

Overcoming the accuser

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" 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 inhabitors 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." (Rev. 12:7-12)

Introduction

In this article we will discuss how to overcome the accuser, Satan, who wants to introduce doubt into our mind as to our salvation, and doubt God's goodness and love, which is ultimately another form of sin, in that we don't trust God's promises. In this he wants to weaken our faith and therefore make us ineffective in our testimony and our ministry. The following diagram depicts how God and Satan relate to humans in the law, the Gospel, and salvation.

	The law	The Gospel	Goal
God	Protection	Salvation	Protection, Restoration, Salvation of man
Satan	Temptation	<u>Accusation</u>	Destruction of man

First of all, God gave the law to protect man from the harmful effects of sin. In it is a protective and preventative objective. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Rom. 7:12). The law is there for a good purpose; if we break it, then we

have to bear the consequences of it, which can be a truly messy and painful experience. The law also serves another purpose, namely to demonstrate that man is sinful in that since he is a sinner, all he can do is break the law: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, ..." (Gal. 3:19). Therefore the law is used by God to demonstrate that man is a sinner and needs repentance. However, we see that Satan's behavior is completely antithetical to God's revealed Word. Satan is the father of all lies and as such uses outright lies or half-truths to deceive us. Satan tempts both believers and non-believers alike in order to get them to break the law and rebel against God.

Man is sinful and in rebellion against God; however, that is not the full story. God's salvation plan for mankind included redemption and salvation from sin: "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:23-26). This is the Gospel, the Good News, that Jesus Christ bore the consequence of our sins upon Himself. His righteousness is reckoned our own, independently from any good or bad that we have done. Furthermore, the believer is born again by the Spirit of God and is a new creation, and is accepted into the family of God, and has eternal life: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1John 5:13).

How the accuser attacks us

Again, antithetically to the truth revealed by God in the Scriptures, Satan tells only half-truths in order to deceive mankind. In the opening verse, the Scriptures depict Satan as the old serpent, the one who tempted Adam and Eve to rebel against God in the garden of Eden, thereby dragging all of mankind after them into sin. Satan has been a liar since the beginning of the world, and is the father of lies (John 8:44). This is the tactic he uses when accusing people of their sin, playing the role of God in trying to judge the believer so that he is fearful of even losing his salvation. Here, as opposed to tempting people to commit sin, glossing over sin's consequences, Satan accuses the believer of committing sin, or being in sin, in being so

hopelessly sinful as to lose all faith, trust and hope in God's goodness. This is why half-truths are so deceptive; we grab a hold of the truthful part of the half-truth but get pulled into a lie because other information is either distorted or held back from us. The reason this issue is so important is because of the accusations that Satan levels against people can sometimes be so great as to drive people to utter despair. The accusations are so intense, that the Scripture says they go on and on, day and night. In such cases some believers doubt their own salvation or that they are really children of God. Clearly, this is an issue which must be dealt with.

What is the solution?

Let us now look at the other side of the story. What is the truth revealed in Scripture that we need to know in order to overcome the accuser? Chapter 12 of Revelation describes great moments in God's plan of salvation for mankind. In it the fall of Satan and his angel's are described. Satan is a rebel of old, trying, in vain to take over God's place. But Satan could not prevail and was cast out of Heaven (verses 8-9). This means that there is no place for Satan, the father of all sins in the holy presence of God, but has to abide wrathfully, like a beaten cur in the earthly realms even where he has but a short time, after which he will be cast into the lake of fire forever (verse 12; Rev. 20:10). Verses 10 and 11 say that salvation, strength, and the kingdom of God have come. The kingdom of God has come, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail (Matthew 16:18). God has fulfilled His plan of salvation for man. Since God is an Absolute Being, outside of time and space, what He plans and wills will be fulfilled, and nothing can stand against Him. The believers have overcome the accuse by the blood of the Lamb. Not by anything they have done, for we cannot stand by our own righteousness. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, shed His own blood so that we may be called righteous in God's sight. Satan, playing the part of a false attorney accuses the believers of being sinners. However, God, the true Judge, to Whom belongs the entire universe declares by His absolute authority that we are free from sin and damnation, and that Satan has no more power over us.

As believers we must know that God not only knew ahead of time that we would commit sin, but He also chose us unto salvation. This means that God knows of all of our past, present, and future sins. God knows perfectly well who we are and where we are going, because He is omnipotent and all-knowing. In spite of all of our sins that we have committed, the ones that we

are in still, and the ones that we are going to commit, God loved us and sent His Son Jesus to die for us. To wit, the reason the Old Testament saints have salvation is because they themselves looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, who would take away the sins of the world. The work of salvation is complete: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished*: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." (John 19:30). God will keep us until the final day of salvation, and there is nothing which can tear us from His grip: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that *of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing*, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John 6:39).

In the book of Ephesians, the armor and weaponry of the man of God is described. Part of this is the helmet of salvation: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:17). This is the doctrine of the certainty of one's salvation, which has also been supported by other Bible verses mentioned previously. The head is a very sensitive and important part of the body. The skull encases the brain, which is the spiritual center of man. If one has a certain knowledge of his own salvation, then this person is free indeed. The believer has been set free from sin, has a relationship with God, and can bear good fruit as a testimony of his new nature and right standing with God. This strengthens the believer's testimony, since he knows who he is; he is a child of God, who will be with God in eternity. Therefore the helmet of salvation serves to protect the believer in knowing that he is right with God. Without this protective helmet, the believer is cast into doubt, fear, and despair.

Romanist aspects of this issue

There are a number of aspects of Romanist teaching which are important to cover with respect to this issue. First of all, the church of Rome is still under the law. The gospel of Rome teaches that man must "merit salvation", a truly contradictory statement by nature if there ever was one. It teaches that man will be saved based on his own good deeds and his own righteousness. Thus, Rome rejects the true Gospel of salvation by faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone, which it calls the sin of presumption. However, Paul addresses these actual accusations of Romanists against true believers: "And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just." (Romans 3:8). Roman Catholics are thus wide open to the accuser, who logically and

consequentially accuses them based on their own teaching. In fact, there is not a single Roman Catholic who can reach salvation by his own, as God's standard is perfection: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48). Some Roman Catholics are engulfed in utter torment if they are not capable of remembering every single little sin that they committed during their confession to the priest. This is the same kind of utter torment Martin Luther went through as an Augustinian monk before he was enlightened with the truth of the Gospel in the Scriptures. This false Gospel of self-righteousness before God is so ingrained into the thinking of some Roman Catholics that even after some have reached faith, they believe that salvation covers only those sins that they have committed until the present moment. This is not true, because God's salvation is complete, it is a one-time event, and covers all of the sins of the believer throughout all time.

Conclusion

Therefore let us stand firm in our knowledge of our salvation. God's love is greater than any lie or accusation that Satan can hurl at us. Therefore let us go and proclaim the love and saving grace of God to all mankind so that they may share in the joy that we know. As in the words of Jesus:

"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:11)