

Podcast 287 God deliver us from evil and the accuser of the brethren.

We've been talking about our identity in Christ, and the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice for us. It takes effort and intentional faith to believe what Jesus has done for us. Our Savior has done everything needful for us. He's a perfect priest, He's a perfect sacrifice, He's perfectly taken away our sins. I can't emphasize it enough that everything that needed to be done, Jesus did it.

What I want to talk about a little bit today is, we have an enemy, so let's pray. Father, thank You for helping us up to this point. Thank You for being near to us. Thank You for never changing. Thank You that You're our God, and You're our Dad, and, like Jesus taught us to pray, we pray, "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed by Your name. Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done," especially for right this podcast as we're seeking You and we're about to discuss spiritual things. We pray for the presence of Your Spirit and the insight of Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

I have to reveal one of my sources here. It was my son, Isaac, who put me onto this insight and set me off on a study in a direction that I was a little bit surprised at. It began when my proofer, Emily, was going through my recent book, and she suggested that I should capitalize the word "satan." And I said to myself, "There's no way that I'm capitalizing his name! He's a small 's' as far as I'm concerned. No, I'm going to capitalize Jesus. I'm going to capitalize every pronoun that has to do with God.

But there's no way that the devil is going to be capitalized. I mentioned that to Isaac, who's also helping me with this recent book. He's doing typesetting and proofing and input, and as we were talking, he says, well, technically, he doesn't put much stock into the fact that there's a personal name for satan. And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Well, his name means 'accuser' or 'adversary.'" So I thought, "Wow, I'm going to look that up." I found eighteen times in the Old Testament that "satan" appears. Eight times, the same Hebrew word is translated "adversary," and once, "accuser." Interestingly, almost all of the times that the word "satan" appears is in Job. Fourteen of the eighteen times it's used in the Old Testament are in Job.

In the first two chapters **satan** is appearing before God, and making his case that, "Of course Job hasn't cursed You. You haven't done anything to him. The guy's got a blessed life." You know the story. But it does appear that there was one being talking to God, and thus this being's name is satan. This is our enemy.

In the New Testament, the word “diabolos,” like diabolical, which means accusing falsely or slanderous. When it has an article, like “the,” then it’s used as a noun. However most of the time, diabolos is an adjective. Isn’t that interesting? It’s not a noun, but it’s translated as such. Keep that thought in mind.

I do believe there is a specific being for we see him appearing in God’s counsel in Job, and we see references to him in the book of Revelation. He is our adversary. He’s the one that accuses us falsely. He is the accuser of the brethren, it says in Revelation 12:9. “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and satan, the deceiver of the whole world.” Then it follows, “He accuses them before our God.”

In Revelation 12:10 NLT, it reads, “I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens” – I don’t want to holler, but it was a loud voice – “It has come at last – salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ have come. For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before God.” There you go. We have an accuser. And he’s called the “accuser of the brethren,” and this is what his ministry is.

One of the reasons we’re talking about this topic is because of what transpired with Jesus after He was baptized. He emerged from the waters, the Holy Spirit came upon Him, and He was led into the wilderness. At his reappearance Jesus is tempted by the devil three times. Notice our adversary, tempting us at our weak places. Jesus had been fasting forty days, and the devil attacks Him, but not as you might suppose. I don’t think the temptation was about food, even though he had fasted.

The adversary attacks Him about His identity. He said, “IF You are the Son of God.” That same phrase is found in two out of the three temptations. This is the nature of our moral enemy. This is what he does. He’s an accuser. He’s an attacker.

A couple of other verses to fill out the picture. John 8:44: “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

That’s Jesus talking and it is one of the clearest explanations of the devil that there is in Scripture. He’s a liar. He’s the father of lies. There is no truth in him. All he can do is twist truth. He cannot manufacture truth because he is a liar. John 10:10 says, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.” This is

another description of his nature. He's a killer, he's a destroyer, he's a thief, he's a liar, he's a deceiver, and he's an accuser.

By the way, we're going to spend more time with God than talking about the devil, so hang in there. I'm just going to read a couple more verses. 1 John 2:22: "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son." Powerful stuff.

2 John 7: "Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist."

1 John 4:2-3 wraps it up: "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist." Now, I don't know about you, but I have had people come to my door in the past. They're trying to promote their doctrine, and they call themselves the Witnesses.

My wife's grandfather refused to say "Jehovah's Witnesses" because he didn't want to put desecrate God's name. He just called them "the Witnesses," so I'm picking up on that. One Saturday, a few Witnesses came to my house, and I said, "Why don't we just cut to the quick here. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh?" And they said, "No." And I said, "There we go."

On another occasion when I was teaching with another man from a different cult, Latter-Day Saints, and we were speaking about our churches and he said, "We also pay tithes, we do this, we do this, we do all this kind of stuff. We're the same as you." And I said, "Can I ask you one question?" And he said, "Sure." I said, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh?" And he said, "No." I said, "There you go."

That is the question that separates truth and untruth, Christ and the antichrist. It is THE question. Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, God in the flesh. This is how we know truth and error. This is how we know the truth which will set us free.

In John 8, which we have already referenced where Jesus taught he's the father of lies. In the same chapter, in the twelfth verse, Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Thirty-second verse: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

When we're combatting the devil, we want to follow the lead of Jesus who combatted lies with truth. Every temptation he endured after coming out of the

wilderness, Jesus answered with “It is written!” When we start doubting that we belong to God, when we start doubting that He’s our Dad, that we’ve been forgiven, then we need to combat that with Scripture. When I was a young believer I was taught, “You are not going to feel forgiven when you sin. It doesn’t matter what you feel; it is the truth, and you need to memorize 1 John 1:9: ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’”

The most effective weapon against the father of lies is the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, because that is the only way we’re going to have victory. God’s Word is powerful. It says in John 15:3, “Already you are clean because of the Word that I have spoken to you.” It’s up to us to believe that. That’s what we talked about in the last two podcasts. We have to mix these precious and powerful truths about our identity in Christ with faith.

As we spend time in God’s Word, it not only cleans us, it is also our sword and our battle axe. One way of responding to temptation, is to have the Sword at hand and not have to go verses. We need to know these Scriptures. We need to have them at our fingertips.

You’re going to be surprised where I get this next passage. Ephesians 5:25–26: “Husbands, love your wives” – you’re probably thinking, “How does that fit into this podcast?” Keep going – “As Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word.” There it is. “The washing of water with the Word.”

I love the Word of God, and I love the power of the Word of God, and I like the cleansing effect and the faith–building effect. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17) We just read, “that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word.” Well, we’re her! We’re it. We’re the church. We have been cleansed by the washing of water with the Word.

This verse goes on to say, “So that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” This is the thing that I’m trying to get into my own soul, and I’m hoping that our listeners can get it and we can keep making progress until we get it. Let me see if I can explain this.

I was in Texas last weekend, and I’m speaking and sharing my testimony. One of the things I said was, “How many of you believe that God loves you?” And people nodded in assent. That’s an easy one. Then I said, “How many of you believe that God smiles when you draw near to Him?” And I observed people

begin to shut down. I can feel it in the room. I can see it on their faces. I can sense it in the atmosphere. This is a common weakness for believers. We have trouble believing that we are, as the Word of God says, holy and without blemish because Jesus has cleansed us by the washing of water with the Word. I have found that we have trouble believing the gospel, that declares that God knows us intimately, that He sees us – every recess, every corner, every part of our thought process. Read Psalm 139 over and over again until you get it. He knows us completely, and yet He loves us completely.

It's hard to take it in, but we've got to get it, because this is what Jesus died for. He didn't die to do a pretty good job – maybe just do enough to squeak us into heaven, because He did a shoddy job. No, Jesus did His job perfectly, and it's up to us to receive it and believe it. He died, He rose from the dead, He left our sins behind.

We have to grab that gospel, because the more we lay hold of it, the more our relationship with God is going to be enhanced, and the more we're going to be able to stand in His presence knowing that we have been clothed with Christ. We have been forgiven in Christ. There's nothing between our souls and our Savior, as the song says. This is what I'm laboring on this morning.

We have a lying enemy who is accusing us and seeking to convince us that we are the exception, that God can save everyone else but us. We must resist him. When we have an enemy, identify and discern him. Recognize that he's an accuser and a liar and a deceiver and he does not have anything on any of us, because Jesus has cleansed us and forgiven us.

Here is ammunition for the battle. Hebrews 7:24–25 which I'm going to read in three translations, then I'm going to talk about some of the words. “[Jesus] He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues forever.

Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost” – that's the word I'm looking for. And I can even tell that the guy that wrote this, the author of Hebrews, was looking for a word that would convey that He saved us completely – “those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” He saves us to the uttermost.

I'm going to read another translation. “Because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.” That's the Berean Study Bible, by the way.

The Amplified Version just gives a couple more words. “He is able also to save forever, perfectly, for eternity, those who come to God through Him, since He

always lives to intercede and intervene on their behalf.” And the Greek word that was translated “completely” or “forever” or “for eternity” or “to the uttermost” is called **panteles**, and it means “permanent” or “unchangeable.” It also means “through all time.” Another definition is “complete.”

This word pan-teleis is a combination of two words, “pan” – which means “all” – and “teleis” which is connected with “telos,” which is “finish.” That’s the word we talked about a couple podcasts ago. Pan-teleis conveys completeness, totally consummated, and fulfilled. That’s the way that Jesus saves us. He saves us completely, every part of us, body, soul, and spirit. That’s our Savior.

1 Peter 3:18: “Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit.” He suffered one time, and He brought us to God. Boom. We just need to believe it.

Hebrews 10:10, 12–14: “We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” And then it talks about other priests. “When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God.” He sat down. It’s done! It’s finished. I did what I set out to do. “Waiting from that time until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet. For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”

This is Jesus. He does a really good job. He does exactly what the Father gives Him to do. It is finished. It is fulfilled. When He was on the cross, He knew He had won. And now, we need to enter into that same assurance and be able to go through life with a clean conscience and fresh hope and courage that He has completely forgiven us, He absolutely loves us, nothing can separate us from His love, He never changes. This is the battle that every Christian faces. We think, “Yes, but.” And heaven knows there are no buts. It is yes and amen.

Scott: I was editing last week’s podcast yesterday, were you quote Hebrews 10:14, “For by one sacrifice, He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” That bowled me over, because it knocks out all those arguments that we play in our hearts and our minds such as, “Oh, but I’ve sinned in this same way hundreds of times before, and here I am again doing the same thing. I’ve got to confess to the same thing I did yesterday.” And he makes it very clear right there. By the one sacrifice, we’ve been made perfect forever, while simultaneously we’re being made holy. We’re still dealing with the working out of your salvation, but the real heavy lifting, Jesus accomplished on the cross. There’s no condemnation, there’s no guilt, there’s no shame.

Steve: Amen. And there is no condemnation. I lived in a state of semi-
condemnation for decades, feeling like whatever I did, it wasn't quite enough.

Scott: I think we all do that.

Steve: I think earnest Christians do. I'm not sure that lukewarm ones do, but the ones that really want to do what's right, who want to please God, that's our Achilles heel. It's something we have to contend with, but the only way we're going to contend with it is (1) we have to recognize that's our weakness that we share, and (2) we have to shore up our weaknesses with God's Word, so when those little accusing thoughts come in, we learn to identify where these lies originate. Sometimes they come from ourself, but we need to recall that we do have an enemy who is aware of our weaknesses. He doesn't attack our strengths – he attacks our weaknesses. He just heaps it on. "Yes, but... yes, but..." And I resist that. Anyway, I'm ready to get fired up again and start praying.

Scott: The other verse that I wanted to share is 1 Peter 5:8–9. There's a quote by C.S. Lewis first. I think it's from the beginning of **The Screwtape Letters**. He says, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devil. One is to disbelieve in his existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them."

In 1 Peter 5, the Spirit says, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings." Peter says, "This is normal. Everybody goes through this." We don't need to act like this is some weird thing that only the weird Christians deal with. No, no. We're supposed to actively resist the devil.

Steve: When I was in seminary, and studying in the library, I noticed a bunch of guys going over there in the stacks of books and chuckling. They were looking at a certain book. I said, "What's going on over there?" And here they had found a commentary by Martin Luther that said, "Resist the devil, fight the fight, and then if that doesn't work, just turn over and pass gas." That was the idea.

Scott: All righty.

Steve: He is so small compared to us. He is greater than us, but we're hiding behind our big Brother here. When fighting the devil, do everything you need to do, and then just disregard him. Because we have to just keep moving, being fully assured that we have been cleansed and sanctified by one sacrifice, he cannot slow us down with His lies and false accusation,

Steve: In Acts, the seven sons of Sceva were pretending to cast out demons. We're not pretending. We are in Christ. We have His armor. We have been cleansed. We have the Word, and we can resist him. And that's part of our job. I am engaging in a lot more spiritual warfare in prayer in these last twelve months than I've done in a long time, and I'm maintaining it. I sense that God is calling me to do more and more spiritual warfare and to bind the strong man and to recognize, regardless of what the media tells me, my enemies are not flesh and blood.

My enemies are principalities and powers, but He has given us authority over principalities and powers, and He has given us weapons that are mighty to the casting down of strongholds, and it's up to us to use those weapons. I'm using them. I'm not talking about them. I've been praying this morning, I'm going to go on my prayer walk later, and this is what I'm going to do. I'm binding the strong man. I'm binding them in my state, and I'm binding them in my capital, and I'm binding them in Jerusalem, for this is what I've been created and called to do, and I'm doing it.

Steve: This is what we do sometimes – come home and discover everything's a mess. As parents, we go into our room, close the door, get down on our knees, and resist the devil. Then watch how the atmosphere will change. Amen.

Father, thank You for these truths. Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for Jesus, Who's praying for us right now, and He's sitting – because He's done His job. He has provided all that we need. He has saved us permanently, forever, completely, to the uttermost. And we draw near today for a flesh draught of living waters. Help us to believe it afresh, and then help us to stand on that and do our part in seeing these enemies being made a footstool for His feet. We do resist the devil. We resist our adversary, we resist the accuser of the brethren, we resist him in Jesus name, and we pray for the sweet Holy Spirit to help us to stay rooted and grounded in truth. In Jesus' name, amen.