

# NOT GUILTY

By

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*“For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10)*

This text is fulfilled today in the great effort to make the God-fearing, law abiding citizen feel responsible for all the evil that is piling up over the world.

When the world wants to fix the blame for poverty, ignorance, and crime, it does not point to the atheistic university or to actual criminals, but to the church. If the kids are on drugs, it is the “public”, the straight citizen, especially the Christian, who is blamed. The schools lay the responsibility on the parents while the school teachers fill the children’s minds with evolution and rebellion against the old fashioned (Christian) parents.

What is most amazing is that preachers join in the accusations, shouting from the pulpit that as Christians we are responsible for the woes of the world and that somehow we must get into the world to cleanse it, to atone for our guilt, and to eradicate every trace of evil and of need. The result is that churches are filled with guilt-ridden members who are drawn into the social revolution which is spawned by enemies of our Lord. Churches spend themselves on new programs which multiply the despair when they fail. The fact that you are unfamiliar with the use of drugs and the way the sinner lives, not “involved” we shall say, by some strange logic makes you to blame for it all.

On behalf of all Christians I plead, “Not guilty”.

It is no secret that many “churches” have abandoned Christ and His cause. We know that merely to be a church member is not necessarily to be a Christian and that many in the churches are actually of the world. As to whether the reader is actually a Christian or merely a hypocrite you can certainly determine for yourself.

Neither are we so foolish as to think that Christians, however devout, live perfectly without a flaw. “If we say that we have not sinned we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” (1 John 1:10). We struggle daily with the old carnal nature and the pressure of the world. No Christian claims to have attained perfection. But having committed sins and confessing such to my Lord is one thing, while accepting responsibility for the crimes that are going on all around me is something else. Christians who pretend to shoulder the blame for the wretchedness in the world (even though they cannot possibly mean it) are doing no favor for the wicked who is actually committing the crimes. What he needs to know is that he must account to God “who will render to every man according to his works” (Rom. 2:6).

This attitude of holding Christians responsible for conditions around him is in contrast to the attitude of our Lord. Jesus never berated his disciples for the sin they confronted. Instead he said that they are like sheep in the midst of wolves. He also said that we are to be harmless as doves, but not dumb and gullible. Instead, he said, "be wise as serpents."

It was Judas who tried to make Christ and the apostles feel responsible for poverty. When Mary anointed Jesus with a pound of expensive ointment, Judas was the man with the bleeding heart, asking help for the poor, the arch-type of the, modern professional fundraiser, both in and out of the church. He began to accuse the brethren, "why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor" (John 12:5)? There, you see? Mary is now responsible for the hungry multitudes that thronged the streets of Jerusalem. In fact, all the apostles were party to the crime, along with Jesus Himself. John records. "Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor: but because he was a thief and having the bag took away what was put therein."

This is a first class example of the unbeliever charging that the Christian has no right to that which is his own, but must be subject to the whims and demands of the sinful world, that the Christian is, in fact, responsible for the plight of the world.

Christ responded, apparently with some indignation, that there was always opportunity to help the poor, but that Judas had no right to take from Mary the credit and pleasure of her act by making her feel guilty.

The target of the accusation is Christ. He said, "He that rejects you rejects me, and he that rejects me rejects him that sent me" (Luke 10:16). The object of the accusation is to destroy the rule of Christ as Lord and King. His opponents would have freedom, freedom from all authority, especially the authority of God. It is one means of ruining His authority, they think, by ruining the witness of His saints, and the best way to do this is by making them feel guilty and ashamed. It is interesting that the ones who delight in telling us that we are failures and to blame for the wayward acts of sinners, do not themselves confess their own sins. No, they want the conscientious God-fearing soul to feel shame, frustration and defeat. We are reminded of the Jews of another day, who could not accept the fact that Jesus was indeed sinless, and attributed to him their own wicked motives.

Concerning the church God said, "My people shall never be put to shame" (Joel 2:27). This is said with regard to the fact that Christ is in the midst of the church, with power to fulfill His word and save the church. Christians have been "redeemed out of this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you," explained Jesus (John 15:19). With regard to the deteriorating world Jesus said "let the dead bury the dead." Christians are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph 5:11). Knowing the accusations to be leveled at the church Jesus said. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12-32). These are not the words of condemnation and accusation one hears and sees in print today with regards to the Christian and his relation to the world.

Christ has not left us without instructions in the face of Satan's accusations. Where we read that the devil accuses our brethren "before our God day and night", we also read, "and they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore rejoice O heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:11-12).

Christ Himself overcame Satan when, in His death. He underwent the penalty for sin, so that in spite of all the accusations, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom.8:1). The Christian can overcome Satan, not by assuming blame for the world's conditions and trying to rebuild it as we are often told, but by "the blood of the lamb;" that is, by being cleansed from sin through Christ's death, being united with Him in death through faith and baptism (Rom. 6:3-7). Once you are a partaker in Christ. Satan can accuse but he cannot harm you. Christ died for every sin committed by the believer. The news media and the educators may accuse you, but it is Christ who in the last day will confess you before the Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32).

Overcoming the accuser does not require elaborate new programs promoted by specialists in the church, but ordinary Christians can do it "by the word of their testimony." The Christian warfare involves faith against sight, fact against opinion, and God's truth against Satan's lies. Our weapon is the Word of God the sword of the Spirit. The Lord instructs us to "tell", "speak", "confess", "proclaim", "preach", "teach" and to "be witnesses". The only way to destroy a lie is by the truth. The truth is that the sinner is responsible for his own sin and must answer to God for it, and the wages of sin is death-his own death in the lake of fire. This is the reason the guilty culprit tries to transfer the blame to society, to the public and the Christian. The devil knows the truth about it, but wants to keep his victims in ignorance, so that the sinner can feel that it is not his fault that he is a criminal, but the fault of polluted environment, of the church or of his parents. In contrast the Christian does not shift the blame for his sin, but confesses it, and seeks the mercy and forgiveness of God through Christ who paid the penalty for sin on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24).

The accuser doesn't give up, but increases his wrath the closer he comes to his doom's day. To withstand him requires perseverance and total commitment: "they loved not their lives even unto death." This is total surrender to Christ. It is where action is required in the face of the world's opposition and accusation. The charge is to "deny ungodliness" and to "live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12). This does not mean trying to change the world and regulate other people's lives, like meddling-do-gooders and busy-bodies, but obedience to God in all one's personal life and relationships with others. James writes that pure religion is this, "to visit the fatherless and widow's in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). This is simply lending a helping hand in an obvious need, action on a person-to-person basis and yet refusing to be involved in the world's efforts to regulate and shape human lives. The difference between this kind of Christian work and the

“social action” advocated by the accuser is that he wants the Christian to take blame for the death of the Widow’s husband. He wants the Christian to hang his head in shame because of the existence of want, and to live in abject fear that the wicked will prevail.

Now if the Christian is such in name only, one who is not really committed to Christ, but chiefly concerned with the world, such fear will defeat him, and he will find himself listening more to the accuser than to the Lord. That’s why the one who overcomes the accuser is said to “love not his life even unto death.” He doesn’t even fear death, because he looks forward to a resurrection to glory. “Therefore rejoice, O heavens” (Rev.12:12). The devil’s wrath in the earth is evidence of two wonderful things: that he cannot defeat the “brethren” by his accusations, and that he “has but a short time.”

In the face of the accuser the Christian holds up his head as one of God’s chosen and bears a testimony to the power of Christ. “Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10).

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