, courts, judges, legislators--they are flesh and blood.

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places (Marginal reading)."

The margin is, "**In heavenly places,**" which would refer to this heavenly jurisdiction in which Jesus Christ rules. The verbal translation of this sixth chapter and twelfth verse runs thus, "**We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against authorities, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies.**" It is the same heavenlies in which God has raised us up with Him, and set us with Him in the heavenlies far above all principalities and power and might and dominion that are upon the earth. So that the marginal reading of that verse is the correct

one. **"Wicked spirits in heavenly places."** Ours reads wicked spirits in high places.

The German reads fully as forcibly as the Greek there. Thus: **"For we have not with flesh and blood to contend, but with prince and power; namely, with the lord of the world."** That is the God of this world--Satan. So then we have not to wrestle with flesh and blood but with the lord of the world: **"Namely, with the lord of the world that in the darkness of this world rules, with the base spirits under heaven."**

That is strong. That is forcible. We see who it is--it is the lord of this world; it is he against whom we wrestle--the one who rules in the darkness of this world--the prince of this world, that in the darkness of this world rules.

Now we know, or at least ought to know, that it is not going to be very long until every dominion of this earth is going to be under the rule of the lord of this world, who rules in the darkness and all are going to be bound in one and aimed at the truth of God and those in whom it is represented in this world. Now I wish all knew that we are going to be there soon. I wish that every Seventh-day Adventist knew that which is the fact, that we are at the point now where all the kingdoms and dominions of the earth are, as such, set against the truth of God. But if there be those (I do not say there are) who now do not know this, it will be but a very short time, in the way in which things have been going lately and are going *now*, before they will be forced to recognize it.

As I mentioned here once before, the United States has been held before the world and has always stood, as the very citadel of liberty of rights and of freedom of conscience and Switzerland was the one little country, the one little republic, in Europe where

freedom was likewise most full. Yet Switzerland and the United States are the two countries now on earth that are doing most against the remnant and the seed of the church who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. And England has now actively joined these. Now, when these countries which have been the exemplars of the world, of the rights of men and the freedom of conscience, set themselves up against God and against his truth--then isn't it time that we learned that all the world is now under the rule of Satan, ready to be swung against the truth of God and the power of Jesus Christ?

Yet in the face of it all, I say that in Christ we are all right, for in Him there works that power that raises us, with Him, from the dead, and that has seated us at the right hand of God in the heavenly existence, far above all the power and might and dominion and principalities that are upon earth and in the hand of Satan. And just now, as we are to be forced into that conflict, isn't it good that the Lord Jesus comes with His blessed truth to shine forth before us and to raise us to where He sits, so that we shall know that we are above all these things all the time and triumph over them?

Now we will study these things a little further; this is so much for the principality. But he says He has raised us far above all principality and power.

That word "**power**" you can look at the Greek word whenever you choose, yourself and you will see that the absolute meaning of the word is the power of authority that is exercised as of "might as against right." That is what the word means. The literal translation is authority. There are accommodated uses of the word, that is true, aside from the absolute meaning. In accommodated uses, the

character of the power is proved by the relationship in which it stands. For instance, if that word should be used of the power of Christ and the authority of the Lord, it would be proper and legitimate authority, of course, because it is the authority of the Lord. But when it is used of the powers of this world, in every instance it takes its associations from the nature of this world and the spirit that rules here and then it runs clear back to the absolute meaning, which is the authority and power of "might as against right."

Where did there start in this universe the assumption of any authority or power of might, as against right? It originated with the rebellion of Lucifer in that assumption of self, away back there. He brought that power into this world and fastened it upon this world by deception when he got possession of this world. Therefore that word is properly used to show that when God in Christ has lifted us above all the principality and power of this world, it is above this power of might as against right, which is the power of Satan, as he has brought it into this world and as he uses it in this world.

This simply emphasizes the thought we mentioned a moment ago, that our contest is simply the contest that has been waged from the beginning between the two spiritual powers, between the legal and the illegal powers, between the power of right as against might, and the power of might as against right. The contest is between these two spiritual powers. We have been under the power of might as against right--the power of force. Jesus Christ brought to us the knowledge of right as against might--the power of love. We forsook the dominion and power of might as against right--the power of force, and have joined our allegiance to the

power of right as against might--the power of love. And now the contest is between these two powers and concerning us. The contest is always between these spiritual powers. Whatever instruments may be employed in this world as the outward manifestation of that power, the contest is always between the two spiritual powers, Jesus Christ and the fallen prince.

Let us follow this, then, a little further, and see wherein we have the victory and wherein He has brought to us the victory over these illegal powers, this power of might as against right. Read in Colossians 2, beginning with the ninth verse.

“In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. and you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him [Christ], having forgiven you all trespasses.”

Made you alive together with Him. You see it is the same story we read in the second of Ephesians the other night--that he has made us alive and has raised us up with him from the dead and made us sit with him where He sits. But now here comes in the key of how this victory came to us in Him. **“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” or, as the margin and the German read, “triumphing over them *in himself*.” Col. 2:15.** The word **“power”** here is the same word in the Greek that expresses this

power of might as against right. I need not turn to the parable Jesus spake: **"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoil."** Satan was the one who originated the authority of might as against right. By deception he became the head of this world by becoming the controlling power or the head of him who was the head of the world. And having taken Adam and his dominion under his control, he became the head of this dominion, the head of this world, and the head of all principality and power in the world and of it.

But a stronger than he came into the world. We know He is stronger, because the battle has been fought and won. A second Adam came, not as the first Adam was but as the first Adam had caused his descendants to be at the time at which He came. The second Adam came at the point in the degeneracy of the race to which the race had come from the first Adam. That second Adam came thus and disputed the dominion of this one who had taken possession. The contest was between these two upon the earth. It was a contest as to whether the spoil should be divided or whether it should be kept intact in the hands of him who had taken it by might as against right. He who came into this rebellious dominion, proved to be stronger than he who had possession and He defeated him at every step while He lived. Then in order to show to the universe how completely more powerful He is than the other, Jesus not only defeated Satan at every step while He was alive, but after that He gave himself over, dead, into the hands, into the power, of this other one, who was in possession. And this one who was in possession shut Him up in his stronghold,

dead, and even then He broke the power of Satan. Thus Christ has demonstrated that He is not only stronger than Satan when He is alive but that *when dead* He is stronger than Satan. When dead He was stronger than Satan, and therefore He came forth from the tomb and exclaimed before the universe, **"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."** Very good! He is alive now, thank the Lord!

Well, then when a dead Christ is stronger than all the power of the devil, what can a living Christ not do, who sits at the right hand of God today? Is there any room for our being discouraged? Is there any room for fear, even in the presence of all the principalities and powers and might and dominions that the devil can muster on the earth? No. For He who is with us now alive, when dead was stronger than Satan with all his power. Now Jesus is alive forevermore; we are alive in Him; and His power is enlisted in our behalf--His living power. His dead power would be enough, wouldn't it? But He does not stop at that. It is *living* power. Be glad and rejoice and conquer in it.

Jesus came unto the dominion and at last entered into the very citadel of the stronghold and the stronghold of the citadel of this illegal power, of this one who held the power of this world of might as against right. This One that is stronger than he, entered in, and took possession and came forth, carrying the key, and He holds them still. Thank the Lord! Then if this illegal power should even get some of us into the same place, into the prisonhouse, it is all right. He cannot keep us there, for our Friend has the keys. When He wants us to come forth, the key is turned, the door is wide open, and out we come. And to show how completely He did

have the keys, when He came forth He brought the keys and holds them yet and forever. For that reason it is written (Eph. 4:7, 8):

“Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”

He spoiled principalities and powers; He led a multitude of captives from this dominion of Satan and of death when He came forth. It is written in the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew, verses 51-53, speaking of the time of the crucifixion of Christ:

“And the earth did quake and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection.”

The graves were opened at His crucifixion. When did they come out? After His resurrection. Assuredly. When He came forth, it is written, He divided the spoil. When He came forth, He led a multitude of captives, and when He ascended up on high, He led them on high in His train of captives recovered from the land of the enemy. That is the figure that is referred to here, in this having spoiled principalities and powers and made a *show* in a grand parade of them openly, triumphing over them in it. The word "triumph" here refers to the Roman triumph. The Roman triumph was granted to the Roman general who had gone into an enemy's country, fought the enemy, taken spoil and captives from there, and brought them home to his own city. If any of the Roman citizens were captives in that land, he brought them home. And when his victory was complete and he had returned, the Senate granted him a triumph. In his triumph he was seated in a great and grand chariot, having six or more of the finest horses, of one color, and he, drawn by these, with all the spoil and the captives in his

train, would parade up and down the streets of Rome, around about, everywhere--all the people out in the great gala-day, doing honor to him in his triumph.

Jesus Christ, our Conqueror, the conqueror in our behalf, came into this land of the enemy, fought our battles--we were prisoners, taken under the power of this illegal one; our Friend came here, our General fought our battles clear through; he went into the stronghold of the enemy and burst his bond and broke open the citadel. He brought the keys. He took the spoil. He brings forth the captives and leads them in triumph upon high to his own glorious city. Now "thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph" in Christ. In Him we triumph over this illegal power, this one whose is the power of might as against right. And in this triumph over Satan, there is displayed before the assembled universe the power of right as against might.

Now note: The power of right as against might can never use any might. Do you see that? Do you not see that in that lies the very spirit that is called of Christians, that is, the very Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is nonresistance? Could Christ use might in demonstrating the power of right as against might? No.

To maintain the power of might as against right, might is to be used at every opportunity, because that is the only thing that can be used to win. In that cause *the right* has only a secondary consideration, if it has any consideration at all.

But on the other hand, the power of right as against might, *is in the right*, not in the might. The might is in the right itself. And he who is pledged to the principle of right as against might and in whom that is to be demonstrated can never appeal to any kind of might. He can never use any might whatever in defense of the

power of right. He depends upon the power of *the right itself* to win, and to conquer all the power of might that may be brought against it. That is the secret.

Then don't you see that that explains in a word why it is that Christ was like a lamb in the presence of these powers and this might that was brought against Him? He had nothing to do with using any might in opposing them. When Peter drew the sword and would defend Him, He said, Put up your sword: he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword.

When we get hold of that, all things will be explained as to what we shall do here, there, or the other place. We are pledged to allegiance to the power of right as against might--the power of love. And Jesus Christ died as a malefactor, abused, tossed about, mobbed, scoffed, spit upon, crowned with thorns, every conceivable contemptible thing put upon Him, and He *died under it*, in His appeal to the power of right as against might. And that power of right which He died in allegiance to has moved the world ever since, and it is to move the world in our day as it never has been moved before. Just as soon as God can get the people who are professedly pledged to the principle, to be pledged in heart to the principle and put the thought upon nothing at all and never expect to appeal to anything at all other than the absolute principle of the right and the power of it to which we are allied and to which we are pledged, then we shall see and the world shall see this power working as never before.

