

Job

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September 3, 2025
Job 1:6-12



Job 1: 6-12

Vs. 6

- "...a day when the sons of God came to present themselves...": 1) we are to understand that "sons of God" here refers to angels. They are mentioned again in 38:7 shouting for joy at Creation and are "the secret council of God" in 15:8. Throughout the book, the presence of celestial being is presupposed. 2) The purpose of the gathering of angels is similar to what we find in Zechariah 6. Here the prophet is being shown heaven by angelic guide and is shown four angels in four chariots. He is told that these are the four spirits of heaven who patrol the earth and then return to stand before the Lord and report. It was common in those days for kings who held vast amounts of territory to have messengers or ambassadors go on important errands through the different provinces of his empire and then return to give an account of what they had observed and of the general state of the kingdom. You see this same imagery in 1 Kings 22:19-23 where the heavenly council is gathered around God who is sitting on His throne and He asks who will go and influence King Ahab.
- It seems that Satan was not invited to the meeting but came of his own accord. In the Hebrew language the word here for Satan means "the Adversary". In the Greek translation has it as "the devil", the accuser. In the Latin Bible as well as the Chaldee and Syriac languages of the Middle East the word is translated "Satan". Arabic speakers use the word in reference to particularly vile and ugly snakes. Adversary, devil, or snake, the word carries with it the imagery of "one who lies in wait, to be an adversary". In common language it came to be used to refer to "an accuser, someone in opposition, someone who stands in the way". Early on the word assumed the status of a proper name, much like the way in English Carpenter or Smith moved from being an occupation, that which you do, to being a proper name. Here the name is applied to the great enemy of God and man, the malignant spirit who seduces people to evil and who accuses them before God. The creature has a proper name already, here in Job and in Zechariah 3:1-2, "And he showed me Joshua the priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan..."

Vs. 7

- The Lord's question suggests that Satan was not assigned a duty in God's kingdom and had no business at the council. Yet it also seems to show Satan's ongoing submission to God.
- If when Satan was cast out of heaven and thrown down to the earth as the New Testament tells us, surely he would have wanted to survey his new home. So he replies to the Lord that he has been walking around the earth. The Hebrew phrase for "walking around" suggests literally that he was circumnavigating the globe, spying it out. In Zechariah 4:10, the word is applied to "the eyes of the Lord," which are said to "range to and fro throughout the earth," that is, He surveys all things as one whose eyes pass rapidly from object to object. The same phrase occurs in 2 Chronicles 16:9 and Jeremiah 5:1 where it is applied to the action of a man running rapidly through the streets of a city.

Vs. 8

- “Have you considered My servant Job?” The Lord finds Job to be remarkable, so surely Satan would have noticed him. God calls Job “My servant”, placing Him in the same company with Moses, David, Caleb, and the prophets.
- God gives Satan Job’s credentials. These are the same as we are given in vs. 1: blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil.

Vss. 9-11

- Satan’s reply suggests that he had noticed Job. He ignores the fact that Job is blameless and upright, turning away from evil and focuses instead on Job’s **motive** for fearing God. And he strikes at the central question of “Why do we worship?”. Do we worship out of a profit motive, hoping to get some favor from God? And when we’re suffering, do we worship solely to press God to intervene and relieve our pain? Or do we worship purely because God is worthy of our worship?
- So Satan draws the battle lines. He is suggesting that the only reason Job is “blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil” is because God has been so good to him: placing a hedge of protection around him so he can’t be harmed, blessing his work and making him rich. Anyone would worship God in those circumstances, suggesting a profit motive is the singular reason for Job’s devotion to God. And indeed, does not Proverbs 3:9-10 say, “Honor the Lord from your wealth, from the first of your produce, so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine”? Satan is making the argument that Job, and maybe people in general, worship God purely out of self-serving motives, that love and a spiritual covenant have nothing to do with it at all. “Take it all away Lord and that same Job who is so upright and blameless will curse You to Your face!” Satan is suggesting that of course, because profit and power were always **his** motives. And when he lost all that he had, cursing God was his first response. Even angels project themselves on others.

Vs. 12

- So the die is cast. God is extremely confident in Job’s faithfulness. The Lord seeks to undercut Satan and rebuke his mercenary attitude by placing Job and all he possesses in Satan’s hands, only Satan cannot lay a finger on Job himself. God seeks to prove that it is the relationship alone, not the residual blessings, that makes worship what it is.

Written during WW2, on the wall of a cellar in the Cologne concentration camp

“I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining. And I believe in love, even when there’s no one there. And I believe in God, even when He is silent. I believe through any trial, there is always a way. But sometimes in this suffering and hopeless despair. My heart cries for shelter, to know someone’s there. But a voice rises within me, saying hold on my child, I’ll give you strength, I’ll give you hope. Just stay a little while. I believe in the sun even when it is not shining. And I believe in love even when there’s no one there. But I believe in God even when he is silent. I believe through any trial there is always a way. May there someday be sunshine. May there someday be happiness. May there someday be love. May there someday be peace....”