

The Accuser of the Brethren

by J.B. Buffington

Satan, the accuser of the brethren, uses accusations to produce guilt and shame, but our defense is the blood of Christ, the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Romans 11:2, 2 Corinthians 7:9, Ephesians 4:26, 1 John 2:1, Revelation 12:7

Topics: "Satanic Accusation", "Christian Defense"

Description

J.B. Buffington delivers a powerful sermon on the tactics of the accuser, Satan, who seeks to bring guilt, shame, and accusations against believers. Using examples from the Bible and personal experiences, Buffington emphasizes the importance of recognizing and resisting the lies and accusations of the enemy. He highlights the role of Jesus Christ as our Advocate and the power of His blood to defend us against the accuser's attacks, urging believers to stand firm in the truth of God's Word and the righteousness provided by Christ.

Transcript

Open your Bibles to Revelation 12:7-12: And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. Dear Father, tonight, please give us wisdom, discernment, alertness, and ability, Heavenly Father, to recognize friend from foe in our spiritual battle. In Jesus' name, Amen.

There is an excellent little paperback book out about Satan called The Strategy of Satan. Let me give you the chapter divisions. It may wet your appetite to want to buy a copy. Chapter one: The Deceiver -- Satan's target - your mind; his weapons - lies; his purpose - to make you ignorant of God's will; your defense - the inspired Word of God. Chapter two: The Destroyer -- Satan's target - your body; his weapon - suffering; his purpose - to make you impatient with God's will; your defense - the imparted grace. Chapter three: The

Ruler -- Satan's target - your will; Satan's weapon - pride; Satan's purpose - to make you independent of God's will; your defense - the indwelling Spirit of God. Chapter four: The Accuser -- Satan's target - your heart and conscience; Satan's weapon - accusation; Satan's purpose - to bring an indictment by God's will; your defense - the interceding Son. That is a loaded little book about our adversary the Devil. I am going to take his outline instead of mine for the message tonight.

The Accuser. In the book of Revelation, you find him accusing. You find it also in the book of Job the first chapter. We must understand that Satan has access to the throne of God. He is not cast out of heaven. He is cast out of the throne room of God, but he has access to God, and he does something before God. He accuses us. He has an army -- one third of the angels evidently. At one time, in the middle of the tribulation period, Satan will be cast out and caged on this earth like a wild lion with his armies. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down . . . He has access to the earth, but he will be confined to the earth. Until then, Satan is busy doing a lot of things, but he is busy accusing the brethren. Heaven gets tired of it, and kicks him out on this earth. You and I had better read the Word of God to understand our adversary. Adolf Hitler wrote a book that told exactly how he would conquer Europe. The world said that he would not do it, but he did it just like he wrote it. God gave us a Book that tells all about our enemy, our adversary. We are not concerned enough to pick up the Book and read about our adversary. Read about our resources. Read how they will attack us. Read how he will use us. Unless we stay in the book and read the book, then the Devil really has a hay-day with us. The accuser of the brethren.

Turn to Zechariah 3. He certainly knows to attack.

NUMBER ONE, HE ATTACKS OUR HEART AND OUR CONSCIENCE. He really shakes us up. That is his design. We have a picture here in Zechariah 3: And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. (Here is the high priest.) And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. Joshua, the high priest, represented Israel. Jesus Christ, our High Priest, represents us tonight. We are clothed in His righteousness. Our names are on His shoulders according to our birth. Our names are upon His heart and a place of affection. He has on His forehead holiness to the Lord. No one else. Aaron had that, but Aaron had that only as a representative. Jesus Christ is true holiness, Jesus Christ the righteous One. He is there to represent us. Joshua, the Old Testament priest, represented Israel. Israel was living in low life, low standards, and low morals. Consequently, you have the attack upon Israel's high priest. Verse 3: Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and

spoke unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

Now Joshua, the high priest, was accused and resisted by the Devil. He cannot resist our High Priest. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: What happens? He cannot resist Him. The debt is paid in full. He has no grounds to accuse us before a holy God because Jesus Christ has fully settled forever all that a holy God could have against us, and it is paid in full. We are not only forgiven; we are justified. We are declared righteous. In fact, He is our righteousness. We have no

righteousness of our own. Satan's target is to get our hearts and to get our conscience and trouble us and attack us. He attacks us to God, but He moves in on us. He moves in to knock us off. He attacks our Christianity. "So you're a Christian, huh? Oh, you're a Christian? What if everybody knew the kind of life that you lived and the thoughts of your life and what you said or did not do? What if all the Christians . . . ?" He will attack you to make you absolutely shut up. He will make you feel guilty when there is no grounds for feeling guilty. He will make you feel guilty about everything under the sun, and his purpose is to make us shut our mouths. There are Christians today who will not open their mouths because of an assault of Satan upon their life. Everything that they did, Satan accuses them. "You did not pray right. You did not read your Bible right. You did not witness right. You were not bold enough. You were not strong enough. You did not sing that right. You sang that for your own honor and glory. You did that for show. You did this or that." Everything in the world that you do, he accuses you. After a while, he absolutely shuts your mouth. He will get on you. People will have assurance of salvation and set out to knock on doors and begin to deal with people and try to win them to Christ, and they will have doubts about their salvation when they did not have any doubts before. What is the matter? "Oh, you're a Christian, and you are out here trying to get people saved and knocking on doors. How about yourself? You are not even saved yourself." A person will begin to doubt their own salvation. They do not understand the adversary. What happens? They will quit their visitation. The Devil has knocked many a person out of singing for the Lord, witnessing for the Lord, doing anything for the Lord because of the fact the accuser has shut their mouths by his accusations. Does that sound familiar? Before a person sins, he says, "You can get away with it. Sure you can get away with it." And, after you sin, you will never get away with it. You will never fly high again. You will never sing again. You will never be used again. The accuser entices us, and the very moment they do it, the matter of despair. "You have really blown it now. You will never, never, never, again get away with this." He hits our heart and our conscience. He really works us over. That is his task, his job. He is after you.

NUMBER TWO, HIS WEAPONS ARE ACCUSATIONS. We read about it in Revelation 12. Turn to Job 1. He not only accuses us, but he accuses us to God. In Job 1, the Lord is in charge of this business, and He set Job up. You say, "That's cruel." God did it. God cannot do wrong. But, God called attention to Job's life to the devil. He said, "Have you watched my servant?" He said, "Yes, Sir, I have been watching him." I read in Job 1:8 where God commended Job. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. (Now all of that is truth. God did do that.) But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. (Now that was a lie.) . . . he will curse thee to thy face. He accused us to God. Now, we must understand that when he talks to God about us often times, he does it in the opposite and uses truth.

"Hey, did you see Abraham tell that lie down in Egypt? And, did you see him tell that lie again? Hey, you're a holy God. You are supposed to punish sin." "Did you see David when he had that lustful thought? Did you see him when he committed adultery? Did you see him when he planned the death of Uriah? Did you see him kill Uriah? Did you see him cover it all up? Hey, you are supposed to be God. Did you see what he did?" "Hey, God, did you hear Simon Peter when he cursed and denied the Lord?"

Did you hear him? Hey, he must be judged. Judge him." There is an interesting passage over in the book of Numbers when Balak was accusing the children of Israel. Balak had called Balaam to curse the children of Israel. When I read the book of Numbers, I see Israel murmuring and complaining and griping against God. That is obvious. You see it everywhere. There is a passage in Numbers where he tried to curse the children of Israel. He said: How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? . . .

He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob . . . "Can't you see, God? Look there." He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob . . . Now, why not? Well, there was a little lamb that shed his blood, and the blood was taken and spread all over the mercy seat. Underneath that mercy seat was His covenant with the ten commandments. It was a covenant of God. It came here between a holy God and the blood on the mercy seat which looked forward to the Lamb of God that one day will take away the sin of the world.

Because of the blood, I do not see any iniquity behind. The blood answers all of the accusations of the Devil against us. Jesus Christ shed His blood, and Satan goes to Heaven and calls forth that which is obvious. God says, "I don't see it." He hath not beheld iniquity . . . We are dead in Christ. We are alive in Him. He is our righteousness. You had better get a hold of that.

His weapons are accusations to produce guilt and shame. If guilt and shame is a good thing, if it makes us turn to God when the Spirit of God convicts us, it tenders us. It draws us to God. But, there is satanic conviction. I am positive as I am standing here, many of God's people have confessed things under satanic conviction instead of God's conviction. Satanic conviction leads to despair. It leads to guilt. It turns you inward. You can confess your sins and confess your sins, and it gets darker and darker. You despair. It becomes hopelessness. It leads to unbelief and rebellion against God because you do not find any relief in that sort of confession. That is satanic conviction. The Holy Spirit conviction brings relief and points to the remedy. The satanic conviction does not point to the remedy. It points to the action that you did or did not do and leaves you there. If it leaves us with our sin and there is no remedy and no pointing out and no sweet reminder, that is satanic conviction. It will drive you to despair. Unless it has been handled, it has driven some people to suicide to get away from the thoughts of the accuser. He is a cunning foe. He is the accuser of our brethren. A few weeks ago, a man came who is related to somebody in this church. This man was saved. He said, "God saved me and forgave me. I was married and an unsaved man. My wife was unsaved. I got saved, and my wife got saved. We did wrong. We could not get along. We got a divorce. We had no grounds for divorce, but we got a divorce." Now, why do you think he is in my office? Guilt. What do you do with guilt? He said, "God's forgiven me, but in everything I start to do there is guilt. Is there anything that I can do? Am I destined? God has forgiven me. Must I just sit on a seat in the church?" I said, "No, that is not what God says. There are some things that I do not think you can do." I told him what you cannot do. "But, there are some things that you can do. God forgave you and saved you back there. He forgave you of that. It is under the blood. You cannot change that. That is unchangeable. God does not intend for you to live with guilt from day to day. When you take it to the Lord and ask for forgiveness, it is under the blood. It is gone forever. . . . their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Now, he went back to his church. I am sure that he is busy trying to do something in service for the Lord.

You think about New Testament Christianity. The Gospel came to Corinth. Boy, what a mess those people made of their lives. Some of them had been married twenty-seven to twenty-eight times. That is history. Can those folks ever do anything for God? Yes, sir, there is something for folks who have messed up their lives and God has forgiven them. There is something that they can do for God. There are some things that are excluded, but there are a lot of things that are not excluded for God. That is satanic guilt. The answer

to that is to believe what the blood of Christ said about your sins. . . . their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Forever, no more. Satan accuses us and uses our sins to drive us to despair. The Lord Jesus in His tenderness drives us back to Him. Satan makes us think that God is through. Has anybody ever felt like God was through with you? How many times have you felt that way? I don't know. Back in the early 1970's, I guess, on a Saturday night, I could not name anything in my life that I had not confessed right before God. But, I felt, "Where is God? Why? Why?" I could not seem to fellowship with God. I searched my heart. On Saturday night, Dr. Bob Gray called me from Jacksonville, Florida. Dr. Hyman Appleman was to preach the kick-off sermon at the Southwide Baptist Fellowship at Trinity Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. He said, "He has had to go to the Far East. Will you preach in his stead?" I felt like going to the Far East, too. I felt constrained to tell him I would, but oh, the guilt, "God's through with you. You are going to get up there

and make a fool of yourself." I stood to preach that night. I could not read my text. I misread my text. A passage from Ecclesiastes: . . . whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever . . . I read, "Whatsoever God do's, He do's forever." Scared to death. I was so scared that I could not see the congregation. I was trembling inside. "God is through with you. Can you think of the conceit and pride? Here you are standing before these folks. You are a fool." I read my text and got started.

God got in that thing, and God turned me loose. Hey, the Devil lied to me. I was so geared up. After the service was over that night, I tried to gear down. I would get running in place, and I could not burn off all the adrenalin. I took a hot shower. I took a cold shower. I did calisthenics. I could not go to sleep. I could not unwind. I was geared like a race horse, and they had not opened the stocks to let me out of the gate. What was it? I got geared up. The Devil lied to me.

He has lied to me a whole lot of times. "God's through with you." I wonder if there is somebody tonight that God has told you that He is through with you. I want to tell you that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. That is what the Bible says in Revelation 11: I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. We are accepted in the beloved. Tonight, I want to help you and encourage you. Let me tell you something else. Some people have said, "I have gone too far. I can never be helped again."

There are some folks that have committed a sin way back many years ago. It is under the blood. When asked to serve, they still feel guilty about that. "How in the world can I be a Sunday School teacher? How in the world could I stand in front of the class?" People are asked to take a class, and they refuse to take the class. Why? It is not because they do not want to but because of the fact of the awfulness of the guilt that plagues them. "I cannot accept that." Why? "Because of the fact, you do not know what I did way back there."

The guilt eats them up. That is satanic. Some of you know back in 1971, I had the flu. I have never had the flu so bad. My wife had it. We had to sleep in separate rooms. We just could not sleep in the same bed. We were sick for two weeks. I was in a period of depression. "Where in the world is God?" In the middle of that, you say, "You stupid idiot. You ought to read the Word of God." I know I need to read the Word of God. I knew the Word of God, but I did not have the strength to resist.

The Devil came into my room. I had nothing left, and said, "Yes sir." "What's wrong with you? You are an apostate." You talk about a fear. It is like you have gone too far, overboard, an apostate. He told me that, and I am Baptist preacher. Yes, sir, he told me. I am telling you the most awful sensation swept across my physical frame that I have ever had in all of my life. That is some sensation to feel like you have

apostatized. You have turned your back on God; and God is not just through with you, but it is over.

That is a horrible thing. I stayed out of my pulpit three months. God sweetly told me that the Devil was a lie up there in Lakeland Regional Hospital. The Spirit of God reached down, and the Word of God breathed in my heart. . . .thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. How tenderly God dealt with me. The Devil is a liar. If he ever tells the truth, he tells the truth in order to get a lie across to you. He is a liar. Part of our weapon, our protection against the liar, is to have truth on our loins.

If we pray and fast unloosed with truth, we set ourselves up for lies to deceive us. Put truth on our loins. That is truth in our conduct. That is truth with one another. That is truth in our words. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . .his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Anybody playing fast and loose with truth is helping you with a real good old dose of the accuser of the brethren with his lies. He will come after you. Satan's weapons are accusations.

I am bearing my heart tonight. I generally bear my heart. I have preached the Word of God, and people get saved. Then the Devil tells me, "You are a hypocrite yourself. You are not saved yourself." And I stand there and resist him in the Word of God. I am telling you that he does that sort of thing to you. He is the accuser of the brethren.

NUMBER THREE, HIS PURPOSE IS TO BRING AN INDICTMENT BY GOD'S WILL AND SO BRING ABOUT GUILT. Turn to 2 Corinthians 7. Repentance is one thing. Remorse is another thing. The church of Corinth had put somebody on the outside in order to bring him to repentance. The man repented. He has to take them back. The church had not repented. He dealt with the church about their attitude of being puffed up. Paul wrote to them. Look at verse 9 as Paul writes about their reaction to his letter. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. Here is one man who denied his Lord. Here is one man who sold his Lord. The man who sold his Lord went out and repented. The Scripture talks about the awfulness of his guilt and the accuser, and he goes out to commit suicide. Another denies his Lord and

looks his Lord in the face. He goes out and weeps bitterly in repentance and comes back to the Lord. There is the sorrow of the world that worketh death and the sorrow of the Lord that worketh life. That is Satan's helper to bring guilt, remorse, and regret and to keep us accusing ourselves and focusing ourselves on our sin. If you get down and confess your sins apart from a recognition and

acknowledgment that Jesus Christ died to forgive those sins, you will be darker in despair. It will get darker and darker and darker. Why? Because of the fact that you are not dealing with it in the light of Calvary. You have to deal with it in the light of Calvary. His blood is the answer to that. As long as we are feeling guilty, then Satan is doing a good job of indicting us. It drives us from the Lord because there is no relief from this. There is no relief. You confess and no relief. When there is no relief, it brings rebellion and unbelief against the God of all grace. That is satanic. It will make you do what? It will make you curse God and die. That is his philosophy. Here is the matter of Satan's purpose.

NUMBER FOUR, MY DEFENSE. 1 John 2. Guilt is not a funny thing. Guilt is a good thing to tell us that we have done something wrong. The blood is the answer to that. 1 John 2: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. (Fight it. Do not do it.) And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for

the sins of the whole world. The blood on the mercy seat in the Old Testament gave a year's covering of blood, for the day of atonement came once a year.

This is an eternal covering. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. He has made that final sacrifice for sins. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. With that blood, our defense is the fact that Jesus Christ has answered all that a holy God had against us. He is our High Priest. As He stands there as our Advocate, He has pierced hands as evidence that He paid it. He has pierced feet as evidence that He paid it. Here is His head that was crowned with thorns.

Now, he stands as the propitiation. God is forever satisfied with everything in the world about this thing called sin because Jesus Christ put it away. He paid for it with His own precious blood. And if any man sin, we have an advocate . . . An advocate presupposes an accuser. He has already accused us, but he accuses us before God. He accuses us to ourselves. God will not defend our sins. He dealt with that, but He will surely defend His children at the mercy seat. Listen to this poem.

"Depth of mercy can there be mercy still reserved for me? Can my God His wrath forebear neither chief of sinners spared? I've long withstood His grace, long provoked Him to His face, would not hearken to His call, grieved Him with a thousands falls. Now, Lord incline me to repent. Let me now my sins lament. Now my fouls revoke deplore; weak beliefs send no more. Still for me the Savior stands holding forth His wounded hands. God is love. I know I feel Jesus weeps and loves me still."

It does not change God. It does not surprise God. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: Here is another article, "God is well able to deal with our sins, but He cannot deal with a man under accusation because such a man is not trusting in the blood. The blood speaks in his favor, but he is listening instead to Satan. Christ is our advocate, but we, the accused, side with the accuser. We have not recognized that we are unworthy of anything but death.

That as we shall shortly see, we are only fit to be crucified anyway. We have not recognized that it is God alone that can answer the accuser, that in the precious blood He has already done so. Never should we try to answer Satan with our good conduct, but always with the blood. Yes, we are sinful, but praise God, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." The accuser. Now, let me turn to another phase of this matter. Turn to Romans 11. Elijah was a prophet, and he prayed for Israel.

Verse 2 talks about him: God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. Here he was making accusation instead of intercession. Now, let me talk about listening to the accuser of the brethren. Christians can listen to the accuser of another believer. Christians are not aware.

If you ever have a wave of accusations against a brother, the Devil, the accuser of the brethren, just filled your mind with all that stuff. There are a lot of folks who have wedges between them that have no idea in the world how it happened. It happened because the accuser of the brethren filled somebody's mind with something and consequently alienated a fellowship when there were no grounds for it. He is the accuser of the brethren. I will give you some illustrations in a little bit. Turn to Ephesians 4. It talks about Satan. Verse 26: Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down

upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. When you sleep over night with anger or that sort of thing, then Satan moves into your house and blows it up. The accuser of the brethren goes to work. He blows it

up and blows it up. After awhile, you cannot stand the sight of that individual. That individual did a little tiny thing that could have been handled, but it can no longer be handled because the accuser of the brethren has summoned every charge in the world against that person. You thought it was their thought life, but it was not. It happened to be yours. That is the accuser of the brethren. Look at 2 Corinthians 2. Paul talked about this person and told him to forgive him in verse 10 and 11. Why? To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. The matter of holding on to unforgiveness of somebody builds and builds. The accuser says, "That is right. You do not need to forgive." It builds and becomes uncontrollable. I was at one of my family get-togethers -- my brothers, sisters, cousins, and so forth. Somebody stayed away because somebody else was there. They had a whole lot in their heart towards them. They said, "I am not going to play a hypocrite. If I went, I would be a hypocrite." Holding unforgiveness is as deadly as acting like a hypocrite. He had the matter to forgive and come or stay home and hold a grudge. What do you do? You play into the hands of some idea that will build it up. If you could just write down your attitude toward an individual before this starts, and after it starts -- you keep a list of it, the person's character -- after you get through, you would never, never recognize them because of the fact of the immensity of their transgressions that Satan has really piled up. That is the accuser of the brethren. That will happen between husband and wife and cause many a divorce. That will happen between brothers and sisters in the family and divide a family. That will happen in the church. That will happen in the business. We must never give place to the Devil.

I led a man to the Lord. His name is Ralph Henderson. Ralph is back in the world. I can tell you when it started. Ralph was out of Chicago. Ralph was a guy that they told me to leave alone. He got saved. His wife got saved the next Sunday morning. I led both of them to the Lord. They were gloriously happy in the Lord. I had a member of the church whose wife left him. His name was Carl. Carl had been in this service. His wife left him. He had a broken leg. I took him to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to get his wife to bring her back. I lived back in the mountains of Georgia, and I did not have a suitcase. I wanted to borrow a suitcase. I sent my wife down to borrow a suitcase. Carl and I were going to Philadelphia. I sent my wife down. Well, then I thought later on, "Hey, I was in the air corp, and I had a lot of buddies from Pennsylvania. If I am up there, I could call them." But I did not know one city from another in Pennsylvania. So, I went down to talk to Ralph. I said, "Do you have a map of the United States, Pennsylvania especially. Carl and I are going to Pennsylvania, and a lot of old buddies of mine are up there. I thought if they were close by I could give them a call." I borrowed a map. My wife borrowed a suitcase. I made the trip. I came back. I noticed something was wrong between my relationship and Ralph. I would try to get close to him. He would talk to me. It was not the same. Ralph began to miss church and began to drift. His relationship with me deteriorated. I asked him if anything was wrong. I could not get anything from him. What in the world had happened to him? I prayed for him. I exhorted him. One year later, I am sitting at his house. My wife is sitting there talking to his wife Carol. We were talking. All of the sudden, he said something, and God turned on the light. "Do you know what you did? He says that he told his wife that he loaned the suitcase because they were going up there to get Carl's wife. He came down and asked me about a map because he was going to see some of his buddies. He and Carl are going to go up there to wine and dine and tell them that they are up there after his wife to bring her back, and preacher and him are going to have a good time." Now, who told him that? One year of that, it all came together. I told him, "You put two things together that go together, but have allowed the Devil to put something in your mind that never happened." I never got back Ralph's fellowship. His pride would not allow him to say that he had thrown a curve. Ralph has divorced Carol. He is out in the world. His downfall began when he listened to the accuser of his brethren. It destroyed a relationship with a man that led him to the Lord. For a year, I did not

know what it was. That is the accuser of the brethren.

I will give you some more. A lady sat right over here. I was preaching one morning on giving and tithing. The lady was a senior citizen. The phone rang that week, and the lady said that she wanted to see me. I went to see her. She said, "I tithe. I put such and such in the plate." I said, "That's fine. Wonderful. I do not need to

know what you have been giving." Then she said, "Now, you were preaching about tithing and giving, and then you looked right at me." That lady is dead and in heaven. Her name was Miss Emma. I said, "Miss Emma, I had to look somewhere. I could have looked at the ceiling, so when I am preaching I am looking at somebody when my eyes sweep the congregation."

Another lady just came to church. She had gotten saved earlier. One night, I was preaching on some sin. I got on anger or something like that. I found out later on that the wife had told her husband, "He looked right at you when he said that." They are gone. Who did it? His wife told him. His wife became the tool of Satan to destroy her husband. If I remember correctly, he had just gotten right with the Lord, and I guarantee you that he is in trouble tonight. Who told him that? How do you know motives? How do you know what makes people tick?

I will give you some more on this matter. In this building over here, I had a funeral. We came out the front, and the hearse backed up to the end of the sidewalk here. I walked down the aisle of the church to the outside and turned a left down the sidewalk in front of the old building down there. I have got one thing on my mind. I am not shaking hands. It was not a social time. I was out there to minister to a family. That was all that I was thinking about. I did not see anybody. I could not tell you who was on either side. I was not thinking about who was on either side. I walked down that sidewalk, and I led the casket and the family inside that church. Over there we had the funeral service. That afternoon, the phone rang. Somebody called me and said, "Mrs. So and So said she is not coming back to Calvary Baptist Church. You walked right up in her face and did not say a thing and turned your back on her." Yes, I did. I did not have her on my mind. I had that family on my mind. I just walked out and turned around like that. Who told her that I faced her and did not speak to her? You forget, sister, my mind was not on you. My mind was not on shaking hands. My mind was on ministering. The accuser.

A lady told me one time, "Preacher, you looked at me like I was dirt." She told on herself. That is how she felt about herself. I have never looked at anybody like they were dirt. Who did that? That has destroyed many sweet fellowships. Sometimes, you can see that something absolutely, totally looks wrong, but it is not wrong. Ellis Jenkins can do something that he will let you just guess what it is. He will not tell you. Ellis was sitting up in the hospital on the bed beside Judy. Judy is his wife. Ellis had on his little badge that said, "Clergy." He is sitting on the side of the bed feeding her. The nurse comes in and sees this preacher feeding this woman. She said, "Are you a preacher?" He said, "Yes, ma'am." He just let her think anything she wanted to. She says, "That is the most tender preacher I have ever seen. He is just sitting there." That is like the time he went to Goodwill and bought a pair of shoes that were a size fourteen for a clown outfit. His boy, Wayne, was about nine or ten years old. He had him put his foot with his shoe on inside the big shoe and had him stand there. A man passed by and saw Wayne standing there with these shoes sticking out like that. He looked at Ellis and said, "How old is he?" Ellis told him and the guy let out an oath. Ellis just let him think. He said, "I have never seen a kid with feet that size in all of my life." There was no way in the world that the kid could walk. I am simply saying that we look, and we think we see something.

One night, my daughter Carolyn came down here for rededication. I got down, and I knelt like this beside her. When I got down like this, I felt a cramp in my hip, and I came up like this. I walked around like this a little bit. I went down there again, and I knelt like that, and I got a cramp again. I did that three times. I am sure somebody said, "Boy, she really told him something." It hurt. Have you ever had in cramp in your hip? I straightened that thing around and walked around.

I will tell you one worse than that. This one could have ruined me. I was visiting when I first came to the city. I forgot the lady's name, but I have not forgotten the little child. I play with children. I pick at them. I like babies. We were east of Lakeland Boulevard. The lady had a pretty little girl. My wife said, "I tried to tell you," but I did not here her. The lady gave her name and her little girl's name. I thought the little girl's name was Susie. We were talking, and every now and then, I looked at Susie and said, "I am going to get some of Susie's sugar." She says, "No, you ain't." "Oh, yes, I am." We would talk a little bit, then I would say, "I am going to get some of Susie's sugar." "No, you ain't" Then all of the sudden she said, "You ain't going to kiss my mommy." The mom's name was Susie. Oh! My wife said, "I tried to tell you," but I got them mixed up. Sometimes, you can hear Christians say things and do things that are not what you think they are. I was

playing with that little tiny girl. I play with kids and pick on them. But, oh my! I am glad that came to light before I left the place so that I could clear it up. I am glad that my wife was with me. Praise the Lord for wives! The accuser of the brethren. We just need to be careful. I could tell you a lot of others, but let me tell you that we misjudge. I went to Tennessee Temple Schools. I thought I would drown. I was trying to keep from drowning when I was walking across the campus. A very close friend now thought I was stuck up. I passed them. I was not stuck up. I was trying to keep my nose up to keep from drowning; the water was so high. I do not walk past people without speaking to them. I do not do that. I would not speak. Finally, she told me later. I said, "No, no, Norma, that was not the case. I was wrapped up in my burdens, and I did not see you." The accuser of the brethren. There are a lot of things that you think about other people that are not reality. It is not so. The accuser got in and built a case. Once he gets in, you watch that person. Everything they do from then on out has significance, and the Devil builds a case and destroys a relationship where nothing ever happened. You begin to wonder, "What in the world happened?" I wondered what happened to my relationship with Ralph. I found out a year later, but I never was able to restore that relationship. The accuser of the brethren. Be careful!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jb-buffington/the-accuser-of-the-brethren/>

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