

## Podcast 006 Accusations and Advocacy by Mike Stroud

Let's start off by going over to the Revelation chapter 12 in the Bible. I hope we can have the Holy Ghost with us tonight. I pray for that, so that we can discuss this concept. I taught a lesson in High Priest Group today on Joseph Smith the Prophet, by President Hunter. The whole lesson had to do with developing a new appreciation for the Prophet Joseph and for the things that he restored. One of the things he restored has to do with what we call the Doctrine of Advocacy. We'll talk a little bit about that. In other words, Christ being our Advocate with the Father. That's a great Atonement principle and a great Atonement doctrine. But to understand the doctrine of advocacy, which is a legal term... and a lot of the gospel of Jesus Christ uses legal terminology: judge, advocate, pleading, bar of justice – all of these different things – guilty, not guilty... all of these things are legal terms that you can find within the school of legal thought in our country and in the world. One of those is this doctrine of advocacy. Another one is the term innocent, guilty, accuser – and I want to chat with you about it and see if we can bring all of this together tonight and see what the Lord is trying to teach us when He uses all of these various terms.

So, in Revelation chapter 12, we want to go to verse 10. Actually, let's skip up to verse 9. In your heading in Revelation 12 it says, "[John] sees the war in heaven in the beginning when Satan was cast out –," *Dash*, "He sees the continuation of that war on earth." So what was begun as the war in heaven wasn't ended when the Garden of Eden was established and Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden. It's simply been extended on Earth and that war won't end until after the Millennium. So, it actually begins in the pre-mortal life and goes all through the telestial world, goes through the Millennium and doesn't end until the end of the Millennium, after the final battle, which is where Satan and his hosts are allowed one final time to go to war against Christ and His Saints. So, in verse 9, it says, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole earth, and his angels were cast out with him." And they're here to this day and they provide, in one form, opposition for man. They oppose everything that is light, good, and righteous.

Now, look at verse 10, "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:" *Colon*. Now it's an interesting reason we place that colon there, because we need to have the salvation and strength of God and the Kingdom of God and the power of His Christ because – what comes after *colon*? "...for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them..." –our brethren, "...before our God day and night." So, one of the names of Lucifer is "the accuser of the brethren." We can discern that the brethren are those that align themselves with Christ and the Father.

Now, look at verse 11, "And they overcame him..." –meaning the brethren overcame the accuser. And how do they do it? "...by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;" –*semicolon*. The placement of these colons and semicolons are important. Now look what comes after that, "...and they," –meaning the brethren, "...loved not their lives unto death." Last verse (12), "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea!" –*exclamation point*, "...for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he have but a short time." Now, that's a great scripture if we want to learn something about Lucifer and about his tactics and what it is he's trying to accomplish. If we can understand his strategy, his nature, and his tactics... remember that you can come to know a lot about Jesus Christ by His opposition. In other words, Christ can be known better in His adversary. The more you understand Lucifer and the powers of darkness, the better you can comprehend Christ and the powers of heaven. Things are made better known through their opposing factors. To understand light better, you come to understand darkness. You want to understand Christ better; you come to understand His enemy. Now there's some truth in that. I think it's interesting- Yeah? Comment?

Student 1: I've understood, all my life, that... not to invite the adversary. Not, you know, go there. Well, not *go there*, but not do that. And then, now you're saying here that by studying the adversary you get to know Christ better. How do I make that work?

Mike: Well, it's a good question. For example, one of the great principles of power that I've learned, has been a guiding principle in my life, is I've come to understand, through study, what it means when we talk about devils and unclean spirits. I've read about that all of my life and I always thought that those two terms were referring to one group, or class,

of individuals. By looking deeper into it, and studying and pondering the scriptures that mention those terms, I've come to understand something I never did know before- that those are two different groups of people with different agendas, with different powers, and must be dealt with specifically, but in different ways. Now if I hadn't taken the time to look into that, I would not ever have discovered and had that revealed to me. The things that have been revealed have given me great insight **and power** to deal with these spiritual forces of darkness in my family, in my life. And as it turns out, have been able to be an instrument for good in the lives of others because I've understood that darkness. So, it's not the same thing as going into it and becoming fascinated with the occult. It's not a titillation of dark things and wondering if Ouija boards and spiritual mediums work. We're in a warfare and this verse in chapter 12 in Revelation, the very heading talks about the war in heaven. I think that's a great question Sharon. It's a wonderful question. I think that as I've studied the scriptures, here's another thing I've found out: the one word that our Father in Heaven and Christ use to describe the celestial world experience that their children are going through, the one word that is used to describe it is war. Now, if you're in a warfare, which I testify that we are and you know that, it becomes really helpful for us to understand the strategy and plans of the enemy. The more that you can understand him then the better off you are in overcoming and fighting that battle. Go ahead...

Student 2: So, how to you know that?

Mike: Well, mainly, I can only give you my experience. It is, if you will let it, as your life unfolds, if you'll first of all understand this principle. The principle is: That we are in a warfare and we need to know all that we can about the tactics and strategy of the person who wants to defeat us in this war. If you come to that point where you accept that principle, then the Holy Spirit will take you by the hand, and, bit by bit, will lead you in the things you need to know personally to help you fight the good fight and come off victorious. I don't know that there's any particular books or manuals that we can get, or... it's not like the book written by the great Chinese warfare expert who wrote the book, The Art of War. We don't have anything like that. But a good portion of the Book of Mormon, especially in 2 Nephi, was spent showing us the tactics of the evil one, how he works, how he leads you carefully by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he grasps you with his strong chains forever. See there's information that we have, that we can understand, that he never comes at you, for example... Here's a tactic: He never comes at you with the large heinous, horrendous sins of this world. He just doesn't do that because he understands that each one of God's children has something in the called "...enmity between thee and the seed of the women..." when he was talking in the Garden of Eden. Do you remember that? "I will place *enmity* between thee and the seed of the woman." Enmity has many different meanings. One is, there's a natural abhorrence, which God's children have, in this life, for darkness and evil and those kinds of things. So, it's just a matter of when the Spirit touches you and awakens you in a particular area, then move forward and follow its promptings and you will learn things that you personally need to know in order to come off victorious. Does that help?

Student 1 and 2: Yes!

Student 3: Hey, Mike. You have a handout on... I think what really helped me was "voices." Understanding what the "voices" are, the voices of the Spirit and the voice of how the devil does that. You've got 3 or 4 handouts, I think, of... You sent those. I have those... [unintelligible] And then also, did you get that article I sent you today, about the 7 missionaries, when they were sent to England to open up the missionary work?

Mike: I'm familiar with that story, but I didn't get the article. You mean when they were attacked in Preston, England?

Student 3: Yeah. Ok, so anyway, that's a good example of how it's real. And Joseph Smith- when God appeared to him, darkness took over his life for awhile, until Christ appeared to him and drove him away. He admitted lots of times where he was struggling. And Oliver Cowdery was chased out of his house 3 times because of evil spirits.

Mike: Yeah. Well, I did not get those articles. If anybody is listening to this and wants that information, we can probably see that it's available for them here. Thank you. I appreciate those comments.

Let's go back to verse 11. They overcome "the accuser of the brethren" by 3 things: "The blood of the Lamb" – I think that we can say safely, that that is by accessing the power of Christ's Atonement to empower you in many ways so that... Again, the name of the game of what we are trying to do is, we want to come off victorious in this battle – So, the power

of Christ's Atonement; "By the word of their testimony"— isn't that interesting! That's the brethren, now. Remember that they were talking about the brethren that are accused. And I think the brethren who are accused by Lucifer are anyone of those in mortality that have a stewardship with the lives of God's children. That could be from as lofty a place as the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, right down to fathers and mothers in their homes, where they have stewardship to protect and rear their children in righteousness and bear testimony. But, the last part I thought was interesting in verse 11: "They loved not their lives unto death." This warfare can cause your death. I think in the 6<sup>th</sup> Lecture on Faith, which is Sacrifice, by the Prophet Joseph Smith, where he said that if you're not willing to give, to sacrifice everything, including your life, to the cause of Christ for the restored truth, then you're not worthy to enter into their presence. Now, whether or not you'll be required to do that, that's another question. But, you have to be willing to give up, sacrifice, everything. And in some cases many people were given that opportunity and it says, "They loved not their lives unto death." In other words, a place with Christ and the Father was more precious to them than remaining alive in the telestial world. They willingly gave up their life for Christ in the great battlefield of the telestial world.

I want to turn back to this thing: "the accuser of the brethren." That's Lucifer's title. That's one of his names. As Christ is an **Advocate** of the brethren," which is also a name of Christ, a name/title, "The accuser of the brethren" is also a name/title of the evil one. I remember that Margie and I were in our mission in New Jersey, I believe it was, when we came across, and the Spirit taught us here, this principle. This is the heart of what I want to discuss with you for the next few minutes. To the degree that we are accusatory in this life, to the degree that we accuse others, we take upon ourselves a satanic role. Now, the opposite of accusation is forgiveness. Now, what we'll do as a result of this lesson tonight is that we'll look inside of ourselves over the next 7 days and you'll be amazed at just how often we slip into this accusatory condition. It's really common among fallen men and women in the telestial world. That is one of the main things that we... Through the Blood of the Lamb and the testimony of the brethren, have to overcome if we want an inheritance with the Father and the Son. That is not easy because we really don't think too much about it. I think the Prophet Joseph Smith... Another word for accusing, another legal term, is indictment. If you bring an accusation, another legal term for that is an indictment against somebody. Higher law requires some kind of a hearing. And the accuser, or the person who's bringing an indictment, is doing so, so that a hearing can be convened and their cause can be listened to and judged. So, every time that we bring an accusation against somebody, part of that process is, not to have it ended with an accusation. It only BEGINS a process that ends up bringing SOMEBODY before a judge in a hearing, where innocence or guilt can be determined. That's the purpose of an indictment, or an accusation. Now, what I want to present to you tonight is, that is satanic. Now that'll give us room to think about that. So, now, over in Matthew chapter 7, you don't have to turn to that, it's the Sermon on the Mount. It's the last chapter of the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord comes out and says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." The person making an accusation is also making a judgment, based in their mind, of innocence or guilt, right or wrong. It's going to have to have a hearing that ends with a judgment from somebody in authority, in behalf, or against the person making the accusation or the indictment. See what we're talking about here? Now Joseph Smith, he took Matthew 7 and he said, "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged..." and then Joseph Smith said, "...but judge righteous judgment."

Now the only time a righteous judgment is made, brothers and sisters... let's go over to Section 121 and see what the Lord says about this. These kinds of things should help us. Remember that true doctrine understood changes behavior. It's not enough to just simply say, "You shouldn't do that. It's wrong." It's important that we see what the Lord has to say about it. Section 121, we want to go to verse 43. If you're going to take it upon yourself to judge a person, to reprove a person, to correct a person, to chastise a person...verse 43 becomes the rule. Section 121:43, to make sure what you're doing is righteous. So remember what Joseph said, "Judge righteous judgment." Well, here's the key to that. You "reprove" and we could put in there judge, "Reproving betimes with sharpness..."—this part, "...when moved upon by the Holy Ghost." So, our judgments, in order to be correct, in order to fulfill what Joseph said, "Judge righteous judgment," you need to be in tune with the Holy Spirit, and with the Mind of Christ and the Father, which is the Holy Spirit, according to the 5<sup>th</sup> Lecture on Faith. You need to have the Mind of Christ in you, so that whatever you think, do, or say, is in accordance with His mind. At that point, whatever judgment you make, whatever chastisement, whatever

correction you make, will be done right. Otherwise, you end up being in danger of judgment yourself because you don't judge righteously. And then in verse 43 ends up, goes on and says that after you've made this judgment, reproof, chastisement, then, "...[show] forth an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy." So, what we're saying here is, there's a way for you, in your stewardship, to correct, reprove, chasten, instruct, without being accusatory or condemning the person. That's the trick. Now, our natural man wants to just make a statement and accuse a person, and "you're wrong," and "you did this," and "I don't like this," and "you're this kind of person," and "you've always been like this," and "you will never change," and "this is your fault" and those kinds of things are dark.

My wife and I were talking about this today, and just to kind of give you an example... How do you help somebody correct themselves without being accusatory, because a lot of times our accusations are based on lack of information? I'd say MOST of the time they are. This last week I was taking this horse I've been working with, going out with a friend of mine, and we were going to move some cows out of [unintelligible] Ranch, out here, east of Springerville. I've been training this horse now for a number of weeks. And I went to saddle him up, got him all saddled up and brought him over, and was waiting for my friend to come by with his trailer so we could load the horses up and go out and move these cows around. I noticed he was favoring his leg. I told Margie before that he was a little gimpy on that leg and that I was going to take him out. But she says, "Why are you going to take him out on this gathering up of these cows, this round-up, when you know that his leg is hurt?" She says, "I don't think it's right that you should ride him out there. If he's not well, you can make that leg worse." And we had this discussion back and forth and she didn't come out and say, "You're wrong! You shouldn't do this. You know better than this." She simply said, "Help me understand why you're going to take this horse out when you know he's lame and can cause him further injury."

And I said, "A lot of times a horse (this is a 10 year old horse), a lot of times a horse can have a little bit of arthritis in his knee and a little bit of exercise out on the trail will take that out. I won't really know how bad this is until I'm on his back and we're moving cows. And if it does not seem to correct itself, I'll simply take him back out of the saddle and put him in the trailer and we'll do something else."

And she said, "Oh! Well that makes sense." So we had a discussion back and forth. Rather than accusing, her tactic was... she could have come out and said, "You know better than that Mike! You're going to hurt that animal. I thought you knew better about horses than that, to take a horse out that's lame, on a cattle drive. That's hard work!" She didn't do any of that. She just simply said, "Help me understand why you're doing this." And so, when I explained it she said, "Oh! Well that makes sense."

When I got to the trailer I noticed that on his knee there was a knot that hadn't been there before. Once I went down and touched the knee with my hand, he picked his leg up. So, what I did was, when my friend came by, I simply said, "I can't take this horse. I don't think it will be a good idea to take this horse out there." So I unsaddled him and took him back out to the pasture and turned him loose. And I went out to the ranch and got a ranch horse and we went on that drive with the other horses. My point was, she didn't have to come out with a railing accusation and say, "You know better than that, etc, etc." There was a way to go around this. The reason she did that, the reason she handled it that way, is because both of us have been working on not falling in this trap of accusing people and going on the dark side. It's tricky to do, but it can be done.

Let me give you another example. Let's go over to John chapter 8. So, my premise tonight is, brothers and sisters, at the level in the gospel of our gospel understanding, we need to avoid making accusations and condemning others because when we do, we literally fall into the role of "the accuser of the brethren." And you don't want to do that. None of us want to do that. Let's go to John chapter 8. Go over to verse 1. I find it interesting that as I study the gospel, I don't find the Lord accusing people. And I don't find him condemning. His ministry was not to accuse nor condemn. His ministry was to forgive, and to edify, and to lift. In that process we are allowed to have our own experiences in the journey of life and learn from those experiences and those experiences be for our own good, as we've studied before. Let's go down here...you know the story. This is Jesus and He's in the temple in verse 2. The Scribes and the Pharisees come to him in verse 3, and they bring a woman whose been taken in adultery. And they set her in the midst and, "...They say unto him,

Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" Now look at this verse (6), "This they said, tempting him, that they might have to **accuse** him..." You see the role that's going on? Now they are not concerned at all with this woman's spiritual welfare. They are more than prepared to take her outside the gates of the city and put her to death, as was the Law of Moses. They came to Him, tempting Him, that they might find a way to accuse Him. "...But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." Interesting thing to ponder. When they continued asking Him... you see, it wasn't just a one-time request. He just kind of ignores it and then they continue with this, 'What do you say? Moses said... You're a Rabbi. You profess to be the Son of God. So what do you say about this?'

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." You know the story. Each one of their rocks started to drop and they condemn their own selves, convicted of their own conscious. And they all went out, one by one. Verse 10, "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine **accusers**? Hath no man condemned thee?" There's the words that we can learn from! Accusation/condemnation: that's satanic.

And she looks and says, "No man, Lord..." There's no accuser. There is no condemner.

"...And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." There's a great lesson in what we are trying to talk about here.

Now, there are different levels of Godliness that you can go into here. Remember, there are different levels in our progression. One level is, is that when you are wrongfully accused, or persecuted, or someone seeks to condemn you, in any way, then... Let's go to Section 64 in the Doctrine and Covenants and see what the Lord requires of us. What does the Lord require of us in that situation? Section 64 and we want to go to verse 9. Are you all there? Section 64 verse 9. Verse 8 says that, "My disciples in the days of old, sought occasion against one another..." What do you think that was?

Student: Accusing.

Mike: Yeah. They're accusing one another. So here we are, right smack in the middle of what we're talking about here. I don't know what the situation was, but when He says they "...sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this **evil** they were afflicted and sorely chastened." You see? This is good stuff! Now we get into the heart of it. You seek "occasion against one another," whether you are the accuser or the accused, doesn't justify. (v. 9) "Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another..." Now, that's what the Lord says. So, if you're the one that's been wrongfully persecuted, or accused and you're the victim...see, you're the victim, and you truly are the victim and you're guiltless in this, then the Lord says you have an obligation to forgive those who accuse, condemn, or persecute you. "...for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses..." See, the Lord spells it out here. If you are the victim, "...standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in **HIM**..." -the victim- "...the greater sin." I want to share with you tonight why that is such a great sin. Why is it the victim can find himself in a position where the sin is greater than the original persecutor, or the original reviler, or the original accuser?

Student 2: I don't understand when you say "the victim." I don't see that in verse 9.

Mike: Verse 9 says that if you don't forgive your brother HIS trespasses... it's your brother that's trespassing against you. You're the victim.

Student 2: okay...

Mike: See that? That's where you're the victim.

Student: You're right, you're right!

Mike: Then in verse 10, "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men." Now, to help you in the process, the Lord gives you a state of mind to adopt. An attitude, a state of mind, in verse 11, "And ye ought to say in your hearts -" "...remember now, you're the victim, "...let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds." Now, what's that? Punishment. You're not in the position to bring a claim against this

person. God sees all. You forgive. And to help you forgive in a difficult situation, take upon yourself the attitude, the frame of mind, "...ye ought to say in your heart – let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds." In other words, "Justice is mine, saith the Lord. I will repay whom I will repay." And you walk away and muster up that forgiveness knowing that God will punish that person for unrighteously accusing, condemning, or persecuting you.

Student 2: Yeah.

Mike: And in that situation you become **justified**. There's another legal term. Justified. In the scriptures, the term justified means: found blameless or guiltless before the accuser. Now that has to require...there has to be a hearing and there has to be a judge. So, you make an accusation and it goes all the way through. Somewhere, *somewhere*, the person who has made the accusation, if it doesn't happen in life it will happen in eternity... that accusation has to be answered by law with a hearing before a judge. And if the accuser is **WRONG** and you truly are the victim, then as a result of that hearing, or that accusation, or that judgment, **the ACCUSER will be punished** for what they've done to you. But you are justified because you have forgiven them. Right? But watch – your forgiveness of that person does not free them of the demands of your accusation. Did you catch that? That's an important part now. Let me say it again. Your forgiveness does not free them from their actions. They're still going to have to account for what they did to you. That's why it says the Lord will judge them and reward them according to their deeds. So somewhere down the road, even though you've forgiven the person, that person will have to answer before God, before a judgment, for their sins and their sins against you. Comment Jay?

Student 3: Yes. It occurred to me, Joseph Smith was going to court all the time. I think he knew the law of the land, but he also knew the law of Heaven. He pushed for the different appearances... that he had witnesses and so forth, so that they wouldn't really, really put him away, and that. And yet, he never spoke ill of the persecutors, or the accusers, and he forgave them. And he knew that their sins would be upon their heads for what they've done because they wouldn't let go of it. They would hang on to it.

Mike: And as a result there would have to be some future hearing on that case, where a judgment is passed and punishment meted out, right? Section 64 says that at least you are justified. Now, being justified before the law means this: When you see the term justify, or just men, or justification, that means that you are found guiltless and blameless before God and any judgment for what you've done.

Student 3: Does justification come before sanctification?

Mike: It does.

Student 3: Thanks a lot.

Mike: It does come before that. You can't be sanctified unless you're justified first. So remember that when you forgive a person of their wrongs, even if you have to come up to the level where you say, 'Hey, God's going to take care of this. I'm not going to trouble myself any longer on this,' ...you can bet your bottom dollar that there will be a future hearing, that that person will be held accountable by God for what they did and be punished for their sins if they don't repent. But, if you walk away from that, and you don't seek for some kind of retaliation, or some kind of vengeance, and you turn it over to God, from that point you are justified. And that's a good place to be. Remember, if you die in a state of justification, the demands of justice have no claim on you. The Atonement of Christ absolves you, (here's all these legal terms) *absolves* you from ALL guilt and responsibility in the past. Now that's not a bad place to be. But my point is, brothers and sisters, that justification is a *lesser* step than where we want to be. So what we're seeing here, in Section 64, is a wonderful place to be and it's way above the natural man because most people cannot find it in their hearts to forgive. You know how hard it is for the natural man to say, 'I'm sorry. I was wrong. Can you forgive me? I love you.' You know how hard it is for the natural man to say those words? And a lot of people will grow up their whole lives carrying a grudge for something, and that's so tragic. And if they die in that state, they die in a state of being unjustified. That's why the Lord says, "With what measure you measure, you shall be measured. With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged." You want to be forgiven of your sins then do what? Forgive others. You want mercy? Show mercy.

Student 1: This is fantastic! This is really a benefit!

Mike: So all of these things put us in a state where we can learn to forgive, become justified, to move on, and develop love for our fellow man. But, I want to end the lesson tonight with something much more deep, much more significant. Turn to Section 45 in the Doctrine and Covenants. Beyond forgiveness there is another step! And this step... Being forgiving is truly Christ-like. But this next step is GODLY. This next step puts you in a place where the Elohim dwell. And this is a part that very few people discover and Margie and I discovered this when we were on our Mission in New Jersey. Let's go to Section 45. We want to go to verse 3. We're going to do 3, 4, 5. Are you all there? Section 45 verses 3, 4, and 5. This is a deeper more significant... this puts you within the society of those who dwell among the Elohim, the Fathers and Mothers in Heaven, Who dwell in Heaven to go no more out. Verse 3, "Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father..." Now that word **advocate** in old English... you go over to England today... and here in the United States we'll have something outside offices that say 'law firm/lawyer.' In England the word for lawyer is 'advocate.' So an advocate is representing somebody before the law. Are we alright? Isn't that what lawyers do? "Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading **your** cause before him-," Now think of the Father as the judge. You are the aggrieved party, and you have an advocate between you and the Father, who is the judge. So it's a very, very, graphic legal image that you can portray here, that you can bring up and see how this works. Now listen to what the Advocate says when He pleads the cause of the plaintiff. By the way, we are all plaintiffs because we haven't earned anything in this life except one thing. You notice the word 'earn' is not anywhere in scripture, but I'll tell you there is one thing we have earned and that's to go to Hell. So we need, we *need*, somebody to plead our case. Now listen to what the Advocate says. He says, "Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased: behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;" Now notice in the advocacy, in the pleading...here's something interesting. In a court of law in this world, the lawyer pleads your cause as he stands before the judge. He's drawing the judge's attention to you, the plaintiff. The attorney, in a legal case, in a world case, in the telestial world, never refers to his own life, his own circumstances in order to plead the cause of the plaintiff. He never does it. He's drawing the judge's attention to the accused, or to the plaintiff. Notice here, He draws the attention to Himself. Not once in verse 4 does the Advocate mention the plaintiff. Not once. He says, 'Look at me. Remember my blood. Remember Gethsemane, Father. Remember Golgotha, Father. Remember the Blood. Remember the Life. Remember the Ministry.' And everything He does to plead the cause before the Father is pointing toward His Atoning Life. Then in the next verse, watch, verse 5, "Wherefore..." -'now because You look at Me' ...that 'wherefore' means 'because You're looking on Me, because You're remembering what I did, because You were there with me in Gethsemane, because of the cross...' "Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life." Now that's a beautiful picture, isn't it? Isn't that a beautiful, wonderful scripture?

Now how does that apply to the accuser and what we've talked about tonight? If you bring no accusation against those who abuse you, you instead forgive them and go the next step. What's the next step? You pray for them. You plead for their cause before Christ and the Father, like Christ pleads for YOUR cause TO the Father. When you do that, you've taken upon yourself a role of a god. You've become, in your own way, a savior for that person who has accused and seeks to condemn you. You become a savior for them because if you make no accusation, and if you pray for them, the hearing is cancelled in your behalf. There will be no hearing. There is no indictment. There will be no being brought before the judgment bar. That person will be held accountable for their own actions, but not as they relate to you. What took place between them and you is now erased. And in a very real way you have now saved a sinner from death because you advocated their cause. You became Christ-like in this situation as it relates to you and the person who seeks to accuse and condemn you. Comments?

Student 1: Uh, Mike. Will they be held... you're saying that that person will be held accountable with God, but wouldn't be accountable toward you, toward justice being obtained... do you get what I'm saying? Do you get my question? So, they are held accountable for what they do, but it's a state of forgiveness for that person and not accountable, or whatever, then that means that they are not accountable [unintelligible].

Mike: Well, the interaction between you and them changes dramatically. This doesn't mean that because of what's taken place between you two, has been handled properly, that will change their nature. In all likelihood, this one thing that's taken place between you and them, the person who's receiving the greater benefit from this is the advocate. YOU're the one that is receiving the greater benefit. Will this, can this have an effect on them and cause them to stop and consider which way they're going and come to Christ and have a mighty change of heart? It sure can! Will it? I don't know, but the interaction between you two has been resolved in a Godly way, so that you are blessed for your Christ-like actions, your nature is further transformed, and they at least get, as it relates to you... will not be held accountable for their transgression against you because you interceded in their behalf, and pled their cause before the Father. And the Father will honor that because of your righteousness. You go to this level... Brothers and sisters, this is beyond forgiveness. Forgiveness is marvelous! But THIS is beyond forgiveness.

Let me read a statement to you here, by a person who understands this principle. "When we accuse others, we interfere with their salvation." Now think about that first. Think about that for just a minute. If we are the one who was offended, you're the victim, and we made no accusation against them, then we become their savior. Woah! That is such a deeply profound principle. If we properly understood this, and would take our interactions with our fellow man to this deeper level, truly we would take upon ourselves the nature of God the Father and His Son.

Student 1: That is Zion! That would be like a Zion people!

Mike: I think you're right. Going on with this comment, by this person, listen to this, "Satan's right to accuse is inferior to ours as victims of the offense." Let me say that again, "Satan's right to accuse is inferior to ours as victims of the offense. We suffer, in the flesh, the wrongs of others. If we make no claim for justice, surrender those claims, and seek instead for mercy on behalf of others..." –this is called intercession – "...then Satan's accusations have no claim on them. We mimic Christ, follow His example, and in our own limited way, also atone for the sins of others." How do we do it? We suffer in the flesh the wrongs of others and we make no claim for justice and no accusations against them.

Now, turn with me and let's go to 1 Nephi 19, as we wrap up tonight's lesson.

Student 2: Can I get that quote?

Mike: I can send you that quote, yes. But I won't give you a reference for it because the person who gave that to me does not want known who he is.

1 Nephi chapter 19, and we'll end our class tonight on this. 1 Nephi 19, let's go to verse 7. 1 Nephi 19 and we'll do verses 7, 8, and 9. "For the things which some men esteem to be of great worth, both to the body and the soul, others set at naught and trample under their feet. Yea, even the very God of Israel do men trample under their feet; I say, trample under their feet but I would speak in other words – they set him at naught, and hearken not to the voice of his counsels." Now, tonight, from the scriptures, we've heard the voice of the Lord giving us some counsel on how we should properly interact with our fellow man, with our husbands and wives, with our children. If in your interactions, brothers and sisters, whenever we have an interaction with each other, if one, or both parties walk away feeling the other is an enemy, then your interaction was done wrong. Anytime that we interact with each other and one, or both parties feel that you are an enemy, or in any way have any kind of animosity, then the way you interact is wrong. You need to resolve, ponder that, and do it differently. Now we've learned some ways that we can do that tonight. Go to the next verse, "And behold he cometh, according to the words of the angel, in six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem." This part right here. Think about what we've talked about tonight. Think about advocacy. Think about accusation. Think about condemnation. Think about intercession. "And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught..." That word 'naught' means worthless, no value. "...wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it..." Now every time you see the words 'suffereth it,' it means that He does not make a claim. He does not accuse. He does not revile. He simply takes it. He does, what I call, absorbs the hit. You absorb the hit. You take it in and it stops with you. It goes no further than you. This is a true... In the Sermon on the Mount where it says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the earth." A peacemaker is a person who's a victim who takes the hit and does not pass it on. You take it and absorb it and the whole conditions stops with you. Usually, what we do when we

take a hit, what do we do? We hit back. And then that person hits back, and then you hit back, and then that person hits back, and there's no end! Somebody has to absorb the hit. "...they scourge him, and **he suffereth it**; and they smite him, and **he suffereth it**. Yea, they spit upon him, and **he suffereth it...**" How can we do this? And here's the answer-how He was able to do it. And I testify to you tonight, that if we practice the principles that we've learned tonight, from the scriptures, we can do this the same way Christ did. "...and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering toward the children of men." When you advocate the cause of another person, before God, it's impossible for you to not be transformed as a result of that process. You cannot do it. You want to know how to access the Divine Nature of the Father and the Son? You want to know how to take upon yourself the characteristics of God and become Godly yourselves? This is one of the primary... one of the ways, that you forgive others their trespasses. But you want to REALLY transform? You want to REALLY access a flow of Divine Power and Grace in your life? Not only forgive them, but pray for them. Do you see the Savior hanging on the cross, bleeding, and He says, "Father, forgive them." We do that. We take the people who hang us upon our own crosses, and spit on us, and scourge us, and revile us, and persecute us...if you'll pray for them, to the Father, in the name of Christ, pray for mercy for your enemies, you will see a transformation in your life to where you become a son or a daughter of Christ, so much more rapidly than you could ever conceive before. The deeper, more significant ways that we can follow Christ, transform us quicker and more completely... which is really what we are trying to do anyway, isn't it brothers and sisters? Aren't we trying to become Christ-like. So in 2 Nephi Jesus says, "Wherefore, go and do the things which you have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do." Go and do those things. And as you go and do what you have seen and learned that He did and does, you'll more quickly, more fully become like Him. Comments? Thoughts? That's it for tonight.

Student 2: Bless us! May He bless us!

Student 1: Thank you, Brother Stroud, so much!

Mike: Well, it's a great lesson the Lord taught us when we were in the mission field in New Jersey and it's one of the great lessons and concepts and principles we've learned. And I will tell you, if you will all plug this into your awareness this week, it will be a great awakening for you how often we assume the role of an accuser, and that's satanic. And we don't want to be that way. But here's a way, brothers and sisters, where knowledge is power! Remember what the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "A man or woman is saved no faster than they get knowledge." But we've studied the battle tactics of Lucifer and his followers tonight. We've also studied the grace and mercy of our Savior. And we overcome "the accuser of the brethren" by the Blood of the Lamb and the testimony of the brethren.