

*The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 31 January 2021. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.*

## **“He Is Able to Deliver Thee” (Part 2)**

### **2 Peter 2:9**

In **2 Peter 2**, the Lord gives a wonderful promise to every believer. He promises that He knows ***“how to deliver the godly out of temptations.”*** This is the same promise that we find in **1 Corinthians 10:13**. The Lord says, ***“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*** For the Christian, the *power* of sin has been broken. Christ broke the power of sin on the cross! We do not *have* to give in to our sin nature. We have all the power that we need to overcome temptation. Victory is available through the **blood of Christ**; through the **Word of God**; and through the **resurrection power of Christ**.

God knows how to deliver His people from temptations. Yet, oftentimes, this process is painful. In order to deliver us from temptation, God sometimes has to “prune” us of things of this world. **Lot** is a perfect example of this truth. Lot was a believer; but his conscience was vexed by the sinful choices that he had made in his life. He knew that he shouldn’t have moved his family into the wicked city of Sodom; yet, he loved the things of this world too much to pass up the business opportunities there. God had to deliver Lot from the temptations of Sodom by “pruning” him of the things that he loved. Lot’s life was spared; but everything that he had loved and worked for in Sodom was burned up.

God knows how to deliver believers from the power of sin. But what about the *presence* of sin? Whether we like it or not, sin is still present with us. We who are saved still have the *presence* of the old sin nature in our hearts. The *pull* toward sin is always there, right inside of us. Also, we are surrounded by a sinful world. Sin isn’t merely nearby: oftentimes, it practically beats our door down! For this reason, it is easy for us to forget that victory is available in Christ. I have good news, though! One day, the *presence* of sin (for the child of God) will be banished forever! This is a wonderful hope; and it is what we will be learning about this morning. The title of this message is ***He Is Able to Deliver Thee (Part 2)***.

**Read 2 Peter 2:9.**

#### **I. God delivers Christians from the presence of sin.**

Back in the early seventies, a famous American actor named Flip Wilson coined an expression that is still used by people to this day. One of the imaginary characters that Wilson played would constantly excuse her wrongdoings by saying, **“The devil made me do it.”** Sadly, Flip loved to make light of sin in his comedies. He especially loved to make light of drinking, and drunkenness. But God wasn’t laughing. God hates strong drink and drunkenness. Alcohol has destroyed more lives, ruined more homes, broken more hearts, and turned more people’s hearts away from God, than we could possibly calculate. God warns us not even to *look* at the fruit of the vine after it has become intoxicating. He also warns us not to make a mock at sin. Flip Wilson will one day stand before the Judge of all the earth and give an answer as to why he used his position of influence to encourage people in their sin.

Can any of us rightly say, “The devil made me do it”? No, we cannot! The devil *tempted* our father Adam to sin, and he still tempts us today; but he didn’t *make* Adam sin, and he can’t make us sin, either. We *choose* to sin. Our sinful choices come right out of our hearts. Though Satan is more than happy to fan the flames of our lusts, we don’t need his help to sin. Because of our sin nature, our hearts are reservoirs of every kind of filthiness. We are naturally inclined toward wickedness. Jesus said, “***For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness***” (Mark 7:21-22).

Thank God, we who are saved have the *power* to overcome the wicked things that are in our hearts. Our old nature will never be reformed or improved; but we do have a *new nature*, which is created in righteousness. Through His death on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection from the grave, Christ has broken sin’s power. As long as we submit ourselves fully to Christ, the old nature is deadened, and rendered powerless. *Yet*, wouldn’t it be nice not to *have* a sinful nature at all? Wouldn’t it be wonderful not to have to fight against that inner urge to sin? Wouldn’t it be nice not to have an old, sinful heart that tells you, “Go ahead and do that sin! You deserve a little fun. Go ahead and think that dirty thought, and fantasise for a little while. Keep brooding on your hatred against that person. Go ahead and look at that thing, or listen to that sinful talk. Just do it!”

The battle against sin is vexing and wearisome. Yet, there is good news. For the Christian, deliverance from the very *presence* of sin is coming! When will this happen?

Well, in one sense, there will be deliverance from sin at the moment of death. You see, in some way that we cannot really understand, *sin* is in our very bodies. The corrupt, sinful nature is passed down through the human genome, from our father Adam. In **Romans 7:18**, Paul wrote, “***For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.***” In verse **24** of that same chapter, Paul wrote, “***O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?***” In **Ezekiel 32:27**, we are told that when sinners are laid in their graves, their iniquities are upon their very “*bones*”!

Sin is in our very bodies. Yet, there is another part of our being: and that is the *spirit*. Our spirits are regenerated by God at the moment of salvation; yet, this “*inner man*” (our spirit) must be renewed day by day (**2 Corinthians 4:16**). This is why Paul exhorts us to be “renewed” in the spirit of our minds, by reading God’s Word (**Ephesians 4:23**). Our spirits must constantly be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, the instant we depart this life, that process will be finished. Our spirits will be complete, and fit for heaven!

### **Read Hebrews 12:22-24.**

In this passage, Paul gives us a list of persons (and things) that are in Heaven right now. Right now, there is an innumerable company of angels in Heaven. Right now, the names of saints down on earth are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life in Heaven. Right now, God, the Judge of all, and Christ, our Mediator, is seated in Heaven. Right now, Christ’s blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat in Heaven. But what else is in Heaven? Paul says that “***the spirits of just men***” are in Heaven. At this very moment, the spirits of all who have died in the Lord are in Heaven; and they are waiting for the Resurrection Day. They are without bodies, for now: but

in the meantime, their spirits have been “*made perfect.*” When a Christian dies, his spirit is immediately made “*perfect*” (complete), and is fit to dwell in heaven.

Yet, what about that other part of our being--our bodies? **Our bodies** have yet to be delivered from the presence of sin. Believers living here on earth still have the sin nature in their bodies. Likewise, the decayed bodies of believers who have already died still have the corruption of the sin nature in them. What does this mean, then? This means that *complete* deliverance from the presence of sin, *in our entire being*, will not happen until the Resurrection Day. On the Resurrection Day, we who know Christ will receive new *bodies* that have no sin nature in them. Our whole being will then be complete, and sinless. In **1 Thessalonians 5:23**, Paul says that the Christian’s whole “*spirit and soul and body*” will be preserved “*blameless*” at the coming of Christ.

Now, there are two ways in which we will be delivered from the presence of sin. First, **Christ will deliver us from our own sinful natures.** As we have already seen, this will happen on the Resurrection Day. The importance of the Resurrection cannot be overstated. Why? Because on the Resurrection Day, our salvation will be complete. On the day when our bodies are resurrected and reunited with our spirits, our whole being will be without sin!

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-57.**

**Read Philippians 3:20-21.**

On the Resurrection Day, we who are saved will be completely like Christ. Not only will we have bodies that can never die again, but our bodies will have *no sin nature*. Are you looking forward to that day, Christian? You *should* be; and it should make a difference in the way that you live your life. If you are eagerly looking forward to the day when you will be without sin, then you will be motivated to stay pure from sin *now*, in this lifetime. It’s like when your family is getting ready to take a holiday. In the weeks leading up to the trip, what is your family doing? You’re packing your clothes, and making lists of what you will take; and your kids are drawing pictures of what they imagine they will see during the trip. By the time the trip comes, you are as ready as you can be! So it is with Christians who are looking forward to the Resurrection. Christians should be “getting ready” to receive their sinless body, by striving to be holy *right now*! **First John 3:2-3** says, “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (Christ) is pure.*”

In the early 1800’s in America, a man named Isaac McCoy, and his wife, Christiana, felt a deep burden to leave their home in Kentucky, and to take the Gospel to the American Indians. From 1817 until his death in 1846, McCoy and his wife either established, or helped to establish, 7 Indian mission stations in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma; but the suffering that they endured is almost beyond belief. Only one of their 14 children outlived their own parents. Most of them died in infancy, or in their childhood or early adulthood, on account of disease, or exposure to the elements. Countless times, McCoy and his wife were deathly sick, and barely recovered. McCoy was constantly making long journeys by horseback over hundreds of miles; losing food and supplies in the dangerous rivers that he crossed; and sleeping in the slashing rain, or on the snowy, frozen

ground. He was constantly having to defend the Indians from evil white men who sold whisky to them. He also had to defend the Indians from other Indians, who, inflamed with whisky, often murdered each other. (Many Indians were murdered right in their own front garden; and on one occasion, a drunken man nearly murdered the McCoys' own little girl.) Though many people came along as missionary partners over the years, most of them did not last long, because they couldn't handle the hardships. The McCoys often faced the bitter disappointment of being abandoned by co-labourers, and of having to bear the tremendous burden alone, once again. The Baptist General Convention, though sympathetic to McCoy, never really understood the tremendous financial and practical needs of his mission; and funds were scarce. For many years, his family was on the brink of starvation. By faith, they took hundreds of Indian children into their own home, and educated them, and sent some of them to college, and treated them as their own children. With financial help from the government, they employed workers to teach the Indians smithery, cloth-making, and farming; but it was extremely slow going. Though in time most of the Indians came to love and trust McCoy and his co-workers, there were always those who distrusted their motives, on account of the evil rumours that French Catholic priests and frontiersmen told about them. At one point, the McCoys had more than 80 children (including his own children) in their family! Government officials were constantly breaking their promises to the Indians; and McCoy, realising that the Indian people might eventually cease to exist if they didn't have their own sovereign nation, worked tirelessly with the U.S. Congress to establish permanent, sovereign Indian lands. (He made the incredibly long journey to Washington D.C., to speak with presidents and Congressmen, *13 times* in 16 years!) Yet, through all these years of trial, many precious Indian souls were saved, and churches were established. Many white folks who had once embraced atheism, Deism, or cold, lifeless religion, were saved, as well; and together, the whites and the Indians worshipped the Lord! Here is how some of McCoy's friends described him after his death:

“Isaac McCoy was one of the most lovable men we ever had the happiness of being acquainted with. Living his whole life among the wild Indian tribes, and wilder frontiersmen; living a life of exposure, vicissitude, and hardships scarcely to be described; always in the saddle or in the camp, and every day risking life and limb to preach the Gospel amongst those whom all the rest of the world seemed to conspire to destroy or forget--his mind and manners, instead of becoming rude or hard in these rough uses and associations, grew, all the while, softer, holier, and more loving. Nothing could be finer than his manners....Carrying in his quiet eye an indescribable something, which prevented anyone from ever being familiar with him, he never repelled. On the contrary, he attracted. Children loved him. Men were compelled to feel, in his company, that they were near something good, kind, and noble. The warm colouring of the heart tinged his words and manner, quiet as they were, in everything he did and said. If you had done anything true or good, you knew he loved you for it. When he looked at you, you felt there was no selfish thought or scheme working in his mind; but that he was thinking what he could do for *your* benefit or happiness, or for the benefit of some poor soul that was in need of others' help and kindness.”

*That*, brethren, is the description a man who had his eye on the Resurrection Day! McCoy knew that the sufferings of this present time were not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us on the Resurrection Day. *That* is the desire we all should have! *That* is the way we should be living our lives as we await the coming of our Lord.

Now, in what other sense will Christians be delivered from the presence of sin? Simply this: **we will be delivered out of this sinful world.** On the Resurrection Day, not only will there

be no sin nature *in us*, but there will be no sinners *in our presence* anymore. There will be no presence of sinful, worldly allurements. We will live in heaven, where there is no sin whatsoever! Imagine that!

Even the Lord Jesus was *tempted* while He was on this earth. Of course, He didn't have a sin nature, as we have. He never had that inner drive to do anything against the Father's will, because He was without sin. However, the *presence* of sin was all around Him. The *opportunity* to sin was all around Him. *Worldly allurements* were all around Him. Sinful people who wanted Him to join them in sinning were all around Him. Satan himself did his best to throw temptation in Jesus' face. The *presence* of sin in others was all around Jesus. It was the Father's will for the Son to endure all this: and *for now*, it is God's will for us, as well!

**Read John 17:12-15.**

It is not God's will to take us *out of* this world....yet! For now, Christians must live in a sin-cursed world. The world's evil system is all around us, trying to draw us in and entice us; and as blood-bought saints of God, we *must* resist the world!

Brethren, we must remember that this world is not our home. We are citizens of a heavenly Country. We are stationed here, for now, as ambassadors of the King of Kings; and in the meantime, sin is all around us. For now, it is not God's will to take us *out of* this world, but rather to give us power to *overcome* the sins of this world. But some day, we *will* be taken "out of" this world; and we will live in a glorious City called New Jerusalem, where sin, and the effects of sin, are no more. **Revelation 21:27** says, "***And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.***" **Revelation 21:4** says, "***And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.***"

Christ has promised to deliver us out of this perverted, twisted, dirty, polluted, immoral, blasphemous, filthy world system. On the Day of Resurrection (the Rapture), Christians will be delivered from the presence of sin in their own hearts, and from the presence of sin in the world. Temptation will ravage us no longer. And, for the believers who will still be living just before the Rapture, there will be an additional blessing: they will be delivered from the greatest time of temptation in the history of the world!

**Read Revelation 3:10.**

What is the "***hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world***"? It's the seven-year Tribulation! The price for being a believer during the Tribulation period will be having your head cut off. During the Tribulation, God will allow Satan's man, the Antichrist, to rule supreme; and there will be only two choices for everyone. Either you take the Antichrist's mark in your right hand or forehead, and worship him, and thus be permitted to buy, and sell, and get food; or, you refuse to take the mark, and instead place your faith in the true God, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you choose the latter, you will be denied employment, income, food, lodging, and commerce. You will also be hunted down, incarcerated, and executed. It's not hard to see how the world is being prepared for this scenario even now, is it? We are being told that eventually, people who refuse to receive the Covid vaccine won't be able to buy, sell,

travel, or enter any public venues; and detention camps are being prepared for those who resist! The mark of the beast isn't here yet; but it surely is a "warmer-upper" for the idea!

If you have not been saved, I urge you to repent of your sin and place your trust in Christ. This event called the Rapture could happen at any moment. Events in our world very much suggest that we could be living in the days just prior to the Rapture. You do *not* want to miss the Rapture! For one thing, if you miss the Rapture, you will, most likely, be deceived by the compelling lies that the Antichrist will tell you; and you will not be able to repent and be saved. Even if, by God's mercy, you *should* be able to see through Satan's great delusion, and receive Christ, you will, nonetheless, have to go through the most horrible time of tribulation that believers of any age have had to endure.

As we've seen here in **2 Peter 2**, Lot is an example of a man whom God delivered from temptation. However, Lot's deliverance from Sodom it is also a picture of the deliverance that Christians will receive from the Tribulation. Just as Lot was snatched out of Sodom, so Christians will be snatched out of this world just before the Tribulation begins. Christ Himself made this comparison. In **Luke 17:28-30**, Jesus said, "*Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*" Let's look at one more Scripture about our deliverance from the Tribulation.

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.**

As we speak, the world is crying out for "peace and safety." All around us, false saviours are telling us that we need a "Great Reset," and a "universal basic income," and civilisation-crushing environmental laws, and, ultimately, world government, in order to usher in a new era of peace and safety. But God says just the opposite. God says that when you hear this cry of "peace and safety," you may be sure that sudden destruction is about to befall the world.

The Tribulation is just around the corner; and as Christians, we should be spiritually awake, and watching, and wearing the armour of God. Yet, we needn't be afraid of the Tribulation, because the Lord has given us a promise. He promises that He has "***not us appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.***" In other words, we will escape the wrath of the Tribulation. It doesn't matter whether we are still "awake" ("living") at the time of the Rapture, or whether our bodies are "sleeping" in the grave: we will all be resurrected, and will "***live together***" with the Lord in Heaven. We will be delivered out of this sinful world, and will go to a perfect place, where there is no presence of sin. We will also be delivered from the terrible "hour of temptation," which will come upon the whole world.

## **II. God is reserving the unsaved to receive the punishment for sin.**

(**Read verse 9 again.**) If you are not saved, the words in the second half of this verse should produce fear in you. These words should convince you of your need to place your trust in Jesus Christ. These words should drive you to your knees in repentance, to receive God's gift of salvation, while the invitation is still open to you.

If you will *not* repent and believe on Christ, and you go off into eternity without Christ in your life, God will *not* declare you “just” on the Day of Judgment: you will be called “unjust.” The Bible says that those who go into eternity without Christ will be forever bound by the *power* of sin. They will remain in their sinful condition forever. Why? Because sin is what they chose to embrace, instead of Christ! The presence of sin will be with the lost forever and ever—both in their own soul, and in the company of the billions of other sinners who will be with them in hell. The *penalty* of sin—separation from God in outer darkness, in the torment of eternal fire—will be forever upon them, as well. Christ said that on the terrible Day of Judgment, those who chose not to believe on Him will hear these awful words: ***“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).***

In closing, I would like to read you an excerpt from a book that was written by a Jewish author named Jacob Neusner. Neusner is not a Christian; yet, he reports a very interesting and revealing narrative from the life of a Jewish rabbi named Yohanan ben Zakkai, who lived in the first century, in the time of Christ and the Apostles. Rabbi ben Zakkai did not believe that Jesus is the Messiah; yet, there was something that bothered Rabbi ben Zakkai. He knew that the Temple was soon going to be destroyed by the Romans; and this raised a haunting question. How would sin be paid for when there was no more Temple, and no sacrifice? Neusner describes it this way:

“When the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, Yohanan was deep into the study of Scripture, trying to determine how to live as a Jew in a situation where there was no Temple, no altar, and no sacrifice. In the years that followed, Yohanan ben Zakkai led a movement to modify and update Judaism. A verse that shed light on his way was Hosea 6:6, where God declares, ‘For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.’ Accordingly, it is believed by many Jews that God no longer desires blood sacrifices for sin, but accepts in their place acts of repentance, charity, prayer, and fasting.

Yohanan ben Zakkai died in A.D. 80. In his last hours, his disciples found him weeping out loud. They asked him, ‘Why are you weeping?’ He said to them: ‘Verily, I go to appear before the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, whose anger, if He should be angry with me, is of this world, and the world to come, and whom I cannot appease with words, or bribe with money! Moreover I have before me two roads, one to Paradise, and one to Gehenna [hell], **and I know not whether he will sentence me to Gehenna, or admit me to Paradise. Should I not weep?**’”  
[quoted by Jacob Neusner, *First-Century Judaism in Crisis*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1975, p. 199]

Rabbi ben Zakkai had good reason to be afraid. He had refused to acknowledge that the sacrifices of lambs on the altar were only pictures of the *true* Lamb of God, Jesus of Nazareth. He had refused to repent and rest his faith in Jesus the Messiah. Despite his attempts at moral living, his sins *were* still upon him. Unless, unbeknown to us, Rabbi ben Zakkai repented before his death and believed on Jesus, he is in the Lake of Fire at this very moment; and he will be there forever.

The Bible says in **Romans 6:23**, ***“For the wages of sin is death”*** (eternal separation from God). But, there is good news. The rest of the verse says, ***“but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*** The Bible says, ***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*** The plan of salvation is so simple! Won’t you believe on Him today?

**Conclusion:** If you have not truly believed on Christ—or, if you are not sure that you have done so—you will be given an invitation to do so in just a moment. I am inviting you to come and speak with me. I will open a Bible, and show you how Jesus Christ can be *your* own personal Saviour, and the Lord of your life. If you know Christ as your Saviour already, you will have an opportunity to pray and ask the Lord to help you to live a more consecrated life of service to Him. He has delivered you from the penalty and power of sin; and one day, He will deliver you from the presence of sin. Until that day, He wants you to “purify yourself, even as He is pure.” Won’t you respond to His call to holy living today?