

# WHO PLEADS OUR CASE IN HEAVEN?

Wednesday, August 26, 2009

Text: Psalm 35

## INTRODUCTION:

Psalm 35 is addressed to God, and it is a prayer from David's heart for help from God. Let me assure you again that God DOES answer prayer. You don't need to write God a letter, all you need to do is talk to Him, and He is there, and He is listening (share Jerusalem letters to God article from newspaper). David prays for two things specifically in Psalm 35:

## I. DAVID PRAYS FOR GOD TO BE HIS ADVOCATE (VSS 1, 23-24).

The King James translation is superior in this Psalm to most of the modern versions, which substitute the word "contend" for "plead."

The Hebrew word is "rib," and according to Vine's Expository Dictionary means "to plead, strive, conduct a legal case, make a charge." The prophets used the word "rib" frequently to indicate that God has an indictment, a legal case, against Israel. Here, David is asking God to be his lawyer, to plead his case.

People often have a negative view of lawyers, but when you need a good lawyer, you REALLY NEED a good lawyer, and you will be grateful. The lawyer image I have in my head is Perry Mason, the fictional TV lawyer who every week saved a poor innocent person from being wrongly convicted of a crime actually done by someone else. I know five lawyers personally, and they are all good Christian people.

Charles Spurgeon wrote this comment about verse one:

"Plead against those who plead against me; strive with my strivers; contend with my contenders. If they urge their suit in the law-court, Lord, meet them there, and beat them at their own weapons. Every saint of God shall have this privilege: the accuser of the brethren shall be met by the Advocate of the saints."

Satan used to be the prosecuting lawyer in Heaven, speaking against us. But he has been cast down (Revelation 12:10).

*"Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."*

Satan has been cast away from God's throne, and replaced by our defense attorney, Jesus Christ the righteous. Our Lawyer in Heaven is Jesus Christ. In I John 2:1 He is called our "advocate," another name for a lawyer.

*"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..."*

The gangster of the 1920's used to call his lawyer a "mouthpiece." The word "advocate" means "to speak on behalf of someone else." The old saying is that the individual who defends himself in court has a fool for a lawyer.

When you are in the court pleading your case, you need an expert to plead your case on your behalf. Who better to speak out for you than Jesus, God's Son?

We are all sinners. We need a Savior. Jesus can plead your case better than anyone else, because Jesus died for your sins on the cross. The old hymn by Charles Wesley, "Arise My Soul, Arise," explains what I mean. (Page 199 in our hymn book) Note especially verses one and three:

"Arise my soul, arise. Shake off thy guilty fears. The bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears. Before the throne my surety (the one who guarantees my victory) stands, before the throne my surety stands. My name is written on His hands."

"Five bleeding wounds He bears, received on Calvary. They pour effectual prayers, they strongly plead for me. Forgive him, oh forgive! they cry; Forgive him, oh forgive! they cry; nor let that ransomed sinner die."

Jesus can function effectually as our Advocate, because He is also our High Priest, and our Mediator.

*"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."*

*(Hebrews 10:11-14)*

*"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).*

And so David asks God to plead his case. And God does indeed plead his case, and our case, in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

## **II. DAVID PRAYS FOR GOD TO BE HIS AVENGER.**

David wants God to take up arms against his enemies; not just against Satan, but also against people who hate him, and who try to harm him (Psalm 35:2-8).

Note: David does not go after these enemies himself, but asks God to do it. This is in agreement with Paul's advice to Christians in Romans 12:17-21:

*Rom 12:17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.*

*Rom 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

*Rom 12:19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

*Rom 12:20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

*Rom 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

We are not allowed to take up arms against our enemies in this age of the world in a sort of holy war. We are not allowed to fight the spiritual battle with worldly weapons.

Our goal is not to kill people, but to win them to faith in Christ. Christ's Kingdom will be established by the power of the Gospel, not by guns and bombs. But in the case of enemies who are truly evil, and who are the avowed enemies of God Himself, we are allowed to pray that God would be our Avenger. He promises "It is mine to avenge; I WILL repay." The souls of the saints in Heaven cry out for vengeance, and God promises to avenge them at the end of the age:

*"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:9-11).*

## **CONCLUSION:**

We now live in the AGE OF GRACE, not the AGE OF THE WRATH OF GOD. Jesus said:

*John 3:17 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*

Peter wrote of God's patient offer of grace to a fallen world:

*2 Pet 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

The Bible tells us that God is a God of mercy. But it also says that He is a God of wrath. He offers salvation and forgiveness to everyone who will respond to the Gospel message, and repent and turn to Christ. But He also says that judgment day is coming.

Please ask yourself tonight: "Am I ready to die? Am I ready to meet God?" The length of life is very uncertain. We never know when an accident or an illness may bring our lives to a sudden end. If you died tonight, do you know for sure that you would go to Heaven? Let's have a word of prayer together, and make sure right now. Amen.

# THE AMAZING LOVE OF GOD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2009

TEXT: PSALM 36

## INTRODUCTION:

The Bible tells us that "God is love." What does that mean? Because of popular culture, where we hear the word "love" mis-used multiple times every day, we are confused. True love is not a "feeling," but rather it is "an attitude of kindness and loyalty that embodies itself in action." The words "I love you" are meaningless until they are backed up by deeds.

God repeatedly shows His love to every human being on the face of the earth, in many ways. He shows love by giving us life, and sending rain and sunshine on both the just and the unjust. He shows love by speaking to every man, woman and child through conscience and creation. Because of His love, everyone in the world knows that there is a God, and that He is powerful, wise and kind.

*"...what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made..." (Romans 1:19-20).*

God's greatest act of love was sending His only Son to die on the cross, and to be the Savior of any human being who will believe in Him. On the day of Pentecost Peter preached the Gospel to all the Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem for the great feast.

The result is recorded in Acts 2:37-41: *"When the people heard this (the Gospel), they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."*

These verses in Psalm 36 emphasize three facts about God's love:

## I. IT REACHES TO THE HEAVENS (PSALM 36:5).

"Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies."

A. I am reminded of the tower of Babel. The same phrase is used there:

*Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4).*

B. Mankind has invented many religions to try to reach God on his own terms. None of these religions work.

C. But God's love reaches to the heavens. God made a plan of salvation. God wants men and women and children to know Him. He wants them to have salvation, and to have their lives renewed. Jesus wants to be our Savior. He didn't come grudgingly, but with joy. How wonderful that God made a plan of salvation for fallen mankind!

*"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).*

## **II. IT IS PRICELESS (PS. 36:7).**

"How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings."

A. Rich people can buy a lot of things that poor people can't, but they can't buy the Holy Spirit.

*Acts 8:18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money*

*Acts 8:19 and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."*

*Acts 8:20 Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!"*

*"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).*

B. Salvation is free to all who believe, but it isn't cheap. It cost Jesus His life. Peter wrote about the price of our redemption:

*"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18-19).*

*"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).*

### **III. IT IS ETERNAL. GOD CONTINUES HIS LOVE ETERNALLY TO ALL WHO KNOW HIM (PS. 36:10).**

"Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart."

We call this the doctrine of eternal security, or the perseverance of the saints, or "once saved always saved." Once you have been saved, you can never lose your salvation. God saved you in love, and God will lovingly keep you saved, too.

Jesus is our good Shepherd. In **John 10:27-29** He said:

*"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."*

He also said that He was determined to lose none of His sheep:

*"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost" (Matt. 18:12-14).*

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The Apostle John wrote that "God is love." In Psalm 36 we are reminded that His love reaches to the heavens; His love is priceless; and His love is eternal. May God keep us rejoicing in His love, and may we learn to love others as He loves us. Amen.