

Job's Test of Faith – Personal Possessions

Job 1:6-22

Job 1:6-22 - *"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." ⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" ⁹ So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰ Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" ¹² And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.*

¹³ Now there was a day when Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; ¹⁴ and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ when the Sabeans raided them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" ¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" ¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" ¹⁸ While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

²⁰ Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD. ²² In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.'

Background Notes

In verses 1-5 we learned that Job was a godly believer, who was greatly blessed with a large family and many possessions. Now Job's faith is being tested as he loses all his possessions - and all his sons and daughters as well.

The curtain is drawn aside in these verses. We observe a dialogue between God and Satan, taking place somewhere in the heavenly realms. *“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them” (v6).*

“Sons of God” refers to angels. Scripture teaches us that God created all angels as good angels, and as servants - including Satan. Before his rebellion, Satan was known as Lucifer (“Daystar,” or “Star of the Morning”). *“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12).*

In Job 1:6 we learn that angels periodically report to God on their activities. Further insight about this is found in the prophet Michaiah’s vision in 1 Kings 22. *“Michaiah said, ‘Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left.’²⁰ The LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said this, while another said that.²¹ Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’²² The LORD said to him, ‘How?’ And he said, ‘I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ Then He said, ‘You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.’” (1 Kings 22:19-22).*

From what we learn about Satan in Job 1, it is quite obvious that Satan is a personal being, not just an “evil influence,” as many people like to believe. Furthermore, we learn that Satan is not now in hell. He is actively roaming about on the earth. 1 Peter 5:8 warns, *“Be on the alert! Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

Job 1 also reveals that Satan also has access to heavenly realms. Other Scriptures support this truth. Ephesians 6:12 says, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

And in Revelation 12:10, Satan is called the accuser of believers. He accuses us before God day and night. *“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down’” (Revelation 12:10).*

Doctrinal Points

1. God allows Satan to test the believer to the limit.

In this first test of Job’s faith he lost everything – all his possessions and all his children! Can you imagine Job’s shock and grief as he received message after message about the disasters that had happened? Job was tested to the limit.

James 1:13 says, “*Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*” Does James 1:13 contradict the tests of Job? Answer: No, it’s not a contradiction. Then how do we harmonize James 1:13 with the fact that “*The Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.’*”

The harmonization is our doctrinal point: **God allows Satan to test the believer to the limit. But - God does not directly tempt anyone to sin.**

For example: Good and godly parents allow their teen children to go away from home to a secular university, even though they know their children’s faith will be bombarded and tested to the limits. They’ll be tested inside the classroom and outside the classroom - even tempted to sinful behavior. But the parents are not the source of the temptation or evil. It’s the secular world that will tempt their teens. Nor are the parents morally responsible if the children fail, because each individual makes his or her own choices. But the parents allow the test, so their children’s faith will be strengthened and proved in a hostile situation.

In the same way, God allows His children’s faith to be tested in various ways - even with temptation. James 1 and 1 Peter 1 teach that the tests are to prove and purify and strengthen our faith. God allows three primary sources to test our faith: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

- The world - “*Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world*” (1 John 2:15-16).
- The flesh - “*But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed*” (James 1:14).
- The devil - God allowed Satan to test Job to the limit (Job 1-2).

2. God does not allow Satan to test the believer beyond the limit.

This is the good news! God sets a limit, and Satan cannot go beyond that limit when he permitted to test the believer. What is that limit? Only God knows the limit for each believer. For Job, it was loss of possessions, loss of children and loss of health (Job 2.) But Satan was not allowed to go beyond the limits of the protective hedge that God had placed around Job. Only as God removed portions of the protective hedge was Satan allowed to test Job further.

Praise the Lord for the protective hedge! Satan is not allowed to test the believer beyond that limit. This encouraging truth is taught in 1 Corinthians 10:13. The Greek word that’s used in this verse can be translated either as “temptation” or “test.” That is, **temptation to sin** or **test of faith**. “*No **temptation** [or test of faith] has overtaken you except such as is*

*common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the **temptation** [or test of faith] will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*” God doesn’t allow Satan to test the believer beyond the limit.

Practical Application

Let’s worship as Job worshiped!

“And he said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.’ In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong” (v21-22).

Wow! After all that happened to Job he didn’t blame God at all! Could that be said of you or me? When a difficulty affects us (that is far less painful than what Job suffered), how often does God get at least a little bit of the blame?

Job not only didn’t blame God for his troubles, but he worshiped God, and declared God’s sovereignty! *“Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped” (v20).* Tearing the robe and shaving the head were signs of grief in that culture. Grief and worship can go together. Look at the five statements that Job made as part of his worship (v21):

- Naked I came from my mother’s womb.
- And naked shall I return there.
- The Lord gave.
- The Lord has taken away.
- Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Could we make all five statements in **worship**? Many believers recognize the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, and can make the first four statements - but how often we fall short of the fifth in times of severe tests and trial.

In each and every circumstance of our lives we should strive to declare, even with tears, **“Blessed be the name of the Lord!”** Let’s worship as Job worshiped!