

# Death Angel Lurking

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 3/16/2013

Let's think for a moment of the Kingdom of God being like a mansion with a father in it. And, let's say that you are a young hog farmer in the same town who was raised on a pig farm – and for some reason you receive an invitation to come up to the big house on the hill.

It turns out that you have just finished slopping the hogs for the day and you are filthy from head to toe. But you head across town and across the tracks to where the large beautiful mansion is with white carpeted floors.

You know the place – it is where your good buddy lives with his dad. You arrive, and the front door is open – so you go right in with your sloppy boots and traipse right across the carpet leaving mucky tracks as you go!

Now, what is wrong with this picture?

Why wouldn't you be welcome to just make yourself at home? The answer is because the owner of that fine house wants to keep it distinguished, refined, cultured and sparkling clean – and you are filthy dirty, polluted and despicable – and you have just made a fine mess in the place.

Now it turns out that the mansion owner has a Son, your buddy – whom He loves very dearly. And the Man of the house has His Son clean you up – and the carpet like new – once and for all – at no cost and no penalty to you.

Now, if this were a nursery rhyme we would conclude here with – and they lived happily ever after.

But let's go on – because **life** is not a nursery rhyme – is it? In real life you go back to your hog farm and get your feet dirty again. Would you even think of going back and soiling that white carpet in the mansion again?

But isn't that what we do?

We all agree that at our baptism our **past** sins were covered by the blood of Christ. We came up out of that watery grave clean, and white, and justified – the sins of our past lives – washed clean away (**Romans 6:4**).

## **Romans 3:**

**23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

**24** Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

**25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of **sins that are past**, through the forbearance of God;

“That are past” clearly refers to sins that have previously transpired – prior to baptism – those sins that have already taken place. ...Not future sins.

In **Hebrews 9:15** Paul said that Jesus’ death was: “for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the **first covenant**.” [The first covenant is the Old Covenant.]

Jesus’ death covered sins that were under the **old covenant** - we are under the New Covenant – Jesus is not going to die again.

A Christian cannot go on sinning. But what of sin committed since we were baptized? We understand that at our baptism we entered into a covenant with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. But, because we are still in the flesh, we sin **after** baptism. We are yet sinners – in sinful flesh (**Romans 8:3**). We are the likeness of sinful flesh.

### **Isaiah 59:**

**2** But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Passover is the story of how we can be made welcome to come into the perfection of God’s Holy Kingdom. That is reconciliation to God the Father. Passover and the things of Passover reconcile us to God the Father. We will not be welcomed into God’s eternally perfect and glorious Kingdom to bring in our corruptness and sin and contamination.

We begin with the premise that all mankind is refused and lost because of its sinfulness. The Eternal God is Holiness personified; He is perfect, faultless, righteous, set high above all that is corrupt, dishonest or imperfect.

Nothing sinful could ever come into God’s holy presence and spoil or soil His perfection. No war, crime, murder, stealing, lies, adultery, dishonor, etc., because His Kingdom is always a place of perfection, love and peace.

God is not going to let His Kingdom become soiled by our sin. No sin can come into His Holy presence. This earth has plenty of sin – but not the Kingdom of God.

Back in the days of the Worldwide Church of God we did not concentrate very much on what happens when we sin after our baptism.

Back to our analogy of us as hog farmers... After Jesus Christ has cleaned us and the carpet and made us righteous in His sight – we sin after baptism – and come back and slop up His abode again! That’s appalling!

We do that because we sin again after our initial repentance and baptism. After we freely admit that we are indeed sinners... Sin **after baptism** does something **serious** to our relationship with God.

Think about it – we promised God in our baptismal covenant that we would walk in His ways – and **then we didn't!** Good News – we know that with repentance and God's merciful forgiveness, the division can be healed. But, how?

How does sin after baptism affect our relationship with God? We know that we were once been washed all over (John 13:10). We know that we are in a covenant with Christ. We know that a condition of our covenant is that we should strive with all our might to remain faithful and loyal in keeping His commands.

As we draw near to Passover we are reminded of the **Death Angel** in Egypt who took the lives of so many. The Death Angel passed over those who had spread the blood of the innocent lamb on their doorposts – and the Israelite's firstborn were spared.

Please do not think of this Death Angel as a distant Old Testament fable that has no relevance today – it has more significance today than it did back then. The Israelites were unconverted. But, we are baptized converted Christians in a spiritual covenant with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

\* The Death Angel is the one that comes and takes away one's eternal life when one is not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

No one will have salvation who is not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. That is the significance of the blood on their doorposts in Egypt so many years ago.

Here is the question we should be asking ourselves today: Am I availing myself of the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, that I might be saved?

Before we answer too hastily in the affirmative, "Oh yeah, I'm availing myself of Christ's blood," let's ask ourselves another question. Have I committed any sin since I was baptized – or since last Passover, for that matter? I hope we are wise enough to answer this way, "Yes, I have sinned." Sin carries the death penalty – eternal death!

### **Romans 6:**

**20** For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

Before baptism we did not have Christ's righteousness attributed to us.

### **Romans 6:**

**21** What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

Death means not ever being in God's Kingdom. But we were baptized and then the blood of Jesus Christ saved us from death.

### **Romans 6:**

**22** But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end – **everlasting life.**

**23** For the wages of sin is **death**; but the gift of God is eternal **life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We know that when we repented and were baptized all of our **past sins** were covered by the blood of Christ.

That's the problem! We have sinned since baptism. **If we say that we have no sin**, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (**1 John 1:8**).

What of our lives today? Do we yet sin? We need to understand what God says. What about sin committed since last Passover? This is a most serious doctrinal question! Consider these verses:

### **Hebrews 6:**

**2** Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

**3** And this will we do, if God permit.

Brethren have we been given a taste of the hope of the Kingdom of God in the Wonderful world tomorrow?

### **Hebrews 6:**

**4** For it is **impossible** for those who were once enlightened [We have been given the Truth], and have tasted of the heavenly gift [We are promised salvation], and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

**5** And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

**6** If they shall **fall away** [apostatize], to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

This says that it is impossible for those who crucify Christ afresh to be renewed again unto repentance! **The Death Angel is lurking** as we read in these following verses:

These verses are for **us** Christians – they are not meant for the unconverted world at large.

### **Hebrews 10:**

**26** For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains **no more sacrifice** for sins,

Jesus Christ's sacrifice was applied **once** to cover our sins – He is not going to go back up on that cross and be sacrificed again – because we continue to willfully keep sinning. "Sinning willfully" means that we return to a life of practicing sin as we lived before being called by God.

### Hebrews 10:

**26** For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains **no more** sacrifice for sins,

**27** But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

**28** He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

The "operative phrase there is, "without mercy." Those who despised Moses' law will live again in the resurrection – but final judgment is **now** on the house of God (**1 Peter 4:17**).

### Hebrews 10:

**29** Of how much **sorer** [worse] punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath **counted the blood** of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an **unholy thing**, and hath done despite [insult] unto the Spirit of grace?

\* The Death Angel is the one that comes and takes away one's eternal life when one is not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

### Hebrews 10:

**30** For we know Him that has said, Vengeance belongs unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

**31** It is a **fearful thing** to fall into the hands of the living God.

Have we sinned like that? This is a most serious question. Now, during this pre-Passover time is a time of self examination and admission that each of us **has indeed sinned**. Yet, there is hope for sinners like you and me:

Here is some good news: As long as you are listening to these words – you have not **fallen away** [apostatized]. As long as we have not fallen away – we are still eligible for God's grace, mercy and forgiveness.

I am concerned for the spiritual health of the greater Church today. Sin is not being taken seriously enough by many of God's people. Perhaps it is because the lewd society around us is rubbing off on us.

There is a whole segment of the Church which says, "Repent of what? "As long as I don't directly break any of the **big** Ten Commandments – I'm doing okay." "I'm not the one who is sinning – it is the other guy who's sinning. By comparison, I'm doing pretty good!"

There are a lot of people in God's Church who say – "Sure, I'd repent - if I ever did anything wrong." There are mature members in the Church of God who say that they have not sinned since they were teenagers! If we would understand the truth, it is that we sin **daily**.

Brethren, I'm afraid that some in God's Church take this matter of sin after baptism all too lightly. We are to **go on to the perfection** of Jesus Christ who never sinned!

There are wrong attitudes that we must recognize: One attitude is this: "I have this fault, I have this short coming, I have this weakness that **I've tried** to overcome – but it is just too difficult – Jesus understands what I am – and He loves me just the same." Brethren understand that **overcoming** sin is absolutely necessary!

Another attitude is more like the Protestant version: "Jesus did it all for us – because He knows and understands and loves us so much that He excuses us where we are weak."

Protestants believe that once a person is saved – they are always saved. You give your **heart to the Lord** – and that is it. That Protestant doctrine is a false dogma in that it is built on the premise that they **already** have **eternal life** – and they work backward from that hypothesis.

They rationalize away the clear Scripture which states that Christ's sacrifice covers **past** sin.

Protestants rationalize Christ's sacrifice by saying it this way: "The scope of the forgiveness of our eternal penalty **must be** for future sins as well, or else, God could not impart eternal life as He promises, for we would have to be asking pardon every moment for every sin."

Yes brethren, Jesus died for the sins of the whole world – but He did **not** pay for **your future sins** – thereby making it okay to keep on sinning.

Though the Protestants do not admit it – that rationale allows them to continue sinning with impunity – because they believe that all their sins are forgiven – past, present and future. We must be extremely careful not to turn God's **grace into license** in order to continue in sin.

### **Galatians 5:**

**13** For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only **use not liberty** for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

### **1 Peter 2:**

**16** As free, and **not using your liberty** for a cloak [cover] of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

Protestants ignore Scriptures that say it is possible to **fall away**.

## 2 Peter 1:

**10** Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, **ye shall never fall**.

Brethren, we need to be very careful that we do not explain away sin or excuse sin as something other than what it is – SIN!

Sin is the transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4). We had better be asking pardon every moment for every sin!

Let's understand this; Christians do sin! The beloved apostle John said that Christians who have God's Holy Spirit **do indeed sin**, and they must confess their sins to Jesus Christ for forgiveness.

## 1 John 1:

**5** This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

**6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness [continue to sin], **we lie**, and do not the truth:

**7** But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**\*8** If we say that **we have no sin**, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**\*9** **If we confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**10** If we say that **we have not sinned**, we make Him a liar, and his word is not in us.

We understand that converted people do occasionally commit sin.

However, upon true repentance, and with the grace of God, and by the blood of Jesus Christ, those sins can be forgiven.

Since sin dwells in our bodies, even if it is just by wrong thought, it is still sin. When Paul said:

## Romans 7:

**23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. [That's the sinful flesh that we saw in Romans 8:3]

**24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

**25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord – I shall be delivered.

Paul was not murdering people – of engaged in Idolatry – or robbing banks...

When Paul is talking about doing the things he doesn't intend to do. In Romans 7, Paul is speaking of things like temper, arrogance, anger, impatience, frustration, disgust, being judgmental, being selfish, being disrespectful – like the time he answered the high priest Ananias sharply:

**Acts 23:**

- 1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

That heartfelt statement should not have provoked anyone – but it did. The high priest Ananias became angry over Paul's words.

**Acts 23:**

- 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.
- 3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall [hypocrite]: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?
- 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

Notice how Paul quickly caught himself – and relented.

**Acts 23:**

- 5 Then said Paul, I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest: for it is written, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

Paul did not justify himself by saying, "I had good cause to react the way I did when I was struck on the mouth." There was Paul defending the Gospel – and he still severely judged himself **as being wrong** and **coming short** while he was being wrongly maligned. How would we have measured up under the same circumstances? Those are the things we have to fight against in our human nature.

How formidable is our task when we are told to **put sin out** – every crumb! Even the things that "jump out" of our human nature when we least expect them to do so.

Paul was not speaking of those evil sins that people **choose to do** while knowing better or as we might say, **practicing** sin.

God knows our heart! He knows when we are diligently walking with Him and are truly repentant and fully intend to overcome. Overcoming is necessary. We were not perfect on the day we were baptized. Conversion, and "going on to perfection," is a lifelong process (Hebrews 6:1). As sure as we were once granted repentance – we must wholeheartedly be **overcomers** of sin.

In these last days we are warned:

\* If we stray far enough from God and Christ that we stop repenting and asking for our sins to be covered, then we lose out on the marriage covenant (**Revelation 19:9**).

That is because once we have been justified from past sins, we cannot continue to transgress God's Law. If we willfully live in sin after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, God's grace will cease, and we will die without mercy.

### **1 John 2:**

**1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye **sin not**. And **if any man sin**, we have **an Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

Back in Worldwide Church of God days we did not concentrate on the necessity of our having an Advocate, intercessor, consoler [*parakletos*], in heaven daily pleading our case to the Father.

We are being judged now in the High Court of heaven at God's throne.

Thankfully, we have an [Court appointed attorney for the indigent] Advocate, Jesus Christ:

### **Hebrews 5:**

**2** Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that He Himself also is compassed with infirmity.

### **Hebrews 4:**

**15** For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

**16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

So we see from the Scriptures that there is a legal battle going on at the throne of God with a Judge Advocate as our defense attorney.

That legal defense lawyer is our counselor and **Advocate** Jesus Christ pleading our case to the Father.

Satan is the prosecuting attorney calling for our death penalty.

It says in **Revelation 12:10** that he is "**the accuser of our brethren**. Accusing us before our God day and night."

Before God's High Court in heaven, Jesus Christ offers Himself – His life – in payment for our offenses.

Look at what Jesus Christ is doing as our Advocate. He is at this moment being our intercessor and High Priest.

### **Hebrews 7:**

- 25** Wherefore He [Jesus Christ] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.
- 26** For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;
- 27** Who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this **He did once**, when He offered up Himself.

Under the terms of the Old Covenant, the people were separated from God and had to make an offering and have the High Priest make an atonement for them once a year. It was a picture of the coming High Priest – Jesus Christ.

We no longer need a physical High Priest on earth to intervene for us. Jesus Christ is sitting as our Advocate at the right hand of God's Throne. Satan comes daily before that throne and makes accusations about us.

\*Jesus Christ, who was worth more than all the sins of mankind, tells Satan, "I've taken care of that" and then we are presented before God the Father as spotless, sinless, cleansed, righteous, pure and reconciled.

That is how God daily sees us. Our part in this is that we have to repent, ask for forgiveness and to **overcome**. Numerous Scriptures tell us that we cannot remain in sin. Brethren understand this: Overcoming is absolutely necessary!

Sure! We will stumble because we are made of sinful flesh, but where sin abounds, grace abounds more! God's grace is entirely awe-inspiring. But we cannot use grace as an excuse to keep going against God's Laws. Jesus Christ under the terms of the New Covenant fulfilled this picture. Jesus is our Expiation and our Propitiation.

**Expiation** is the removal of our guilt through His payment of our penalty.

**Propitiation** is the repair of the breach between us and God – bringing about our reconciliation with God the Father.

These are evidence of God's continual forgiveness and mercy toward us.

### 1 John 2:

- 2 And He [Jesus Christ] is the **propitiation** for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.
- 3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.
- 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
- 5 But whoso keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.

Do we extend the love of God to others in the same way that Jesus extended the love of God to us? We should be doing so.

### 1 John 2:

- 6 He that saith he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked. [Sinlessly.]

We understand that a converted person does **occasionally** commit sin, but upon true repentance, through the grace of God and by the blood of Jesus Christ, those sins are able to be forgiven.

### 1 John 3:

- 9 Everyone who is begotten of God does not routinely commit sin; because His seed resides within him, he does not routinely continue to commit sin because he has been begotten by God. [The KJV has a poor translation of this verse.]

We are the Children of God in an eternal covenant with Him. We continue to rely on God's grace to cover our sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ when we fall.

God is not mocked (Galatians 6:7). He knows when we are in a truly repentant attitude. Through Jesus Christ we conquer our sins and become like Him. Brethren, we have no option – except to be overcomers. God requires us to be overcomers and to go on to perfection.

### Revelation 2:

- 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that **overcomes** shall not be hurt of the second death.

\* The Death Angel is the one that comes and takes away one's eternal life when one is not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

### Revelation 2:

- 26 And he **that overcomes**, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.

Brethren, we have no option - except to be **overcomers**.

**Revelation 3:**

**5** He **that overcomes**, the same shall be clothed in white raiment [That is the righteousness of the saints]; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Through Jesus Christ we conquer our sins and become like Him.

**Revelation 21:**

**7** He **that overcomes** shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Brethren, we see here that there is a choice laid before us: We either overcome sin or we will face the Death Angel.

**Revelation 21:**

**8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the **second death**.

The second death is brought by the Death Angel – the one that comes and takes away one's eternal life when one is not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. Let's close with:

**1 John 5:**

- 3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.
- 4** For whatsoever is born of God **overcomes** the world: and this is the victory that **overcomes** the world, even our faith.
- 5** Who is he that **overcomes** the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

End: Death Angel Lurking