

JOB: Man Of God
May 1, 2005
Message 2

INTRO: We have begun a new series and it is on the book of Job. In the first message we introduced this book and looked at the first scene, and what a scene it is. In the scene we saw a godly man who was going about his everyday life. He was a wealthy man, and one that feared God and shunned evil and held his family up before God continually.

But all unknown to Job, another story was unfolding behind the scenes. God and Satan were discussing him. God was proud of HIS servant Job and Satan said, "Sure he is good. But it is all because You have hedged him about and handed out every goodie imaginable to him. But, touch his possessions and he will curse you to the face!" And God said to Satan, "All that he has is in your hands. Only do not kill him."

Well, we speculated that Satan never scampered back to earth as quickly as he did after he got permission from God to touch Job's possessions. I suppose a fiendish glee ascended from the pits of hell when Satan informed his hosts of demons when he arrived back. So let us see to what extent Satan will go when he has permission.

2. Scene Two (1:13-2:6)

a. In the scene (1:13-22)

Now it seems to me that Job's children were probably not living as they should. That is why Job sacrificed whenever they were done feasting, for he feared they were not living right. How many a godly man or woman has not feared how his children are living when the indicators are not that great. And it is just on such a day that Satan strikes.

(Read 1:13-19). I suppose of all the bad news, no report is so devastating as the report that a hurricane or tornado has robbed him of all his children. And thus, in a day, the dastardly destruction of the devil is done. Everything is gone, from possessions to posterity. One cannot imagine a moment in life

like this. Body, soul and spirit must go through indescribable agony, so that a person may well be brought to do things he would not normally do. It is such a moment when heart wants to reveal all the evil that is hidden within. Moments like this reveal a person's deepest, innermost being. This moment would reveal who Job really is. And now we will begin to see who is right, God or Satan.

(1:20-22) And so we read that Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head and fell to the ground. And out of the heart came these words, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Now notice what an incredible window God has opened to us. One messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell." Who got the blame? God. And Job says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away..." Now I want to do something that I very seldom do, and that is take a view contrary to the common opinion of all the commentators I checked on this verse. The commentators agree that God gave and God took. I do not believe that God gives all we receive. When we steal, God did not give what we stole to us. When we lose, it is not always God who took it from us.

If it were not for this window God had opened into the spiritual world, I would not dare take exception with both Job and the commentators. However, in the window we have seen who took all these things from Job.

I would go this far with the commentators, that God allowed all these things to happen, but to say that God took it all away, that I cannot agree to. In verse 16, the messenger says, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants..." This messenger, like people of our present day, understood this as an act of God. In our day we call natural disasters "acts of God."

And though Job's analysis as to who took all his possessions and family away may be wrong, his conclusion to implicitly trust God is right.

If you ponder our passage, who in the passage sees the devil's hand in it? Not one, including Job. And we might not either, and we might agree with Job's friends later, if God had not twice briefly opened a window into the heavenlies. And though Job did not know who was actually responsible for all these events, I believe he was right in trusting God implicitly. You see, we do not need to know exactly what is happening behind the scenes in our lives; but we need to believe according to the Bible that all things work together for our good, regardless of who is responsible. And furthermore, we learn from this Scripture and we can rest assured that the Devil can do nothing to us, but what God has allowed it.

And so, in the story of Job, like a boxing match, the bell has gone for round one and Satan has lost. I can well imagine how intensely hell is watching this event. But glee turns to gloom for our text says, "In all this, Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong."

b. Behind the Scenes (2:1-6)

(Read 2:1-3) One round is down, and what a brutal round it has been for Job, but the devil has been soundly defeated in the life of Job. And now, once more God says, "Have you considered My servant Job..." I ask again, why would God remind Satan about Job? Why not leave well enough alone? Let me give a hint here with regard to what I think the purpose of this book is. God was seeking to accomplish something the first time he drew Satan's attention to Job. And in this first time around with the devil God's purpose was not accomplished. That is why God brings this topic up once more with Satan.

Let me set before you another earthly scene. The devil has tempted a godly and upright man, and that man has given in to the temptation. Does that happen in real life? Do some people not fall for the devil's devices? Of course they do. And what do you think happens in heaven when Satan comes before God to discuss a once godly man who has bought into the devil's tricks? Have you or I let God down? Are we in the process of doing so right now? You see, this story reveals to us that we too may be discussed by God and the devil. Let us not be among those who let God down.

And now, after round one God says to Satan, "Have you considered MY servant Job? Have you seen that there is no one like him? He fears God and shuns evil." Then God adds this, "Job still holds fast his integrity even though you, Satan, incite me, God, against him; because you want to destroy him even though there is no cause." The word *incite* is to lure or instigate or move. So I ask who moved who against whom? Did not God say to Satan, "Have you considered MY servant Job?" Did not God lure or move Satan against Job? No, God spoke nothing but open, upright truth. So how did Satan incite God against Job? He said, "Sure Job is nice. But that is only because You give him everything. Just touch his possessions and he will curse you to the face." Was that nothing but open, upright truth? No, it was a lie. But to prove it, God was obliged to show Satan he was wrong, and so He allowed Satan to touch all Job had. And now, after one round, Satan has been proved wrong.

But Satan is not about to give up the battle (read 4-6). Here is a word for us. One victory against the devil is not the end of the battle. The devil will come again and again. The first time around Satan said, "Touch his possessions and he will surely curse You to the face." That did not work out. Now he says, "Touch his body, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

Now let me ask a question? How lacking in intelligence do we think the devil is? If Job lived in the time of the patriarchs, and it seems likely; then the devil already has had 2000 years of experience with man. Would we suppose that he has never yet succeeded in drawing men away from God by touching their possessions? I propose to you that it has been a very successful tool in his hands. That is why Satan said to God, "Touch his possessions and he will curse You to the face." And did God not know it? Of course He did. I propose to you that one of Satans successful means of turning men away from God is by touching their possessions or their positions or their dreams.

What does the devil know about man? He knows that man is glued to his possessions. Touch his possessions, and he is likely to let go of God. It may have worked with many, but it has not worked with Job. But the devil has more than one method of deceiving man and thus drawing him to himself. If he does not give up on God when you touch his possessions, then surely if you touch his body, touch his health, then he will let go of God.

So the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life." Let me remind us once more of this verse, "When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold."

3. Scene Three (2:7-3:26)

We come to the third scene, but it is a scene with a difference. Here before Job lies the greatest test of all, and when he comes forth, he comes forth like gold. Also, in the first two scenes we have the scene on earth and then we get to look behind the scenes. But in scene three we do not get to look behind the scenes, we do not need to. The devil is defeated. All excuses for Job's servanthood to God have been removed. He is left a defeated foe. But for Job, the pain that he goes through is almost more than he can bear.

a. Job's body (2:7-8)

(Read 2:7-8) MaClintock and Strong say of Job's disease, "The opinion that the malady under which Job suffered was *elephantiasis*, or black leprosy, is so ancient that it is found, according to Origen's *Hexapla*, in the rendering which one of the Greek versions has made of 2:7... The passages which are considered to indicate this disease are found in the description of his skin burning from head to foot, so that he took a potsherd to scrape himself (2:7, 8); in its being covered with putrefaction and crusts of earth, and being at one time stiff and hard, while at another it cracked and discharged fluid (7:5); in the offensive breath, which drove away the kindness of attendants (19:17), in the restless nights, which were either sleepless or scared with frightful dreams (Job 7:13, 14; 30:17); in general emaciation (Job 16:8); and in so intense a loathing of the burden of life that strangling and death were preferable to it (Job 7:15)." Although MaClintock and Strong feel that there is not sufficient evidence to prove that this was indeed *elephantiasis*, the indicators point that way. Whatever it was, it was a dreadful disease.

Now here is Satan's effort to turn Job away from God. His possessions are gone. His family is gone. He, a once mighty counselor, sits to scrape his skin with a potsherd. Job has been reduced to worse than nothing. Now he just simply exists in painful misery.

b. Job's wife (read 2:9-10)

And so, to add insult to injury, his wife has listened to the voice of Satan and seeks to counsel him with it (read vs. 9). Her insidious question is, "Do you still retain your integrity?" The word *integrity* is *tummah*. If you look back at verse 3, where God calls Job blameless, *tawm*, that is the root word of this word *integrity*. Do you still maintain

your blamelessness? Why don't you sin and die? Curse God and die? You can't get more miserable than you are.

I know it is not only women that chisel away on their husband's integrity, but here such is the case. And how many a woman has chiseled away and chiseled away on her husband's integrity until he finally gave in? I trust we do not have any such ladies here. But this is a good place to stop and consider, "Am I chiseling away on my husband's integrity?"

Now a word to husbands. Do you have convictions? Do you stand for some thing. You have a standard and it is receiving your wife's criticisms? Do not hammer her over the head. Do not fight her, but stand for God. Do not let your standards be undermined, not even by your wife. And when you can honestly see you were wrong, admit it and change. But until then, be a man. Be God's man.

Oh, Job. How much more can you endure? Your possessions are all gone. Your children are all gone. Your health is gone. And your wife is fed up with you. How much more can you endure?

c. Job's friends (2:11-13)

(Read 2:11-13) Ah, at last some comfort. Job has some wise friends, and surely in his time of distress they will bring solace. There is Eliphaz the Temanite. He is a Temanite because he came from Teman, not far from where Job was. Teman was known for its wise men, as Jeremiah indicates (Jer. 49:7). Bildad the Shuhite, is of course the Bible's shortest man, because he is of shoe height. Seriously, he was a descendent of Shuah, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah. Last is Zophar, the Naamathite, also from nearby Naamath.

Now all three were men of some notability, since they were friends of one of the greatest men of the time, Job. And when they saw Job in

the distance, their voices rose in shocked dismay; for Job was unrecognizable. And as the custom of the day was, when dreadful things happened they tore their clothes and sprinkled dust on their heads to show their extreme sadness.

And then they sat down with Job on the ground, seven days and seven nights. And they never said a word because they saw his grief was great. Some say they didn't say a word because seven days was the normal period of mourning for death. Few blame these men for their silence. I do. Shame on them. I think there is a reason why they are silent, and I spare them not for it.

Some time ago I visited my uncle who is suffering from MS. After years of suffering with this disease he awoke one morning to find his wife had taken all her possessions and moved out. He then signed the house over to her and moved here to La Crete where they have done a wonderful job of caring for him. And I have never sensed any bitterness in him. One day he told me he did not blame his wife for moving out. Who wants to live with a man who can't care for her. And I said, "I blame her! Did she not make a covenant? Did she not say, 'For better or for worse; in sickness or in health'?" What kind of covenant keeper is she? I blame her! I blame Job's friends for being silent. God deliver us from ever being this kind of friend.

Here is how I see the scenario. His friends have already diagnosed his case and come to a conclusion. The case and conclusion are this. Job is a sinner. God has struck him for it. All I can say for them is they have the decency not to tell him so while his losses are so fresh. Why didn't they say anything? Because their comfort was as miserable as his state. Why didn't they say anything? Because they had no real comfort to bring him.

CONCL: And so, in conclusion we ask, "Job, how much can you take? You have lost all your possessions. You have lost your children. You have lost your health and sit in constant misery. You have lost your wife's companionship. And now you have lost your friends. They have become your adversaries. Job, how much can you take?" Now let me answer the questions I have raised. Job can take anything the devil can hand out because he never served God for what he could get out of Him.

On a number of occasions I have heard people ask this question: I wonder if I would stand up under persecution? We might ask, "I wonder if I would stand up under testing like Job had?" Here is how I answer that question: It all depends if you are learning to trust Him in life's situations right now. If we fully trust Him now, I think we would stand up under persecution. If we have to manage and manipulate our own affairs now, we would not stand up under persecution or trials either.

Permit me another question: What trials are you undergoing? Are you trusting God and staying faithful to Him. Or, is there someone here this morning who is buckling under the tests or temptations? Surely this morning is a time to search our lives and commit ourselves to faithfulness to Him.

Now let me ask one more question? Why did God allow all this to happen to Job? Has His love for Job died? Does He not know when enough is enough? Oh God, why? How many times in life must we not wait before that "Why" is answered? Well, Job's test by circumstances have been completed. He has been the victor though he sits in dust and ashes. But he will now be tested by his fellow men. We'll look at that next message.