

Message #3

Job 1:6-12

Tucked away in various passages in the New Testament are some seemingly odd verses and statements about angels. For example, in 1 Peter 1:12, we see that angels “long to look” into things that pertain to the Gospel and to us. In Ephesians 3:10, the implication is that the grace of God, which is being made known through the church, is being made known “to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.” In 1 Timothy 5:21, it is evident that what is taking place in the church is on full display before God’s “chosen angels.” Time and time again, various verses suggest our life is being monitored by God’s angels.

Now, I doubt seriously that many of us have thought about this in times when we have been struggling or suffering. If we are honest, when we are hit with the negative, the first question we typically will ask is “Why is this happening to me?” not “I wonder who is watching me?”

Did we ever stop to consider that our suffering and hardships may be sovereignly ordained of God to make a powerful statement to God’s angels? Did it ever cross our minds that God may be sovereignly entrusting us with a series of negatives so angels, both good and bad, may watch God’s grace displayed through our difficult drama? When these angels see one of God’s faithful people endure hardships without whining, moaning, complaining, doubting, disbelieving and cursing, it displays for them the glory and power of God.

GOD, AT TIMES, WILL APPARENTLY ALLOW HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS ON EARTH TO SUFFER ON FULL DISPLAY BEFORE THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN SO THAT THE ENTIRE ANGELIC WORLD WILL STAND IN AWE OF GOD’S SOVEREIGN WORK, GRACE AND GLORY.

The grace of God does not exempt the child of God from hurting or suffering. But the grace of God does lead us to conclude that if we remain faithful in suffering, we will experience great blessing.

In this passage we get a rare behind scenes glimpse of things that go on in the unseen heavenly world. There are four preliminary observations we want to make before we examine this unusual text:

(Observation #1) - Neither Job nor his friends had any perception of this angelic reason for suffering, but we do.

We have already established that Job was probably the first Bible book that was written. There were no doctrinal studies on angels and there were no passages one could turn to in order to form a proper angelology. Job and his friends viewed suffering as God’s curse against someone and had no idea that God’s program also included an agenda for angels. Job had no idea that angels could be involved in any way, but we do and we are more accountable.

(Observation #2) - Satan does not bring up Job's name, God does. **1:8**

God is the one who pinpoints Job, not Satan. God could have ended the discussion with Satan at the end of **verse 7**, but He decided to bring Job into the picture. This is a remarkable demonstration of the sovereignty of God and honor for Job.

(Observation #3) - Satan ends up being a puny puppet on display before all the other angels, for he can only do what God permits him to do and what he attempts to do, and ultimately what he attempts to do fails. **1:12**

God shows the other angels and us that Satan's roaming on the earth is sovereignly controlled by Him. Satan can only do what God permits him to do and his goal to get Job to turn against God does not work. Satan is the loser and ends up being the loser in front of all the angelic world.

(Observation #4) - The fact that Job was brought up by God means Job will be greatly blessed by God. **1:6**

There is nothing more noble or honorable than God's perspective of Job and in the end there is no man God blesses more than Job. In these verses there are three heavenly scenes:

HEAVENLY SCENE #1 – The presentation of the angels before God. **1:6**

What is described in this verse is a court assembly in which the angels are required to appear before God to probably give an account of what they are or have been doing and to receive various assignments (i.e. 1 Kings 22:19-22). Notice carefully two proper nouns are used for God in this verse. The name God is Elohim and the name LORD is Jehovah. So these angels are subject to the Triune Godhead, who is the sovereign I AM, in control of everything.

These “sons of God” are the celestial beings known as angels (Gen. 6:2) and apparently there are certain days when they must present themselves to God at His throne (i.e. Job 2:1). This would be a very serious day of accountability for the angels in which their faithfulness in the execution of their responsibilities is analyzed by Jehovah (Ps. 89:5-8).

The conjunction “and” which precedes the noun “Satan” is a waw consecutive, meaning this is the next consecutive sequential thing to happen after the “sons of God” came before God. The name “Satan” in Hebrew means an adversary, such as an enemy in war.

All angels knew that Satan was God's adversary at this point because all knew that 1/3rd of the angels had rebelled against God (Rev. 12:4) and they also had seen God destroy the world by flood and punish some of the evil angels by binding them forever (Jude 6).

So even though Satan probably had somewhat of a good look to him, all knew he was God's enemy. As David Thomas said, Satan loves to be an intruder into sacred things and sacred gatherings.

This is an important point God wants us to know—Satan still does have access to God and is not excluded from the presence of God. Satan was once the greatest angel ever created by God, but he threw away his status. However, apparently he can approach God’s throne in heaven at certain times. Satan is not God and God is the One who determines what He permits Satan to do.

HEAVENLY SCENE #2 – The communication between God and Satan. **1:7-12a**

It is important to observe that God initiates the conversation, Satan doesn’t. This idea that I’ll get before God and tell Him a thing or two is ludicrous. One before God will only speak if God permits it. There are two forms of communication here between God and Satan:

Form of Communication #1 - God’s questions to Satan. **1:7-8**

God asks Satan two questions. He does not ask Satan these questions because He needs to discover something, for His sovereign omnipresence already knows the answers. God asks these questions for two reasons—1) To get Satan to do exactly what He wants; 2) to display Satan before the other angels.

(Question #1) - God asks Satan about Satan’s activity. **1:7a**

When God asks Satan “From where do you come,” God already knows. God did a similar thing with Moses when He asked him, “What is in your hand?” (Ex. 4:2).

This first question would have been somewhat of an egotistical embarrassment for Satan because he has to admit before all the other angels that he is no longer worshipping God in heaven, but is roaming the earth. He no longer could regularly associate with these other angels in heaven because his domain is the temporal world.

(Question #2) - God asks Satan about Job’s activity. **1:8**

Satan wanted these other angels to think he had mastered the whole world. God’s mention of Job’s name clearly showed this angelic crowd that Satan had not accomplished his objective. Before Satan can even answer, God mentions six key qualities about Job:

Quality #1 - Job is God’s servant . **1:8a**—Job was submissive to God and not Satan.

Quality #2 - Job was unique on earth. **1:8b**—Job was a rare, righteous man.

Quality #3 - Job was blameless in life. **1:8c**—Job was complete in his relationship with God.

Quality #4 - Job was upright in life. **1:8d**—Job lived his life by his grasp of the Word of God.

Quality #5 - Job was one who feared God. **1:8e**—Job had a deep, trembling reverence for God.

Quality #6 - Job was one who turned from evil . **1:8f**—Job’s habit was to turn away from evil.

If our troubles are due to this kind of character endorsement, then we can rejoice knowing tremendous blessings will occur for us in this life and high eternal accolades for us in the next life.

Form of Communication #2 - Satan answers God. **1:7b, 9-11**

Now Satan answered God's questions in two ways:

(Satan's answer to God's question #1) - 1:7b

Satan informs God and the rest of the angels that he had been roaming about on the earth. The idea behind the word "roaming" is randomly moving around the earth. We know from the pen of the Apostle Peter that Satan roams the earth "seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). He is especially looking for those committed to God and His Word and he is out to devour them. He hadn't been able to crack Job, so Satan just avoids bringing him up.

Satan is still doing a roaming work. He still is blinding minds (II Cor. 4:4); robbing people of God's Word (Matt. 13:19); opposing God's work (I Thess. 2:18); tempting God's people (I Cor. 7:5); attacking God's Word (Gen. 3:1); spreading false doctrine (I Tim. 1:3); persecuting God's true church (Rev. 2:10) and deceiving all the nations (Rev. 16:14). Satan is still out roaming the world, but he will not be able to crack Job types.

(Satan's answer to God's question #2) - 1:9-11

We get a good glimpse here as to how Satan mixes false things with true things. He never tells the truth because he is the father of lies, but he does use part truth to mix with part error.

False Accusation #1 - Job fears God for nothing. **1:9**

Satan's suggestion is that there is no need to fear God if everything is going along smoothly in life. It is easy to fear God when He is blessing you. The accusation is that Job is in this commitment to God for personal gain. Satan is insinuating that the only reason Job is committed to God is because it pays him to be committed to God. So Satan's accusation against God is that God is buying Job's worship by making him prosperous.

True Accusation #2 - God has a hedge around Job. **1:10a**

This is interesting because Satan obviously knew there was a hedge around Job because he had been trying to attack Job. Yet Satan had not brought up Job's name.

The word "hedge" is Hebrew for a fence that was typically a protective fence made with thorns (Gesenius, p. 785). Satan had taken a good look at Job and realized that God has blessed him and had fenced him in and was protecting him.

True Accusation #3 - God has blessed the work of Job. **1:10b**

“Possessions have increased”-are breaking out in all directions. Everything Job did was blessed by God. Everything Job touched turned to gold.

False Accusation #4 - Job will curse God if God takes away His blessings. **1:11**

The Hebrew grammar of this verse is interesting. Satan uses imperatives and he truly believes in order for Job to be hurt, God must command it. Satan could do nothing to Job without God's commanded permission. Satan challenges God to strike down everything Job had and Job would curse Him. **Satan's thinking is this—since God thinks so highly of Job, if I can take Job down, I will control the whole world and have broken God's best and everyone will worship me.**

I want you to think of the arrogance of this request. Ray Stedman said could you imagine in WW II if some German commander went up to General Patton and saluted him and then said to General Patton—we would like your permission to bomb your troops, destroy your tanks and wreck all your plans. Stedman said you may be certain that Patton's response to such a request would be unprintable. Just imagine the arrogance of Satan in making this request (*Expository Studies in Job*, p. 16).

HEAVENLY SCENE #3 – The decision of God between Satan and Job. **1:12**

God granted Satan permission to attack Job but he could not take his life. Satan could attack Job's possessions, but at this point not touch his body. Why would God permit Satan to do this? He was going to make a statement for Himself and for Job. He was going to take Job to a brand new level of amazing blessings. He did permit him to suffer for a while, but He will eventually double the blessings he had ever had in his life.

Notice as great as Satan thinks he is, he is not sovereign. Only God is sovereign and whatever Satan does is by His sovereign permission.

If you are God, you know what is going to happen.

If you are Satan, you think you know what is going to happen.

If you are the angels, you are very interested to see what will happen—this is big time drama.

But what if you are Job? You have absolutely no idea what is happening or why it is happening. All you have to hold on to all through this is your concept of the sovereignty of God and that is it. He'll lose everything else except his grasp of God, and it will be his grasp of God that will prove to be enough!

Perhaps you are going through things in life right now that you cannot explain. You have questions and want answers. Stay faithful to God because ultimately your status will change. Suppose there was a moment several months ago when there was one of these angelic meetings at the throne of God. We don't know for sure, but let's say there was. Suppose at that meeting Satan appeared and the discussion was about churches in the Kalamazoo area. Suppose Satan was alleging that he had control of almost all of the religion and churches in this area. Suppose he said most churches are involved in politics, progressive religious thought, pickets, protests and programs. Now just suppose for a moment that God said to Satan, "Have you considered Texas Corners Bible Church." That is a church filled with people who love my Son, my doctrines and my Word. There is a church that reverences Me and the people are interested in doing My will.

Now suppose Satan said—"yes, but you have a hedge around that church. You are blessing it. They are growing, their offerings are the largest in the history of the church and they have nearly \$100,000 going to mission outreaches all over the world. But let me take a shot at the church and watch what will happen."

Let us say God said "okay, take your best shot and see." Probably we would come under some sort of verbal attack. People would go on a rampage against us and our doctrine. People would gossip about us and say things that weren't even true. Probably we would see some strange health matters hit some of our people. For no explainable reason some of our healthy people would have odd things hit them. Probably we would see some people leave for reasons that were not even explainable.

Now if such a thing were taking place, Job says to us here is what we need to do:

- 1) Remain totally focused on reverently studying God's Word and worshipping God.
- 2) Remember that what we do in this church is on display before angels.
- 3) Realize that faithfulness by us will eventually bring great remuneration to us.
- 4) Realize that those who made things miserable for us will be held highly accountable.