

Our Adversary

Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-20

Happy Mother's day to all of you moms. Praise the Lord for you. If you are a mom, why don't you go ahead, stand, and let us honor you this morning with a handclap of praise. Wow! We've got moms all over the place. Thank you so much! Moms, we are in a little mini-series in Ephesians. It's on spiritual warfare. We are going to look at Ephesians 6:10-20 and I thought how is this going to work out. How am I going to do a mini-series on spiritual warfare on Mother's Day, this awesome, great day for all of us because of your contribution to our lives and making us who we are? We just thank you so very much. The more I studied and the more I thought about Mother's Day, I tried to find this but couldn't. Someone ought to do some research and find out how much time mothers actually spend preparing their children to either go somewhere, or do something, and momma has to dress them. Do you know what I'm saying? Remind them of what they need to wear because sometimes, when you have small children, they do not understand the connection between where you're going and what you wear. They really don't understand the connection between what they are getting ready to do and what they wear because sometimes what they are getting ready to do won't be appropriate for them to do. I mean, it would be appropriate for them to do, but it won't be appropriate for them to do in what they've got on. Does that make sense? Sometimes kids don't understand that when you're getting ready to go somewhere, there are certain things you do wear and there are certain things you don't wear. How many times do moms go to the closet, lay out clothes for the children, and have to remind them to put the clothes on. How many times has a child been inside a house in the safety and security of mom, get ready to rush outside, and they totally forget to put their shoes on? Mom has to say, "Don't go out of the house until you put your

shoes on." How many times has a mom had to tell the child, "Make sure you put your coat on," "Don't forget your gloves," "Don't forget your toboggan"? Mom, you just seem to be doing that all the time. Because you do that all the time, I think it's fitting that Paul is going to tell us that we, as children, ought to "put on."

So I am going to ask you moms to do this; you've reminded your kids a lot, probably their dad to, of what is and is not appropriate to wear and what they forgot to put on, so spiritually, could you come alongside and help me this morning to remind all of your kids and to remind those you have an influence with of something else the apostle Paul tells us we need to put on. We are going to hear about it this morning in Ephesians 6:10-20. We're starting a new mini subseries that will close out the book of Ephesians called, 'Spiritual Warfare.' Let's stand together as we read God's Word.

If you are a special mom guest this morning, I want to thank you for being here. When we read publicly here at Hardin, we read out of the English Standard Version of the Bible, and normally, it will appear on the screen as I read. But feel free to read along in your version of the Bible as well.

Scripture

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that

end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”

(Prayer)

Father, one more time we praise You and thank You for this opportunity to stand before Your people and bring Your Word. Father, thank You for all the special mothers that are here this morning, and every mother is special. Thank You for the way You knitted us together in their womb. Thank You for their influence in our lives. Father, on this Mother's Day, I pray that You challenge each of the mothers here to help remind their children, no matter how old they are, their grandchildren, of how important it is to not just dress for summer, not just dress for winter, not to just dress for a date, not just dress for a prom, but to dress daily for spiritual warfare. Father, help us really understand what it's like out there so that we can be prepared for it. In Your precious Son's name we pray, amen.

If you've been with us throughout this entire study, you know that in the beginning we reminded you of how the book of Ephesians naturally breaks down into two parts, the first three chapters, and the last three chapters. The first three chapters talk about our identity in Christ. It talks about what God has done for us in Christ. Then once Paul finishes speaking about identity, he begins to talk about behavior and launches into the last part of the book, the second half of the book. In the second half of the book, because he has already told us what God has done for us in Christ, he then begins to tell us as a church what we ought to be doing for God since we are in Christ. When you think about it, the book of Ephesians begins by talking about our worth as a saint of God. It opens by talking about that great wealth we have, all of those spiritual assets we have because we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. It talks about this great new society where there are no walls. God is actually building a church where there is equality among all. Then he begins to talk

about our walk, how if you're in the church, how if you're in Christ, how if you have this new identity, you're a saint of God, you've been set free from sin, how it affects your walk, your walk in the world, your walk in the church, your walk in your home, and your walk in your workplace. Now we come to these last verses of chapter 6, and if I can say this, I almost want to break this last half into two parts because in my mind, Paul isn't talking about our walk now, he is talking about our warfare. He reminds us that we are in a spiritual battle. He will remind us of two things, who our adversary is and of the armor that God has given us.

Because there is no way we can preach through all of these verses in one setting, we are going to break this into a few sermons over the next few weeks as we close out Ephesians, but please get this picture. We have an enemy. Yeah, and he wants to knock you down. He wants to knock you off your feet. He wants to knock you down and he wants to keep you down. Do you understand that? God has ordained you, in Christ, to walk lovingly, not lustfully, in the world. He's ordained for you to walk as light in this world of darkness. He's ordained you to walk wisely, not foolishly. He's ordained you to be filled with the Spirit of God in the church. He's ordained for you to be filled with the Spirit of God at home. He's ordained for you to be filled with the Spirit of God at work. So while you're walking in the world, while you're walking in the church, while you're walking at home as a husband, as a wife, as a parent, as a child, he wants to knock you down. He would love to get you to blow it in front of your wife. He would love to get you to blow it in front of your husband. He would love to get you to blow it in front of your kids because he not only wants to take you out, he wants to take them out. When you go to work, you know that guy who doesn't know Christ, that guy that wonders if you know Christ, he would love to get you to mess up. He would love to knock you down. Do you understand that? We have an enemy. The picture of the Bible is at the end of each and every day, as you and I live in this evil day, we are still standing. This isn't a picture of us standing at the end of our life, victorious, it is the picture of you and me standing at the end of each and every day, still on our feet no matter what Satan or the world throws at us. We are in a battle.

After painting this glorious picture of all these precious relationships that we have, and all these people we get to influence with the gospel, “finally,” he says; I mean, it’s not enough just to be filled with the Spirit of God, Paul says, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” We are in hand-to-hand combat, spiritually.

This word, wrestle, literally means two people are engaged and they are swaying back and forth. It’s not the picture of Papaw wrestling with his three grandsons, Crider, Finn, and G, playfully, humbly, letting them think they're winning from time to time, and then when the time is just right and they get arrogant, I pin all three of them at the same time and then yell for Memish to come and look, and they are totally humiliated. That’s not the picture here. This is mono a mono, you wrestling, you in hand-to-hand combat, you in a personal battle, me in a personal battle, but not with flesh and blood. Did you catch that? Wow. Do you remember when Jesus was casting out demons in Matthew chapter 12, and they accused Him of being empowered by Beelzebub? The Jews believed there was a prince of all the demons. They believed there was a demonic world, and they believed there was a hierarchy. Paul alludes to that hierarchy: there are rulers; there are authorities; there are cosmic powers; there are spiritual forces; there is a prince; and there is a devil. That’s who we wrestle against. Here is the challenge, here is the charge; at the end of the day, you are still on your feet.

Now, to knock you off your feet, he's going to scheme against you. I have to be totally honest with you, I didn’t really used to know what scheming was until I got the privilege of being football chaplain of Murray State University for a couple of years with Coach Pannunzio. Do you remember Coach P? I always loved football, but I never played football. I watched it on TV and rooted for my Kentucky Wildcats, the Miami Dolphins, Alabama,

and the SEC. I just love football. But when I was with Coach Pannunzio, I got to sit in coaches meetings and player meetings. I got to see him teach the offensive line, how to block for a run, and how to block for a pass. I thought these guys should already know how to do this after coming out of high school, but he would have to reteach them how to do that. Then they would teach them how the defense would pick up how they were blocking and they would scheme against them with a certain scheme, and he taught them how to recognize the scheme and not let it cause the block to be ineffective. All of a sudden, my knowledge of football went to another level because now I'm not just watching the guy with the ball, who is the quarterback or the running back. I'm now watching where the game is really won or lost, and that's in the trenches where the scheming takes place.

Are you with me? Let me just ask you a question right now. Spiritually speaking, what is the most precious thing in your life right now? What is the most precious thing to you right now? That's what Satan would like to take away from you. I hope somebody said my husband. I hope somebody said my wife. I hope somebody said my Lord. I hope somebody said my children. I hope somebody said my church. You did say those kind of things, right, not a truck, or a boat, a car, a vacation, a second home, or a job, or 401k. I hope you didn't say that kind of stuff. Before the Lord Satan would love to knock you flat on your face. He would love to get you to blow it in front of your wife or your husband. He would really like to mess with you and your kids. He really would, so he is scheming against you. Some of you are being blitzed and you don't even recognize it. Some of you are being schemed against, and you don't even know it. You don't even see what it is doing because he does it in such a way that he just wears us down to the truth. So Paul is coming back here and saying hey, if you want to be standing in your kids life, if you want to be standing tall in your parents life, if you want to be standing tall at work, if you want to be standing tall in the church, if you want to stand tall out in the world, you had better put on the whole armor of God. Why? Because the one trying to take us out is a spiritual being, and he's the ruler over the demonic world. This battle that's taken place, you need to recognize. Maybe sometimes wives who are praying for your husbands ought to realize the battle is not

really with him, but it is with the one influencing him. Have you ever thought about that? The battle sometimes isn't with who you think it is with. It is with the spiritual being behind that person. The Bible will specifically call him the devil. The Bible will specifically call him the evil one.

We all know this; in the military and war, you study your enemy. You know your enemy. If you don't mind, this morning for a few minutes, I want us to just glance through the Bible at who our enemy is and what he is up to. If you're one of those Christians who got saved, and you decided to be spiritual and read your Bible through in a year, you realize that you don't run into Satan until 1 Chronicles 21:1. Isn't that amazing? Some people see the devil behind every bush, behind every action, and yet when we read our Bible, we don't meet him in person until 1 Chronicles 21:1. Here's what it says when we meet him, "Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel." I want you to see this. We've got a spiritual being that is tempting David to go number Israel's army because he's standing against Israel. He wants to stop God's people from doing what God wants them to do, so he tempts Israel's leader to do what God told him not to do, and that's number the army. You might think that's strange, but if you're a child of God, God never wants His people to take credit for what He does through them. Does that make sense? So God never wanted Israel to trust in the number of their military. He wanted them to trust in Him, so He said whatever you do, don't number the army.

Now, Satan tempts David to number the army, and David numbers the army and it is disastrous. You need to remember this; 1 Chronicles 21 is Israel rewriting their history after the Babylonian exile. You knew that, right. I don't know if you've ever noticed this or not, but sometimes things seem one way while it is happening, but when a little time passes and you back up and look at it years later, it wasn't the way you thought it was at all. Can anybody testify to that? Israel has now gone into Babylonian exile and they are seeing things differently. For see, the first you read about this account of David numbering the army, it was in 2 Samuel 24:1, and look what the Bible says here, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and He incited David against them saying, 'go number Israel and Judah.'" Whoa, whoa...does anyone see the contradiction? Tell me you see

it. We just read that Satan tempted David to go number the army, but when it was actually happening, Israel didn't know it was Satan. Do you know who they thought it was? They thought it was God. God was so mad at Israel, that they thought God caused them, tempted them, to do what He told them not to do, so they blamed it on God. See, there was a time in Israel's history when everything that happened they either blamed God for it being good, or they blamed God for it being bad. But all of a sudden, as they go into the Babylonian captivity, they begin to understand that not everything that happens happens as a result of God, and that God actually has an enemy and His enemy is our enemy, and his name is Satan, and he is our adversary. I hope you realize that yes, our God is sovereign, but our God has an enemy and his name is Satan, and he is your adversary and he is my adversary. He would love to scheme against you and tempt you to do what God doesn't want you to do, because he knows if he can just get you to do what God doesn't want you to do, the result in your life will be disastrous! What he really hopes is you never recognize it was from him, but you just blame God! Not us, because we don't read the Bible through a narrow lens and just take one text as approved text, we see the Bible in light of its whole teaching, and we have an adversary; we have an enemy.

The next time we meet this being in Scripture, we meet him in the book of Job. The book of Job isn't in the historical section of the Old Testament; it is in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. Please note this; most Bible scholars who are conservative believe that the character of Job was actually a contemporary of Abraham. Abraham was before David, so if that's true, then in real chronological time 1 Chronicles 21 is not the first time we meet Satan, we meet him in the book of Job. Here is what's neat; in the book of Job, the Bible says, "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them." Now, in the book of Job, wisdom literature, the Bible is going to tell us in the first two chapters what's happening in the heavenlies that you don't see, that Job doesn't see, and none of the characters in the story sees, but the Bible will let you and I see something nobody else sees. Does that make sense? So while we are reading the book, we're going to encourage Job to stay true, and encourage him not to listen to his friends because we know things aren't the way they seem. Please hear this. In the

scheming of Satan, sometimes he wants you to not know how things really are. Are you with me? If you and I had been Job's friends, we would have said the same thing they said because when you went to church in that day, here is what you were told. If you are obedient and you love God, He will bless you and good things will happen, but if you mess up God will zap you. So when bad things happen to you, you know you're not good. Job is this blessed man, the richest man, a wise man, and all of a sudden, he loses everything. You would have said the same thing; ok Job, come on, tell us what you are doing in your closet. Come on be honest. What have you been in to, because if you were really who they say you are, these bad things wouldn't be happening to you. But we are going, Job, don't believe it! Why are we saying that? It is because we have read the story and here is what we know; one day, in Heaven, the sons of God, the angels of God, came to present themselves, they're administrators over God's creation, and they come to present themselves before God and Satan shows up too. God said to Satan, 'Hey Satan, what have you been doing?' 'I've been walking to and fro upon the planet.' 'Did you run across Job?' 'I sure did.' 'What do you think about him?' 'Well, I think the only reason he serves You is because of how You've blessed him.' Now see, the Bible has already told us that God thinks Job is righteous and blameless, he fears the Lord, and he always turns from evil. Did you hear what Satan just said to God? 'He is not who you think he is. Let me have him for a little while and I'll show You who he really is.' Do you know what God does? He gives Satan influence over his life. Now please hear this; when you read the book of Job, Satan is not tempting Job to sin to get him to sin. Satan is testing Job. He is setting the stage to give him a test because when he gives him the test he knows he is going to fail, and when he fails it will reveal he's not who God thinks he is. Can you imagine embarrassing *the* God of the universe in front of this heavenly council and proving Job is not who You think he is? Wow! So now, we've got this tester who is testing God's creation, trying to find flaws with God's children.

The next time we see him is in Zachariah 3. Zachariah 3:1 says, "Then he showed me Joshua, the High Priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him." Does everybody see this? You've got the High Priest of God; this is Billy Graham! Have you ever

heard anyone say anything bad about Billy Graham? No. You've got Joshua, the High Priest, standing before God and Satan is there at the right hand, accusing him. All of a sudden, when the camera backs up, you see Joshua and he is in filthy rags. God rebukes Satan. The next thing you know, they take those filthy rags off Joshua and put on him clean clothes. God is basically saying to Satan, don't you accuse this firebrand that I've plucked out of the fire. But that's his nature. He's an accuser. He accuses people before the God of Heaven that we're not really who we say we are, and we're not who He thinks we are. That's our enemy. That's our adversary.

Now, have you ever wondered why would God create a being like this? Let's think that through. Why is there a devil? Why is there a Satan? Did God make him the way he was? Because there are a lot of people today that want to blame sin on the way God made them. 'It's just the way God made me.' I was sitting there listening to that beautiful song Michelle was singing, and I was thinking, wow, somebody could really excuse their sin by thinking that's the way God made me. Did God make Satan the being he is? Let's turn to Ezekiel 28 quickly, just so you'll know the nature of your enemy. In Ezekiel chapter 28, this is a prophecy against the king of Tyre, but all evangelical Christian conservative scholars believe it is an insight into the person behind the king, and that is Satan himself. So listen to this in verse 12-17.

*"You were the signet of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden, the garden of God;
Every precious stone was your covering,
Sardius, topaz, and diamond,
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,
Sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle;
And crafted in gold were your settings
And your engravings.*

On the day that you were created

They were prepared.

You were an anointed guardian cherub.

I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God;

In the midst of the stones of fire you walked.

You were blameless in your ways

From the day you were created,

Till unrighteousness was found in you.

In the abundance of your trade

You were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned;

So I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God,

And I destroyed you, O guardian cherub,

From the midst of the stones of fire.

Your heart was proud because of your beauty;

You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

I cast you to the ground;

I exposed you before kings,

To feast their eyes on you.”

Do you get this picture? When God created Lucifer, he was created as an anointed cherub of God, created blameless, but given free choice just like God gave man in the Garden of Eden. On the day that he was created, God had already created this special suit, this special robe; this special outfit for him with was all of these beautiful stones. Can you ladies who like to have a diamond on your finger imagine having a whole suit, a whole dress made out of sapphires and diamonds, jaspers, and carbuncles? I don't know what that is, but it's got to be pretty...but catch this; all of these precious stones reflect light, they don't radiate light. Note that. Now remember this; when

God created man in the Garden of Eden, God said man was to be an image bearer of God, male and female, which means we have the specific duty everywhere we are at to image God. When you're in the world, when you're at work, when you're at home, when you're at a ballgame, when you're at church, you image God. How are you doing? Is there ever a time when somebody would look at you and go whoa, that don't look much like God. We are supposed to be image bearing. Lucifer was created being an image bearer, and to image God, in God's presence, he had this covering of stones so that every time the light of God shined on these stones, they just sparkled. Have you ever noticed that when you go to buy a diamond, usually, the place you go to will not let you hold it in your hand? Because if you hold it in your hand, your skin will absorb much of the radiance of that diamond, so normally they lay it on the counter, put it on a black cloth, and shine a light on the black cloth, on the diamond, and wow! Get this special created being who ministers in the presence of God, he guards the presence of God, he's in the Garden of Eden, and he reflects the light of God. Here was his problem; he forgot that he reflects light and started to believe he radiates light! Then next thing you know, when he looked at himself he did not realize he was who he was because he was made, he began to think he was that of his own doing. He began to be prideful and that leads to a dramatic fall. In Isaiah 14:12-14, another prophecy about Satan, listen to what Isaiah says.

"How you are fallen from heaven,

O Day Star, son of Dawn!

How you are cut down to the ground,

You who laid the nations low!

You said in your heart,

'I will ascend to heaven;

Above the stars of God

I will set my throne on high;

I will sit on the mount of assembly

in the far reaches of the north;

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;

I will make myself like the Most High.”

Tell me you see this. We have a being created by God to test God's creation, and in testing God's creation as this wonderful being who guards the presence of God, the next thing you know he begins to see himself, not as a created being of God, but as a being who rivals God. He decides to ascend above all the other stars of God. He decides to set his throne in the midst of the assembly and he's going to take his seat in the very throne room of Heaven and he's going to ascend above the clouds, and he's going to be like the most high God. Wow! He's setting up a false kingdom. He's setting up a rival kingdom, and that's who stands against you. That's who's coming against you. When we say coming against you, it is to take you down. It's to take you out! Oh, you will still function, you'll still go to work, you'll still have a family, you'll still coach ball, but he'll take the most important thing you've got, the most important thing anyone can have, and that's influence. He wants to take you out. Can I be honest with some of you? It's not personal; he really wants your son. He really wants your daughter. He really wants that person who trusts you at work. He really wants that person who is invested in you, and believes in you, so he's coming after you.

Now you understand why the gospel opens with Jesus being baptized, and Matthew says, "The Spirit of God hurls Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." Whoa! Back up, back up; listen! He's not the tester of God's creation now; he's the tempter of God's creation. He's now not scheming against God's people to reveal to God who they really are; he's now trying to bring them down. He's now trying to get them to live their life outside of the revelation of God for them, and he attacks Jesus. I always liked to say this, just so you know, this is a fair fight. Before Jesus took on Satan, He didn't eat and drink for forty days or forty nights, amen, just to level the playing field. So He is in this state of hunger, and Satan comes at Him in the flesh. At the end of that temptation, Jesus was still standing. When Satan left, Jesus was still standing, and that's the goal.

That's the picture of you and I every time he comes at us with whatever scheme he has specifically designed for you that will be different than mine. It is to take you down, to take you out, and to keep you down. God's will for you is to walk, because of all this enormous wealth you have, every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies is yours! So when we walk in the world, when we walk in the church, when we walk at home, when we walk at work, our walk should display this gigantic, huge spiritual asset we have in Christ. And Satan wants to take all that away from you so that you don't have influence.

You ask how I know that. Let's fast-forward to the last book of the Bible. In Revelation 20, we have this Scripture. Revelations 20:1-3 says, "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended." Please tell me you see this. The book of Revelation teaches that during the church age, the thousand years, Satan, the devil, the dragon, the one who deceives the nations, is sealed in a bottomless pit so that he cannot deceive the nations anymore. Please hear this; up until the coming of Christ, the majority of Gentile nations were totally deceived to the revelation of God. Only Israel had the revelation of God. The rest of the world was deceived by Satan. You know that, right. When Jesus Christ came and defeated Satan at the cross and in His resurrection, all of a sudden, Satan, spiritually, can no longer deceive the nations. He cannot keep them in sin. Now, when the gospel is preached to someone, anywhere, the moment they hear that message, repent of sin, put their faith and trust in Christ, at that moment, they are set spiritually free and spiritually made alive, and they are not deceived anymore, amen! Please tell me you see that. So here's the picture; here is the church in the book of Revelation, we've been commissioned to take the gospel to the world, and when we take the gospel to the world, here's what we know. The enemy, who has held them in spiritual darkness, is now bound and he has no control, no authority, over them anymore in preventing them from

seeing Christ. So when we tell the gospel to them, it is not between them and God. Satan has been taken out of the picture, amen!

So here is this picture of the world, ripe, ready for harvest, and you are a harvester. Now let's back up. Do you see why he is coming at you?

Revelation 12 opens up with the picture of a woman who is getting ready to give birth to a baby, and standing in front of the woman is this dragon, not a midwife, but a dragon. This dragon doesn't breathe fire; it breathes water. So we have this water-breathing dragon and as soon as the baby is born, he tries to drown the baby. He can't drown the baby, and the baby is spared and taken up to Heaven. It says the baby is the one who will rule the nations, so this is the Christ. So when the Christ is born, you've got this dragon trying to prevent the baby from being born, but once the baby is born he tries to kill the baby. He can't kill the baby, so now he follows the baby into Heaven and Micah and his angels meet him and the third of the angels that follow him. There is this big battle, the dragon loses, and gets kicked out of Heaven. Now, look at verses 9-10 of Revelation 12. "And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the 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 our God." Do you get it? The dragon is Satan, the devil, the one who deceived the nations but can't deceive them anymore. The accuser of the brethren, through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and ascension back to the right hand throne of the Father, he was defeated. And when he was defeated, he was kicked out of Heaven! The rest of the verses will say Heaven threw a party because the party pooper was cast out! They rejoiced and said now, salvation in the kingdom, and the authority has come! Then they looked down at the Earth and go, oh man, I hate it for you guys...woe to you down there because the accuser of the brethren is not up here with us anymore. He is down there with you guys, and he is still accusing the brothers. He tries to stop the church, and he can't. When he can't stop the church in its entirety, the book of Revelation says he goes after the individual members of the church. Satan

will never stop God's church, but he will try to stop you. That precious person you work with, that precious person you go to school with, that precious person you live with, church will never influence them like you will, so that's why he's going after you.

Please tell me you see this. If you don't see this, you'll be the little kid going out on a ten below zero day barefooted without your coat, toboggan, and gloves. At first, the warmth on the inside, you won't even notice how cold it is on the outside. But before you know it, it will be too late. Some of us don't realize what Satan is doing. His schemes are that masterful. I ask you to recognize you have an enemy, you have an adversary, and it's not personal to you. He just hates you because he hates your God. He wants to take you out, but the Bible says we have some armor, and if we put on this armor, at the end of every day we will still be standing. In the world, in the church, in our home, and in our workplace, we will be standing for the glory of God. I'm not going to let him have the most precious thing to me, and ultimately, that is our influence with those we love. Do you really love those you say you love? Then it is a battle worth fighting.