

The Devil is Still a Liar

Job, Prophet of God

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We're in Job chapter 1. Follow along with me beginning in verse 1,

“1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. 2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. 3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. 4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. 5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually. 6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. 7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 8 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? 9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?”

Is there no reason why he fears God?

“10 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. 11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.”

Incidentally, I think I should stop right there and just please look at the end of verse 5. Job, remember last week, is sacrificing just in case his children have cursed God. Are you all with me? And now it is Job that Satan says, “He'll curse you to your face.” Isn't that

amazing? The writer of Job almost sounds like it's the Lord, he's so skillful in the way he writes it in that he says that Job is praying about others cursing God in their hearts only to find out soon that it is he who will be accused of the very same thing for which he is praying on behalf of others. Learn it well, friends. Often the reason God is moving upon us to pray for others in a specific way is because we ourselves will be subjected to the same temptation very, very soon. As a matter of fact, you might notice in verse 10, Satan says, "If you bless the work of his hands," that word "blessed" believe it or not, is the same Hebrew word as "cursed" in verse 5 and "cursed" in verse 11. It is the very same Hebrew word. Cursed and blessed come from the same Hebrew word and it is the context that determines how the word is translated.

Verse 12,

"12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. 13 And there was a day..."

So remember last week, verse 4, sons and daughters are feasting with one another and so here we go. Remember we talked about last week how he has the main scene and then up here in this square we have the subplot, Satan is standing before God. Are you all with me? So down here Job is praying for his kids who are feasting in one another's homes and oh, by the way, back here on planet earth, verse 13,

"13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: 15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 17 While he was yet speaking," you talk about a rough day, "there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away,"

Now, you understand that that means they herded them off, I don't know anyone that is that buff they can put a camel on themselves and walk away. "What are you doing?" I'm just carrying this camel away.

"yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house."

Just as Job was thinking, “Well, you know, I mean, you can always get more camels and you can always get more donkeys and you can always get more sheep and you can always get more oxen. At least I have my kids.”

“18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.”

Wine is used twice, verse 13 and verse 18 to just say that they were in a moment of cheerfulness. Wine brought cheer, brought joy. That was how it was known in the times of the patriarchs. Sure it was abused, for example, in the time of Noah. Noah, remember, predated Job and he drank too much wine and brought disgrace on himself but in this situation, this writer is trying to get you to see it was a happy time. The donkeys were taking plowing gear out to the fields; the camels were doing whatever camels do; the sheep were grazing. How's that for skilled preaching? The oxen were grazing; they were pulling plows. Everything was nice. Job was enjoying his kingdom and he was enjoying being able to have time to have a quality devotional life and to pray for his sons and his daughters. Everything was going wonderfully. They were drinking wine; it was a cheerful time. But while he was enjoying the good times, Satan was talking about him to God.

“19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.”

Worshipped! Maybe a little too loud, I don't know. But think about what the writer is saying: he arose and fell down. He got up and the only thing we see missing here is sackcloth and that happens in chapter 16 where it mentions he has sackcloth. “Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down,” in sackcloth we found out in chapter 16, “upon the ground, and worshipped God.” The only thing that changed was the circumstances because the chapter starts with him worshiping. Think about it: the indictment Satan had on Job was, “Yeah God, he worships you when everything is going good.”

Verse 21, Job said,

“21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither:”

That is a very poetic way of saying, “I cam into this world naked and I guess I'll go back that way.”

“the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Incidentally, that word “blessed” is that word. It's the word used for cursing in verse 5 when Job says, “I'm going to sacrifice in case my children have cursed the Lord. It's the word translated “cursing” in verse 10 where Satan says, “You've blessed Job.” In verse 11, it's translated “curse” where Satan says, “If you'll take away your blessing, he'll curse you to your face.” The writer of Job is using very, very skillful words, he says, “He'll curse you to your face,” and instead of that, he doesn't curse God to his face, the second to the last verse in the chapter says “he blesses the Lord.” Same Hebrew word, context determines the translation.

“22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

Well, we have a lot to talk about in this passage but I would wager that we've already received about all that we would need. First of all, we're going to start talking about verse 6, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD.” Who are these sons of God? Well, I've already talked about this and so I'm not going to belabor the point. The short answer is: they are angels. I taught on this in another series, you can go there or you can come up and get it in writing after the service, but we talk about who these sons of God are. We talk about it from Genesis 6 perspective, another good proof that the book of Job and the book of Genesis were written about the same time. They use similar verbiage for the same things like sons of God and here's a sampling of how Scripture really does talk a lot about this. Look here in Psalm 89, “Who in the heaven can be compared to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints.” “Saints” doesn't always mean Christians, it means “holy ones.” “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the holy ones.” Where are they? “And to be had in reverence all them that are about him.”

Let me talk to you quickly about parallelism in poetry. Parallelism says we're going to take two things and use different words to say the same thing. We're going to say something and then we're going to use different words to say it again, it's called parallelism. Let me show you in verses 6 and 7 how this works here. Here it is in two lines, “who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?” “Compared” and “likened,” they're synonyms, yes? “In heaven,” “sons of the mighty.” We have sons of the mighty who are in heaven and the Psalmist says “who in heaven can be compared to the Lord? Who of the sons of the mighty who are in heaven can be compared to the Lord?” Verse 7, “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his holy ones or of the saints, and to be revered.” “Feared” and “revered,” synonyms, yes? Alright, the “assembly of the saints,” “them that are about him or around him,” synonyms, yes? So we have sons of the mighty who are in heaven and we have the assembly of holy ones that are around the Lord.

Here's another one in Jeremiah 23, “Who has stood in the counsel of the Lord?” Now, I understand if we talk about city council, it's c-o-u-n-c-i-l, right? Is everyone with me? This is an old English word, it's an old English spelling of the word. We differentiate now in English between a gathering or a council and the act of counseling someone. We spell them different now. It's typical but then it was 1769 which is the date of the King James

version that we have in our laps, not 1611, don't fool yourself, 1769. "Who has stood in the counsel of the Lord?" Who has stood in a group of counselors around the Lord, "and has perceived and heard his word? Who has marked his word and heard it? But if they had stood in my counsel," God said, "and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings." So we have the Psalmist and we have Jeremiah that speak of these counselors around the Lord.

Now, I'm going to show you one more time. Apparently, there are angels sent from this counsel. Apparently. So, let me show you a few examples. Are you ready? Here we go. 1 Kings 22, now we have Micaiah, the prophet of the Lord standing before King Jehosaphat's son, the king of Judea and King Ahab, king of Israel, the northern ten tribes. He says, "Hear thou therefore 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 hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him," how are you going to do that? That's "wherewith," okay, it's Bill Sturm's translation. "Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so." Did you know that was in the Bible?

You have a council of angels around the Lord and they talk about business affairs on earth, that's what's happening here in Job 1, yes? And from this council, apparently from these council meetings, the Lord sends errand boys out, for lack of a better term, to go and handle some stuff for him. Here's an example of that, Zechariah 6, "Answered and said to the angel that talked with me, What are these, my Lord, and the angel answered and said to him, These are the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth." They're errand boys. Look at this one, have you seen this one before? "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven and shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet." From where? Psalm 89, from a council. How about this one? "To which of the angels said he at any time, Sit at my right hand." No, you're going to stand. Who does he say to sit on my right hand? Who does he say that to? Jesus. "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister?

Again, the sons of God is all through the Scripture, we just aren't used to noticing it. If you want more information, you can listen to the recording out of Genesis 6 or you can read some more on it that's available up here in the front pew. I have 15 copies of it. If you want more, it's available with that recording I flashed up on the screen or you can just say, "I would like to have it," and I will send it to you.

So in verse 6, "Now there was a day when this assembly of angels came to present themselves before the LORD." Now, if they're sent forth from this council, everyone

hang with me, if they're sent forth from this council to go and do errands and now they're coming back to present themselves before the Lord, what would you call that in a military setting? You've gone and taken care of an errand for the commander and now you're back and what are you doing? Yeah, AAR report, something, right? You come and you're saying, "Here's what we did." That's what's happening here.

"And Satan came also among them." Satan is the word for "adversary." That's exactly what it means. That is the Hebrew word "satan" and it means "adversary." It actually means a little bit more than that, it means "to oppose at law" and it seems like either it was a responsibility given to him or a responsibility he took upon himself that among all those in the court in heaven, he decided or someone decided or God decided that he was going to be the prosecutor. You might call him an accuser.

Verse 7, "And the LORD said unto Satan," Where did you come from? "Whence comest thou?" Remember who else he asked that? To Adam he asked "Where are you?" Cain he asked, "Where's your brother?" Judas came to the Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus said, "Where did you come from?" Same question. Are you all listening? You have God in the flesh asking....some of us can't handle that tonight...asking Judas the son of perdition, arguably Satan in the flesh, "Where did you come from?" So Jesus wasn't caught off guard when the mystery of iniquity shows up in the flesh, the son of perdition in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Verse 7, Where did you come from? Satan said, Well, you know, here and there. "Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." You know, I have to tell you that there is a life lesson here and it's this: the devil is still your adversary. He hates you. I wonder, did God know where Satan had been? He's so busy asking questions. It's amazing. We've already talked about how it was clear that Cain killed Abel, "Where's your brother?" God knew where his brother was. Adam goes and hides wherever Adam can hide and God says, "Where are you, Adam?" God knew where he was. God asked Judas, "Where'd you come from?" Jesus, God in the flesh, knew where Judas came from. Always busy asking questions, giving people a notice or a witness that they're a bunch of liars and the father of lies is where they learned it. So, sure he knew. Look at the Scripture, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." So if the eyes of the Lord are to and fro throughout the whole earth and God asks Satan, "Where have you been?" "Well, you know, to and fro throughout the whole earth." What a fixed fight.

1 Peter 5:8 is still in the book, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." If you're not familiar with the idea of amillennialism, it's the idea that there is no literal thousand year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth and my biggest argument against such a nonsense as that and I will say it respectfully, is that it says in the book of Revelation 20, that the devil is bound in the bottomless pit for that time. Now, how can he be bound in the bottomless pit right now and roaming the earth trying to mess with you? "Well, it's figurative." Really? So the bottomless pit is figurative now? You want to go down that route? He is right now seeking to crush us: our marriages, our parenting relationships. He wants us to hurry up

when God wants us to slow down; he wants us to slow down when God says hurry up. And we, I think, fall into this trap where we really don't think he notices us at all. If he notices us at all, it's because we're doing great things for the Lord and I must say, if the devil doesn't know you, if the devil doesn't know you, it's because no one can accuse you of being perfect and upright, one that fears God and eschews evil.

Could I also point out that this whole idea of Satan coming before God and talking about Job happens again in the time of Christ? Do you remember on the evening of the last supper, for lack of a better term, you might call it the Lord's Supper. Do you remember that? Do you remember what Jesus told Peter? "Satan has talked to me about you." It's still happening 2,000 years later. Satan was having discussions with the Trinity about servants of the Lord and there is coming a day when that will all come to an end. The book of God says in Revelation 12:10, "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." You mark it down: the spirit world is having conversations about you tonight if you are a perfect and upright one that fears God and eschews evil. Down here, it's all pretty.

Look at verse 8, "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job?" I love these questions, "Have you considered my servant Job." "Lord, I thought Job was your man. I thought you knew the answer to that," and, of course, he did. This word "considered" is wonderful. It actually means "have you set your eyes upon him? Have you directly interfered with him? Do you wish you could touch him?" Think about that now: God looks at Satan and says, "You wish you could mess with Job, don't you?" You might as well forget it. God has never one time eaten a Rolaid over protecting his kids. Not one time has he lost a wink of sleep even if he did sleep. Thankfully, we have the assurance in Psalm 121 "he does not slumber or sleep." But if he did sleep, he has never lost a wink of sleep. Never one time when Jesus was on this earth did he ever lay awake at night thinking, "What am I going to do about my followers?" Not one time. You might quake. You might feel the winds of hell breathing up against your life but not one time has the Master of the Sea ever wondered how he was going to protect you. Hallelujah! It's enough to update your status with, isn't it? The washer doesn't work, the windows are stuck, the car won't start, well, wait a minute, I'm protected.

Isn't that what Satan says in verse 9? "Well, ahh Lord, you and I both know that Job fears you for a reason." It is Satanic – look here, #2 – it is Satanic to always question people's motives. Let me say this again. What does the accuser of the brethren do? He questions the motives of God-fearers. When you finally get a man who is perfect, upright, one that fears God and eschews evil, you have the wicked one who is standing before God saying, "The only reason he's doing it is because you made it like cake for him. You've built a hedge about him." That's what he says in verse 10, "You made a hedge about him and his house. All that he has on every side, you've blessed the work of his hands. The reason that he loves you, God, is because you've given him a nice car, his daughters are gorgeous so he'll have no problem marrying them off to the king in the next region over,

his sons are ingenious, his sons know how to start businesses, his cows are happy, his horses are happy. Everyone is happy, happy, happy.” Some of you don't understand that and that's just fine.

It is Satanic for us to be always questioning people's motives. We want to because we know ourselves but when you finally get to the place when you're making some decisions that are God-ward, God-centered, God-focused, God-directed, immediately the wicked one is going to say, “The only reason you're doing that is because things are going good. Wait until the morning. You're going to fail again.” Hm, so, so, listen carefully, this is a pastoring moment: if you find yourself always questioning the motives of another believer, you are Satanic. “I fit that sometimes.” I didn't say you were Satan-inspired, Satan-filled, I'm saying that you are acting like Satan. Isn't that scary? Isn't it scary to know that when you're always looking for fault in the saints you're acting just like Satan? “Oh yeah, they're doing right but I know what they're doing. They're just trying to kiss-up. I know why they're doing that, they're doing that because they really made me upset last Sunday. I know why he's doing that, he's doing that because he wants to be in favor with him. Flattery, flattery, flattery, blah, blah, blah.” And if they don't talk to you, “I know why they're not talking to me, they think they're better than I am.” There is no way to win with some people and you know what? Guess what? You're looking at a guy that's hard to please sometimes. No, Amen, please. The fact is, sometimes we can be so influenced that we're always questioning people's motives and I just want you to know that that is from the pit of hell. It's always legal and it's always justified and always righteous when it's a boy who likes your daughter. Amen. That's not Satanic. Lighten up, you're going to cry a lot in life so just lighten up.

Verse 12, “And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.” #3. Praying people still find profound protection. Did you hear me? You find Job praying and he's righteous, hates evil, avoids it, eschews it. So how do we know they find protection? Because Satan was hindered before that. Satan is almost this big cry-baby, “You won't let me mess with your people, God. I'll tell you what, if you let me, they wouldn't love you.” You see, Satan is crediting Job's riches to God. “Well, the only reason he loves you is because you've gifted him,” so obviously Satan thinks that God has been protecting Job but it's also seen in the response of Job. Did you notice, please, that Job says, “Well, I'm still alive.” He got up and he said, “Well, this all belongs to God. The Lord gave and the Lord took away.” Isn't it interesting? Is this not what Job did? Job did not say, “I hate the Lord. Why did it happen to me? Why won't Satan just leave me alone.” Job said, “Well, the reason it hasn't happened so far is because God didn't do it yet.” Hang on a second, some of you just had a stomach tremble and it was not supper. Job gave the credit for Satan's work to God and his theology was so right that God never took the time to correct him in 41 succeeding chapters.

“So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.” That's found only of two other people in the Bible: one of them being Cain and the other being Jonah. One just murdered his brother and one just murdered his brethren. Remember? Jonah didn't want a bunch of non-Jews getting saved. He did not love his neighbor as himself and the Bible says if you

hate someone it's like murdering them. In both cases, in all three cases, it says in John 8:44, "Satan your father is a liar and he is a murderer from the beginning." Do you remember that? A murderer, 1 John 3 says Satan is a murderer, right? Is that what your Bible says? So in all three cases in our Bible where it says he went out from the presence of the Lord, in all three cases it was a murderer leaving the presence of God. What a great book.

So, we find out that there's an alternation. Verse 15, "The Sabeans fall," those are people from Sheba. Now, I don't want to worry you out with just fun facts here but the Sabeans came from Sheba. Sheba is also the place where the queen came to see Solomon. Do you remember that? So, here come these people from deep or I should say, semi-deep Saudi Arabia and they steal something of Job's: they kill his servants and they steal his oxen and they steal his she-asses, his donkeys, and off they go.

Then, you see later on that the fire, a lightning storm fell from heaven and now Job should be figuring out – you see, this is something that keeps happening in the Bible. You see fire came out from God and struck the murmurers in Numbers 11; fire came out from Elijah and struck the prophets and what was on the altar and then he struck the 450 prophets of Baal; Elisha, you might remember, struck companies of 50 with fire out of heaven, but here it is Job being a recipient of the fire from God out of heaven. A lightning storm perhaps. I don't know, but a fire from heaven.

Then in verse 17, you see the Chaldeans came and stole the camels so you have the people from Sheba or the Sabeans coming and taking the oxen and the asses, then you the lightning storm taking the sheep and you have the Chaldeans coming, those are the folks right over here where the Garden of Eden probably was in Mesopotamia over where Abraham was from, we might today call it Iraq. They came over and they took the camels. Interesting how they needed three bands to take away camels. Apparently, camels don't herd well. It didn't say there were three bands of Sabeans, they just said there were three bands of Chaldeans. Apparently, you need three bands to rustle up camels, I don't know, it's strange. One day I'll become a camel herder and I'll let you all know.

Then you have this wind from God in verse 19 smiting the corners of the house and killing all ten children. So please notice, you have enemies on earth and then heaven and then enemies on earth and then heaven again. You have people, weather, people, weather. Everywhere Job looked, "Well, I can see that man is my enemy but at least God is on my team," and here comes a lightning storm and scorches his sheep. The Chaldeans come and carry away the camels. I'm still trying to get over that whole idea. "Well, at least God might still be on my team," and here comes a tornado, a whirlwind, something and he takes away his children. Now, losing stuff is acceptable; you can replace stuff. But losing a loved one? I mean, I know that we can hardly, no pun intended, conceive of an idea but we have this idea that children, we try to avoid them until we can afford them but there was a day when they were a blessing from the Lord. I think we're still in that day so I'm sort of playing to the PC crowd out there that thinks you should have 17 years of a career under your belt before you decide that Psalm 27:3 really is true and that children are the

heritage of the Lord. Job believed they were a blessing from the Lord and he says, “You know, I can't replace my children. I'm glad I still have them,” and then they're gone. That's a tough day, folks.

Only real servants are worth such wagers, I already mentioned that. Then also, God is still the giver of all good things and I think we've already preached that. So, you're probably wondering here: was any of this the fault of God? The short answer: yes. I assume you're even nervous to say that. Is God the cause behind Job's pain? Job thought so.

I thought about maybe I should spend some time answering this question but I just don't think I can do any better than Pastor Sean did two years ago this month, “[A Gospel-Centered Approach to the Problem of Evil](#).” You need to spend some time and listen to that. You might have heartache with something I've already said tonight and I'm not saying that this message right here will answer everything in your heart and mind but he does a pretty good job of answering the question, “Is God responsible for evil in your life?” Please understand that nobody in this room needs to feel like they need to apologize for the Lord.

This gives us profound gratitude for Jesus Christ. Why? Let me show you Jesus in Job 1. Jesus, do you know how I feel? “Yes, I do.” But Jesus, are you telling me that Satan desired to crush you? “Yes.” Are you saying that you struggled before your Father with Satan trying to kill you in the Garden of Gethsemane first? “Yes.” Are you saying that you were tempted of the devil in the wilderness in the same manner in which Job was tempted here in his wilderness? “Yes.” Are you saying that you lost all of your goods, I mean, when did you lose sheep, God? When did you lose camels, Lord? When did you lose your house? When did you lose your oxen and your asses? When did you lose them, Lord? In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul is good enough to tell us, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” Untold riches. Riches that are so rich that it would be pointless for this guy to even talk about how rich Christ was before he came to earth and yet, for the sake of his glorifying God, just like Job – now listen to me, I want to say that again – for the sake of him glorifying God, he suffered the loss of everything and was tempted of the devil and it could be said of Christ what was said of Job, “in this he did not sin at all nor charge his Father foolishly.” I know what you're thinking: Jesus died because he loved sinners. Sure he did, secondarily. He died because he loved his Father primarily. Look up here. Don't ever forget that. If you will never forget that, your theology, your soteriology, your doctrine of salvation will never be man-centered, ever, ever, ever will it be man-centered. You will never fool yourself into thinking the reason Jesus died for you is because you're die-worthy, death-worthy, dead-worthy. The reason he loves you is because you're loveable. No, no, no, no. No, the reason Jesus died is because he was obedient to death even the death of the cross, Philippians 2. The reason he died was because Hebrews 5 says that he learned obedience by the cruelty that he suffered. He learned obedience. He was obedient to the Father. 1 Peter 2, he committed himself to the one who judges righteously. Jesus did. Jesus did. And why was it? Why was it? Because Satan desired to sift him as well.

I want to remind you Isaiah 14, Lucifer said, "I will be like the most High. I will exalt my throne above the stars. I will have it all. I will sit on the mountain of the north. I will be right next to God." That's what Satan wanted. Satan was booted out of the Garden and who was it anyway who was booted out of heaven and then sent to the Garden and who was it anyway that belonged to be right next to the God the Father? Who was it? Who sits at the right hand of God today? It was Jesus and only Jesus that deserved to be right next to God. He says in Revelation 3, "He that will come, I will give to him to sit in my throne even as I overcame and have been given my Father's throne to sit upon." It was Jesus who belonged next to God, not Lucifer and Lucifer was not happy being the cherub that covers, Ezekiel 28. He was not happy being the one that looked upon God and covered the glory of God. He wanted the seat that belonged to Jesus Christ sitting right next to God.

So, we have this age long drama where the devil is jealous, jealous, jealous of the relationship between God and his Son just like he was jealous of the devotion that Job would give to God and so he was debased and robbed of everything and crushed for our iniquities so that at the end of it all, the Lord Jesus Christ could look up to heaven and say, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit. It is finished." In all this, Jesus did not charge God foolishly or sin with his lips. I am floored by the fact that Christ can be found on every page.

I don't know what you're going through tonight but I know this: if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son, you're just as saved as you've ever been. God cannot love you anymore than he already has. There is not a thing you can do to earn the favor of the Lord and if your soul is being buffeted by the wicked one tonight, it is because God Almighty has allowed it to be so because you are the choicest of servants to go through this storm through which you are suffering. Not everyone can endure what you're enduring. The storm that you have been chosen for is one that only you can endure by the grace of God. I cannot endure your storm and you cannot endure mine and I don't know what your storm looks like, it might be a failed relationship, it might be failed finances, it might be failure in what you feel like is all of your life and I cannot tell you why that is happening other than this: God is allowing it. Why? Why? Because he hates you? No, because he's looked at someone one day and said, "Have you considered my servant, James? One that is upright, fears God and eschewed evil?" And Satan says, "Well, the only reason you're blessing him, Lord, is because he's comfortable in church, he's got a wife that loves him, a car that turns on every time he starts the car, an air conditioner that works in the house. If you take one of those things from James, he will curse you to your face."

So be encouraged, good friend, there will come a day, there is a chapter 42, and you're going to be looking back on the storm. No one will understand the storm you're in and everyone will try to be Mr. Wiseguy in the middle of it, won't they? Now, I'm not trying to dissuade encouragement. We all ought to be ready to render an encouraging word and an exhortation and help and grace to the hearer, but I'm telling you, nothing works quite like what we're going to see in the next chapter or two with the friends of Job.

Stay tuned. Let's all stand together.