

4 Hope That Defends

Introduction

“Sino ang kakampi ko?”

Life can be unfair. In a world where injustice seems common—at work, in relationships, or even in the government—it’s easy to feel abandoned. But God has not left us alone. Jesus stands as our Advocate in Heaven, defending us and interceding on our behalf.

Even when others judge us unfairly or when guilt weighs heavily on our hearts, Jesus speaks on our behalf. He offers forgiveness for every sin and strength for every struggle. He knows our weaknesses and fights for our salvation, ensuring that God’s justice is ultimately carried out. His heavenly ministry reminds us that no matter what the world says, God’s love and mercy have the final word.

Jesus—our Hope—is our Defender and Advocate.

In the history of Philippine law, there have been landmark cases where individuals, wrongly convicted, were later exonerated through the efforts of brilliant legal advocates.

- Take, for example, the Vizconde murder case. In 1991, a gruesome crime shocked the nation, and several individuals, including Hubert Webb, were convicted. Webb, the son of a prominent politician, maintained his innocence, insisting he was in the United States at the time. After 15 years in prison, the Supreme Court acquitted him in 2010 due to inconsistencies in the evidence against him. His release was only possible because of persistent legal advocacy that proved his innocence beyond a reasonable doubt.
- Another case is Scott McMahan, a U.S. citizen wrongfully imprisoned in the Philippines on charges of rape. Despite evidence proving his innocence, he was convicted and spent over five years behind bars. His freedom came when a team of lawyers, led by Michael Semanchik of the California Innocence Project, fought for his case and successfully overturned his conviction.

These stories remind us of a far greater courtroom battle—one where every human being stands guilty before the divine Judge. The Bible tells us that we are all sinners (Romans 3:23) and that Satan, the “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10), relentlessly presents charges against us. Without an Advocate, we would be condemned. But the good news is that we have Jesus Christ as our Mediator, Defender, and Substitute in the heavenly courtroom.

Bible Discussion

To understand Christ's mediatorial work, let's explore three essential aspects of the Sanctuary that reveal our desperate need for Him. Each of these aspects begins with the letter P:

1. The **Pattern** of the Sanctuary (God's Plan for Salvation)
 - The earthly sanctuary, built according to God's instructions (Exodus 25:8-9), was a pattern of the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:5). It symbolized God's plan for redeeming sinners and pointed to the work of Christ.
 - The structure of the sanctuary reflected the stages of salvation:
 - The Courtyard symbolized Christ's sacrifice (John 1:29).
 - The Holy Place represented Christ's intercession (Hebrews 7:25).
 - The Most Holy Place foreshadowed the final judgment and cleansing of sin (Daniel 8:14).
 - Christ's role as our High Priest is the fulfillment of this pattern. He now ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, ensuring that sinners have access to God's mercy and grace.

2. The **Problem** of Sin (Man's Need for a Substitute)
 - Since the fall of Adam and Eve, sin has separated humanity from God (Isaiah 59:2). The problem of sin is universal—"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
 - In the Old Testament sanctuary, sinners brought an innocent lamb to be sacrificed. By placing their hands on the lamb's head, they symbolically transferred their sins to it, and the lamb was slain in their place (Leviticus 4:27-29).
 - This pointed to Jesus, the true Lamb of God (John 1:29), who bore our sins. Isaiah 53:5-6 declares:
"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities... and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."
 - Sin demands death (Romans 6:23), but Jesus took our place so that we might live. Without Him, there is no solution to the problem of sin.

3. The **Priesthood** of Christ (Our Only Mediator and Advocate)

- After His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven to serve as our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16). Unlike earthly priests, He is sinless, eternal, and all-powerful—the perfect Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).
- As our High Priest, Jesus:
 - Intercedes for us daily, applying His blood to our sins (Hebrews 7:25).
 - Represents us before God, offering His righteousness in place of our guilt (Romans 8:34).
 - Prepares us for the final judgment by cleansing our lives (Daniel 8:14).
- Without Christ's priesthood, we would stand condemned before the divine Judge. But through Him, we can confidently approach God's throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).

Appeal: Christ is Our Only Hope

Just like Hubert Webb and Scott McMahon, who needed skilled lawyers to defend them and prove their innocence, we need Jesus as our Advocate in the heavenly courtroom.

The Sanctuary teaches us that:

- God has a pattern for salvation.
- Sin is a problem that demands a substitute.
- Christ's priesthood is our only hope.
- Because of Jesus, we can be forgiven, justified, and cleansed.

Call to Action:

- Would you accept Jesus as your High Priest and Advocate.
- Would you trust in His ongoing mediation for you.
- Share this truth with others who need hope!
- Would you like to accept Jesus as your Defender today?