

Job ■ The Man Who Was Praised By God

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the story of Job from the Old Testament, highlighting his unwavering faith and steadfastness in the face of trials and suffering. It emphasizes the importance of repentance, humility, and patience in our relationship with God, drawing parallels to the challenges we face as modern-day believers. The sermon also underscores the need to trust in God's sovereignty and compassion, even amidst difficulties and unanswered questions.

Scripture: Matthew 5:11, James 5:7, James 5:11, Job 1:21, Job 42:6, Job 42:7

Topics: "Faith in Trials", "Trusting God's Sovereignty"

Description

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Transcript

Brothers and sisters, we are here for another conference and we thank God that in spite of all the limitations there are at this time that we can still have a conference like this. We praise the Lord for that. I want to turn first of all to two verses, first of all in Matthew 11.

You know, all these, most of the past few years we have spoken a lot about the new covenant and our emphasis has been on mostly on the books of the New Testament in our preaching and in our studies and everything. And I felt this morning that there's a great danger that we could neglect the Old Testament. And even though the old covenant which God established through Moses with Israel has been abolished on the day of Pentecost, remember, it was not abolished until the day of Pentecost.

There were many things even in Jesus' time where he taught things related to the old covenant, like paying your tithes and going, the lepers to go to the priests to report their cleansing. But on the day of Pentecost, the new covenant was established. But the Old Testament is still three quarters of our Bible.

If you just look at the number of pages, three quarters of the Bible is the Old Testament. And that is also the inspired word of God. And the Bible says in 2 Timothy 3, 16 to 18, that all scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for instruction and righteousness that the man of God may be perfect.

So, where I find in Matthew chapter 11 that the Lord speaks about some Old Testament instances He contrasts the time in which he was there with the Old Testament time. For example, Matthew 11, after he had preached in Chorazin and Bethsaida, Matthew 11, verse 20 onwards. It says, he began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles were done because they did not repent.

And he compared them with certain Old Testament instances. He said, woe to you Chorazin, woe to you Bethsaida, if the miracles, Matthew 11, 21, which had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, he's referring to the Old Testament instances where God had done certain things in Tyre and Sidon, had occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But it'll be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

Then he says to Capernaum, in the last part of verse 23, if the miracles had occurred in Sodom, which occurred in you, Sodom would not have been destroyed. So there again, he's referring to the Old Testament and saying how much more privileged these cities were to hear things. And if you turn also to Matthew chapter 12, you read Jesus saying again, in verse 39, when people asked him for a sign, he said, an evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign, but no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah the prophet.

Again, he refers to the Old Testament, to Jonah the prophet. And he says, as Jonah was in the whales in the belly of the monster, so the son of man will be three days and three nights in heart of the earth. Then he talks about the men of Nineveh, to whom Jonah preached.

He says that those people will rise up in judgment against this generation and condemn it because they repented and you folks have not repented, even though someone greater than Jonah has come here. And then he talks about the queen of Sheba who came to Solomon, verse 42. He says, she will rise up and condemn this generation because someone greater than Solomon is here.

Notice how in all these verses, Jesus was contrasting the privileges that generation had to listen to Jesus compared to the Old Testament people. And he says, they would have repented, but you haven't repented. So it's very good for us also to compare ourselves who have much more today after the day of Pentecost than even the Israelites had when Jesus spoke to them.

Jesus was there physically, but after the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit's coming, the privileges we have are far, far greater. So I thought in this conference, we could spend a little time looking at some of these Old Testament examples of godly men and be challenged by them. And just like Jesus sought to challenge the people of his generation by the examples of the men of Nineveh who repented and the queen of the South who traveled so far to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, et cetera.

I also want to remind you when we go to these Old Testament examples, that please remember that they were not under grace. Some of them like Job and all were before even the law. Even Abraham was lived before the law.

We must remember John 1 17, John's Gospel chapter 1 verse 17. The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. And the word truth then means reality.

Where our inner life corresponds with our outer life. That is the truth spoken of here. A lie is hypocrisy.

Truth is reality. Grace and reality came through Jesus Christ. In other words, it was not possible before Jesus came for us to have, for anyone to have an inner life that corresponded with his outer life.

No man of God could have that. Not even John the Baptist. That's why he lost faith when he went into prison.

But as so many others in these 2000 years have gone to prison and lost, not lost faith and trusted in Christ. So reality is possible only after the coming of Christ. And grace also was realized through Jesus Christ.

There was no grace in the old covenant. There was mercy. You read many times in the Psalms, the mercy of the Lord endures forever.

Mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy relates to forgiveness. Whereas grace is more than that. Sin shall not have dominion over you because you're under grace.

That is not an Old Testament verse. That's Romans 6, 14. So don't forget that when you look at these Old Testament people.

So when we look at the Old Testament people, we see weaknesses in them because they were not under grace. Every time you see a weakness in an Old Testament saint, remember he was not under grace. That's why.

But without grace, if you can see how far he came to know God, boy, how much more it should be with us. That's the challenge which I want you to consider. And the other thing I want to show you is that there were another verse which I want to show in this connection is in Matthew chapter 19.

Again, where Jesus contrasts this present age with the old covenant. Matthew 19, Jesus said when the Pharisees came to him and said in Matthew 19 verse three, is it lawful for a person to divorce his wife? You know, it's amazing that even today there are Christians who ask that question, even though it is crystal clear what Jesus said. Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason? And Jesus said, if you want to know God's original purpose, go back to the beginning.

Go back to when God made Adam and Eve. He did not make two women so that Adam could have a choice, only one. He made them male and one female.

That's it. One male, one female. That was God's original plan.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh and with no one else. And they are no longer two now, but they are one. And how can you split up what God has joined together? Matthew 19, verse six.

Then they asked him, why did Matthew 19, seven, why did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce? And Jesus corrected that. Moses never commanded anything like that. He says in verse seven, verse eight, he permitted it.

There's a lot of difference between God permitting something and God commanding something. So even in the old covenant, divorce was not commanded in any situation. It was permitted.

And the reason given is because of the hardness of your heart, divorce was permitted by Moses. And then he says in verse nine, but it is not, he says in verse eight, but it was not from the beginning. He goes back to the beginning.

How was it in the beginning? There was no divorce. Adam was not permitted to divorce his wife. It's got to be like that under the new covenant.

The new covenant, God is raising us even higher than Adam and Eve. Adam could not take part of God's nature. He could not be filled with the Holy Spirit within.

God's raised us to a higher level. And it's pathetic that Christians have sunk much lower in this day and age. And then he says about divorce in verse nine, I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality or fornication, marries another woman, commits adultery.

Now again, was that a command that if your wife commits fornication, she can be divorced? No. A lot of people have taken it as a command. God, Jesus has commanded.

If your wife commits fornication, you can divorce her. That is the selfish nature of man that gets that interpretation. It is permitted.

You don't have to divorce your wife if she commits adultery. You can forgive her. Like Hosea forgave his wife numerous times.

That old covenant man could forgive his wife so many times. So forgiveness is the law of the New Testament. My point is I want to show you here how Jesus was always showing that in the New Covenant, we had to go back to God's original purpose.

So keeping those things in mind, let me look at the example of Job in the Old Testament. Why do I mention Job? Because he is the first godly man referred to in the Old Testament whose history we know. There were godly men like Enoch and Noah before that.

But we don't know much about them except that Enoch walked with God and Noah built an ark and obeyed God. But in the case of Job, we have a whole book about him. And Job lived before Abraham.

And there are a number of details concerning his life which are a challenge to us. Remember what we looked at, what Jesus said. If the men of Nineveh had heard this, they would have repented.

The queen of Sheba could live at this time. She would have sought after the wisdom of God that came through Christ. So we keep that in mind as we look at the book of Job to see how do we compare with this man who did not have a Bible, who did not have the Holy Spirit, who did not have fellowship, who did not have regular exhortations, who certainly did not have videos that he could watch of old messages given by godly men.

He didn't even have a godly man in his generation to guide him. He was a lonely godly man in the whole world, one man. And notice what it says here.

It says about the very first words. I believe this is the first word of inspired scripture written because Job lived before Moses. And Moses wrote Genesis.

Remember that. So long before Genesis was written, the book of Job was written because he lived a number of years before Moses, maybe 500 years before Moses. And the first word of inspired scripture, very important to see it.

There was a man who was blameless, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil. There's something we learned there. When God wanted to write a book for man, the scriptures, the Bible, he doesn't begin with how he created the world.

That can come 500 years later when Moses writes Genesis. He begins with a man. A man is more important to God than all this universe.

How this universe was created is unimportant. So many people keep arguing about it. And I say that's unimportant.

I'm not going to waste my time even talking about it. I don't want to prove to people that God created this universe because the Bible doesn't give any proof. It just says God created the heaven and the earth.

And I just say that. That's the first verse in Genesis. But much before that, 500 years before that, God begins to write scripture and he writes about a man.

So remember this, my dear brothers and sisters, that one man or one woman is far more important to God than this whole universe. That's what I learned from here. Not just any man, but a man who feared God, who revered God, and who turned away from evil.

When God could find a man like that who was upright, who would not allow the devil or human beings to bend him, to compromise. Are you like that? A man or a woman who nobody can bend to compromise on the principles of scripture. Who is willing to be unpopular but will stand erect.

That's how God wants us to be. So I'm challenged by this, that this is what God looks for. And he was not a single man like a monk living all by himself.

He was a family man. It says he had seven sons and three daughters. He had a large family.

Many people think that if you're all alone, then you don't have a wife to trouble you and you don't have any children to bother you. And you can be all alone in some monastery and you can be holy. Nonsense.

A lot of people who live in monasteries live in terrible sin that we don't even know about. And the other thing we see here is that he was a very rich man. In fact, it says he was the greatest, the richest man of the East in verse three.

Now, you know, verse two, it says about his children. And some people think you're a family man. As I said, it's difficult to be godly.

The verse three, it says here he had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen. In those days, a man's wealth was not evaluated in terms of money. When he had a bank account, there weren't any banks.

It's evaluated in terms of his possessions and his cattle especially. And so this is a description of his wealth. He was a multimillionaire.

And he had many, many servants, another indication of a very wealthy man. And it says here he was the greatest of all men in the East, which means he was the wealthiest man in the East. And that's the other thing I want to say.

A lot of people think that if you are wealthy, you cannot be spiritual. And God writes a book, the very first book of Scripture, to show that the most godly man at that time was also the wealthiest man. Abraham was wealthy too.

He had many servants. It says about Abraham he had 318 servants. So these are things that we need to get out of our head.

Can a family man with many children be godly? Sure. Can a man who is very wealthy, probably the richest man in town, be godly? Yes. And here is what the Bible says about that in the very first page of written Scripture.

And it says here something about the way Job brought up his family. That's the first thing I want you to see in verse 4 and 5. There were days when, you know, his children were all living in their own homes. They were grown up.

Job was an elderly man, over 100 years old. And his children had their days of feasting whenever they celebrated their birthdays. And then Job would think about it.

Say, my children, he didn't go to those feasts necessarily. The children were meeting on their own. And it says here Job thought about it after their feasting was over.

And he says, perhaps, notice this, Job 1, 5. Perhaps, I don't know for sure, Job 1, verse 5, the last part. My sons may have sinned. Not openly.

They may have cursed God in their hearts. See the concern that this man of God has for his family. Perhaps.

I'm not sure. I don't have any evidence that my children have gone and done something terribly evil. But what are they thinking in their hearts? If you're a father or a mother, I want to ask you, do you have a concern like this for your children? Perhaps they've slipped up.

They were in a situation where they could have been tempted. Perhaps they slipped up. Or do you defend your children so much that you say, no, no, no.

My children will never make a mistake. I've seen Christian parents like that whose children go astray. Because they never have this, perhaps, my children have sinned.

Keep that attitude always, my brothers and sisters. We need to preserve our children and bring them up for the glory of God. But don't assume that they are perfect.

They've got a flesh which they inherited from you which is corrupt. Nothing good dwells in it, as it says in Romans 7.18. Now, Job didn't have all that understanding. He had no scripture.

But he was still convicted in his conscience that perhaps, just like I know, Job says, I know how I'm tempted so much. I know how much I was tempted when I was a young man. So now my children are young people.

And perhaps they are tempted. And I know how I sinned when I was young in my thought life and all that. Perhaps they have also sinned in their hearts.

Notice this. Not openly. Perhaps they have sinned in their hearts.

What a challenge for new covenant Christians to be alert for their own children. So that's the first thing we see. He was a godly man.

And so what did he do? He called them all together. And he would do this regularly. He would call them up, rising up early in the morning.

He would offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. He would pray for them. Every time they had a feast or something early in the morning, he would offer prayers for them.

A very good habit for all parents to do, to pray for their children every single day. Do you do that? Job, without a Bible, without fellowship, without anybody to challenge him, did it. Without anybody telling him.

Without even having the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Just because of the knowledge of God. His family life is important.

The testimony of my children is important. I wanted them to grow up godly, just like I have become. And I want to pray for them.

He believed in prayer. You see, those days, the way they prayed was they offered burnt offerings and said, Lord, perhaps they have sinned. Please forgive them.

Here is an offering for their sin. He was so concerned that the sins of his children in their hearts should be forgiven. Boy, I hope that challenges us as parents.

Perhaps my son has had some bad thoughts in his heart. My daughter has had some bad inclinations. Perhaps they haven't forgiven somebody.

Perhaps they are bitter against someone. Oh, Lord, please forgive them. Please forgive them.

In the name of Jesus, I believe you. You will hear our prayer. If the people of Nineveh had heard what Jesus had spoken, they would have repented.

If Job could experience all that we experience, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, knowing about the blood of Jesus, having the scriptures, fellowship, video messages, where would he have been? Way ahead of most of today's Christians. Because he revered God. Now I want to see something further here in Job chapter 1 and verse 6. Job chapter 1 and verse 6. There was a day when it says the sons of God refers to the angels.

You know, any person who is a direct creation of God is called a son of God. That's why in the last verse of Luke chapter 3, Adam is called a son of God. He's direct creation of God, and the angels were direct creations of God.

See, you and I are not directly created by God. We were born to our parents. But when we are born again, then we become a direct creation of God, and we are called sons of God.

So here he's referring to the angels. They came and presented themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. Now Satan was cast out of the third heaven long before that, but he's in the second heaven.

The Bible says we battle with Satan and his forces in the heavenlies. The first heaven is the universe. You see, the third heaven is where God was, and Satan was cast down to the second heaven.

And from there, he couldn't come as far as the other angels. Good angels could come right into God's presence, but he could speak to God from the second heavens. And the Lord said to Satan, Where do you come from? And it's not as if God did not know, but he wanted Satan to say that for our benefit.

And Satan said, I've been roaming around the earth and walking around it. And the Lord said, Have you considered my servant Job? There's no one like him on the earth. So what is Satan's task? That's the other thing we learned from this first book of the Bible, that Satan, the enemy of God, is always roaming around on the earth.

He and his demons. Their main interest is on earth to watch people, to see who can I turn away from God. He's doing that today.

He did it 4,000 years ago in Job's time. Remember that. There are a lot of things we learned from the book of Job, which are not so clearly mentioned in Scripture.

In other places, Satan roams around the earth, and he's watching to accuse people, just like we read in Revelation 12. He's the accuser of the brethren. And God knew that Satan observes people.

And so God says, And in all your travels around the earth, have you considered my servant Job? That there is no one like him on the whole earth, blameless, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil. It's not that he had overcome sin like we can in his thought life and all that. He did overcome a lot of sins externally, but he hadn't come into the new covenant.

But without the new covenant, without the Holy Spirit, without knowing about Jesus dying on the cross, there was a man whom God could boast about to Satan, a blameless and an upright man who feared God, revered God. And because he revered God, he turned away from evil. There is only one proof that you reverence God, you turn away from evil.

That's mentioned in verse 1, and God himself mentioned this in verse 8. We all say we fear God, reverence God. Well, if you do, you will turn away from evil. You'll turn away in the new covenant age.

You'll turn away from evil in your thoughts and your words. You will really seek to overcome anger, for example, and unkind words and things like that. And Satan is quick to accuse.

The one who is called the accuser of the brethren in Revelation chapter 12 comes in the first pages of Scripture as an accuser. He's an accuser in the first book of the Bible, Job, and he's an accuser in the last book of the Bible, and he's an accuser all through. He's always been an accuser.

In Genesis chapter 3, he accused God to Eve. He said to Eve, as it were, God doesn't love you. If he loves you, he'd allow you to eat this lovely fruit.

Why doesn't he allow you to eat this lovely fruit? Doesn't it make your mouth water, the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Why doesn't God allow you? He doesn't love you. He's afraid that you'll become like him. You'll be like God.

That's what he was telling Eve, and that's how he led Eve astray. So we have to learn something from that. He is the accuser.

He accuses God to man, and he accuses man to God. But we read here also, he says, I know why Job is fearing you, because you blessed him. Even today, many people think material blessing is the proof that God is happy with someone.

And we got to learn something from the book of Job. You're all those who preach the so-called prosperity gospel, that if God blesses you, you'll be wealthy. That's a lot of rubbish, because if that were true, Jesus would have been the greatest billionaire in the history of humanity, or trillionaire, or whatever it is, because he followed the Lord, the Father, more than anybody else.

And yet he was one of the poorest. He said the birds of the air have nests, and the foxes have holes, but the Son of Man doesn't even have a place to lay his head. And when somebody asked him, should we give tribute to Caesar, he said, please give me a coin.

He didn't have a coin in his pocket. He said, show me a coin, and somebody had to give it to him. He didn't live with the richest man on the earth.

Far from it. He was one of the poorest people in Israel. Not perhaps the poorest, like blind Bartimaeus, but he was poor.

And prosperity is not the evidence of God's blessing. Well, they say that's because it was Jesus. What about Paul? Paul was a poor person.

He was struggling. In fact, when he was in Rome, in the prison, he didn't even have a blanket to cover himself, and he didn't have the money to buy one. He asked Timothy to send it to him.

So we see here that prosperity is not the mark of God's blessing. God provides all our need if we seek his kingdom first. But that's not the mark of God's blessing.

And Job says, Satan says, yeah, God, you've blessed him, Job. You have protected him and taken care of him and increased his possessions. Verse 10, that's why he serves you.

Listen to this. You made a hedge on him on every side about him, his house, and his possessions. And that's something that slipped out of Satan's mouth, and he knows things in the heavenlies, and he knows how God protected Job.

And that's a lesson for me. That's helped me tremendously, that word of Satan. If there's a word of Satan that blessed me, it's here.

What he said, which is the truth. I mean, Satan lies to man, but he dare not lie to God. And look what he says about Job, which is absolutely true.

God had put a hedge of protection, first of all, around him, around his person. Second, around his family. That's his house, wife and children.

And third, around all his possessions, his property. Now, I believe if that was true about Job, it's much more true of all of us. There's a hedge that God has put around me, my body.

The devil can't touch my body. Sickness can't touch my body without God opening up that hedge a little bit and allowing it to come. If you'd believe that, you wouldn't be so much in panic when you get sick.

And he's put a hedge around my family. You wouldn't be so worried if you realize that God put a hedge around your wife and children, too, if you're a God-fearing person. And around your bank account and all your house and possessions.

I mean, God may allow people to steal your stuff, but that's with his permission. The point is, without God opening up that hedge, nothing can happen. And as you read the book of Job, you find first God allowed a little bit of that hedge to be opened up.

In fact, the entire hedge around his possessions, and he lost all his possessions. And then God opened up the hedge around his family, so that all his 10 children were killed. And finally, in Job chapter 2, he opened up the third hedge.

God allowed the hedge to be opened up for Satan even to attack his body, but he said, you can't kill him. There's a limit to how much God permits Satan to touch his children. These are tremendous lessons that can bring great rest and assurance and faith in our hearts that will save us from panic and anxiety and fear when we understand some of the fundamental truths about God's care for his children and how much Satan can attack them.

We cannot attack them without God's permission. If we see these truths, it can deliver us from anxiety. We get faith by reading the book of Job.

Not just faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, not only the word of Christ but even the Old Testament scriptures. So now God, the Lord, he says, because you've increased his possessions, that's why he's serving you. That should never be true of any of us, that we serve the Lord because he met our financial needs.

We love him. We serve him because we love him. We love him because he first loved us.

That's it. Then Job 1 verse 11, he says, now God, if you touch him and take away all he has, he will curse you. And listen to this.

The Lord had such confidence in Job that he says, okay, I will open that hedge. All that he has, that is his possessions and his children. I've opened up two hedges for you completely.

All his possessions and his wife and children. You can attack them, but you're not allowed to go through the third hedge. You can't touch him.

And so Satan went and did that. Now, a question that should come to all of us that should challenge us is, can God boast about you and me to Satan? As Satan goes around the world today, can God say, have you seen this particular man or this particular woman who lives on such and such a road in such and such a town? And Job knows all about, and Satan knows all about that person. And God can say, there's a man.

A lot of hypocrites among Christians, God says, but have you seen this man upright? He will not compromise. He doesn't love money. He doesn't serve me because he gets, because I bless him with material things.

See how he brought up his family. See how he lives upright. He fears God and he turns away from evil.

I remember as a young Christian when I was born again and I read the book of Job and I saw how God boasted about Job to Satan. This was the challenge that came to my heart. I said, Lord, can you boast like that about me? I want it, Lord.

I want you to be able to say to the devil, not to human beings. The testimony of human beings is fit for the trash can. Fit for the garbage bin.

I mean, if it's a godly man like Paul, yeah, I would value his testimony. I wouldn't throw Paul's testimony about me into the trash can. No.

Paul's opinion about me is very important because he's a godly man. He has discernment. But all the other human beings who are unconverted or carnal or people are just critical of others and critical of godly men, I don't care one bit for their opinion.

They can say what they like. They can think good or bad. It doesn't make a difference.

In the trash can, a good opinion praising you, saying you're a great person, in the trash can. A bad opinion saying you're like the devil in the trash can. No.

Not bothered. But for God to say something about me to the devil, boy, I value that. And I say, Lord, I don't know what you can say about me, what you can boast about me to Satan.

I hope you have a concern about that, my brothers and sisters. Don't worry what people say about you. Ask yourself what God is saying about you to the devil.

That's far more important. Far, far more important. Anyway, let's move on.

We read here that God allowed Satan to test Job. I want you to see a verse in Jeremiah in chapter 20 before we move further. Jeremiah chapter 20, we read these words.

Jeremiah was a person who knew God from a very young age. And listen to this statement of his in Jeremiah chapter 20 and verse 12. He calls God a God who tests the righteous.

Jeremiah 20 verse 12. Do you know God as a God who tests the righteous? If you're righteous, he'll test you. He tested Job.

He tested Abraham. He tested Moses. He tested Peter.

He tested David. He tested Paul. There's not a single godly man whom God did not test.

He had to be tested before a ministry was committed to him. You know, just like if you want to get into an important position in a company or somewhere, they test you. How much more if God has to give you a ministry or to serve him, even if you're not a full-time Christian worker, any type of ministry, he has to test you.

And if you don't pass the test, I mean, you can still take a ministry as you like, but God's backing will not be there. God's not going to back you up in that. No.

So we see here that the Lord allowed Satan to test Job. And what is the first test? All his property and all his possessions. He says, let me take it all away.

And we read here that it came with a fire from heaven, verse 16. See, this is very interesting. We read here in Genesis, sorry, Job chapter 1 and verse 16.

A fire from heaven fell from heaven and burnt up the sheep and all his servants. Now, the question is, is it only God who can send fire from heaven? We know that Elijah brought fire down from heaven. But the first example of a miracle done on this earth in the Bible was by the devil.

Don't forget that. So don't think every miracle is from God. Remember, Jesus said in the last day, many will, not one or two, but many will come to him.

We read that in Matthew 7, verse 21 onwards. And say to him, Lord, we did miracles in your name. And he will say, depart from me, you who live in sin.

You who did not do my father's will. The important question in the final day will not be whether you spoke in tongues, whether you could do miracles. The important thing in the last day will be, could God approve of you? Did you do God's will? Did you stay away from sin? So here we see the first instance of fire from heaven is by the devil.

The devil has got tremendous power. Not only fire from heaven, he could stir people to come and attack God's children. So we see here that the Chaldeans came in verse 17 and slew Job's servants.

And listen to this, verse 19. A great wind came from the wilderness and struck a house in which Job's children were, and they all died. So we see here that Satan has power to send a wind like a hurricane or a tornado.

He's got power to send fire from heaven. That's something we must remember, that Satan has been allowed by God to have supernatural power. He didn't get that power after he became the devil.

When he was created as the head of the angels, he was given certain supernatural powers. And we see that God did not take them away when he fell away. To me, it's like you give somebody a birthday gift, and he turns one day and becomes your enemy.

You don't go back and say, hey, give me back the birthday gift I gave you 10 years ago. No. So I don't know, but I see here it's pretty clear that God gave certain gifts to the head of the angels.

We don't know what his name was then. They call it Lucifer, but that's not his name. That's just Latin, which means morning star or something like that.

But he was the head of the angels, and he was given tremendous powers and gifts. And when he fell away, he lost his character, but he didn't lose his gifts. Remember this.

You can fall away from God and lose your character, but you still have the gifts God gave you. You can be a great preacher and go to hell. You can do miracles and go to hell, and here is the clearest proof of that.

And when Job hears this, it says here in a single moment, he got two messages. In a few moments, one came and said, your property is all gone, and another came and said, your children have died. Just one after the other, within a few minutes.

And we read in Job 1 verse 20, he fell to the ground and worshiped. This is how people worshiped throughout the Old Testament, you see. They fall to the ground before God.

You know, today I find many people in some charismatic meetings, some preacher lays a hand on their head and they fall backwards, backwards. You never see that in Scripture. No.

They always fell forwards with their head down. Those in Eastern cultures know that falling down with your head down is the way you respect a person. When you fall backwards and show your feet to a person, you're disrespecting him.

No, no. In Eastern culture, a lot of the people in the Bible are all in an Eastern culture. They knew that showing your feet to somebody is an insult.

I mentioned that in passing. This thing that you see, people falling backwards on their back and showing their feet to God, the devil laughs at it and says, God, see these people? They're not bowing their head down to you. They're showing you their feet.

They're insulting you. You see that as an insult? Do you know how many Christians there who haven't seen that? They think, oh, great power of God. Rubbish.

It's just psychological, and they're insulting God by showing Him their feet. Job fell down and put his head down before God. Abraham did the same thing.

And John did the same thing in Revelation. From the first book to the last book of the Bible, the only way people worshipped God was not by showing Him their feet, but by putting a head down before Him and bowing their head before Him. These things are important.

We must not be deceived. Job fell down and worshipped, and look at his attitude. He said, well, when I came to this earth, I didn't have anything.

I didn't even have a stitch of clothing on me. Every single thing I got till today, property, wife, children, is God's gift. And if God gave me something, it's a loan.

He can take it back anytime He wants. He gave it to me, and He took it away. If any of these things were mine, God would be a thief to take it away from me.

Remember that. You know, anyone who takes away something that's yours is a thief. But if someone has loaned you something, he has every right to take it back.

If somebody loaned you a thousand rupees, you can say, give it back to me. But if somebody gave you a gift of a thousand rupees, you'd never ask for it back. Which teaches us one thing here.

I came naked, and I return one day naked. I'll go to the grave without a cent in my pocket. I can't take any of my children with me, or my family.

So I say, the Lord gave, and the Lord has every right to take it away. Now once you understand that, brother, sister, you will never have a complaint against God. Saying, why have you done this? Why haven't you done that? Why have you taken this away? Why have you not given this to me? When you recognize like Job, this is a mark of a godly man, I deserve nothing.

It's a privilege God gave me even to be born on this earth. And when I was born, I came with nothing. One day I'll leave, I will leave with nothing.

And during this period, He allows me to use certain things. He gives me the privilege of having a family, a wife, and children, and possessions, and to live a certain comfortable life. What does the New Testament say about this? Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 6, in relation to certain people who are making money through their preaching.

Who think that godliness is a means of gain. 1 Timothy and chapter 6, he talks about certain people in verse 6 who are preachers and they're preaching in order to make profit for themselves. Send me money so that I can buy a car.

Send me money so that I can buy an airplane to travel. I don't have time to stand in line like in the airports. I need my own private plane to go and preach the gospel.

People who have used their position in God's work and the respect people have for them to get money from poor people to live and comfort themselves. These are, they are corrupt people. We read here about such people in 1 Timothy 6, 6. Godliness is a means of gain for them.

But then in that connection, he says in verse 7, remember Timothy, what Job says. When we came into the world, we brought nothing in. When we leave, we can take nothing out.

We can't take anything out. So we got to leave everything behind. It's like, you know, if you take a little child to somebody's house and while you're in that house, the children there are very kind to your little boy or girl and allow your son to play with their toys and toy cars and all that.

And when you leave the home, you find your little son has put certain of those toy cars in his pocket. So you got to examine his pockets when you leave the house. And you take out the little toys and cars that are in his pocket and say, son, we got to leave this behind.

And he says, why, mom? Well, the answer is when we came to this house, we had nothing. They allowed us to play with this. They were very kind to us and allowed us to play with these toys and cars while we were here.

Now we go, we got to go exactly as we came. Did you bring anything here in your pocket? No, we go without in our pocket. That is how we must recognize our time on this earth.

Everything God gives us is for the short time that we live on this earth. God uses it to test us to see how we will use it, how we will bring up our children, how we will use the money that God gives us, whether we live in a very selfish way for ourselves or whether we will learn to use our children and our money for the glory of God. So that is how he was tested.

And then we find that when the devil saw that he could not conquer Job this way, then he goes to a second step, how the Lord can boast further to Satan in Job chapter 2. See, consider my servant Job for a second time, Job chapter 2, verse 3. See, there is a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from me. See, three times that statement is there, Job chapter 1, verse 1 and verse 8, and again in Job chapter 2, verse 3. Look how God boasts about this man, a man who endured trial and came through triumph. Do you know, brother or sister, that when you go through a trial and you come out like that and say, well, God's got every right to do with me whatever He likes, I will praise Him, and you fall down and worship Him, again, God can boast about you to Satan.

But can He boast about you to Satan when you complain in a trial or when you grumble and say, why did God allow this? Then God cannot speak about you to Satan because Satan can speak about you to God. God, look at that child of yours. See how he's complaining when you took him through a test.

And there we can say what a challenge it is for a man like Job who had no Bible, no knowledge about Jesus or no Holy Spirit to fill his heart, no fellowship to come to such a life. It's a tremendous challenge. And we read further that God said, okay, Satan said, okay, yeah, yeah, I know why.

Actually, Job loves himself. He loves, he doesn't care if his children die, he doesn't care if his property goes, but he loves himself. Now, one question comes up here, you know, and that is, you know, his wife was in that second circle.

Why didn't Satan kill his wife, Job's wife? And the reason is Satan felt, well, Job's wife is a carnal woman, and she's more used to me to irritate Job alive than dead. I'll keep her alive so that she can nag and nag her husband and nag her husband and nag her husband. What a testimony for a wife that Satan did not kill her because he could use her to nag her husband.

Your sister, if you're married, what does Satan think about you? It is far more important than what people think about you because Satan knows a lot more about you than other people do. Other people may not know that you nag and nag and nag your wife, your husband rather, but Satan knows it and he says, I'll keep her alive so that she can be a nagger and nagger and irritate God's servant. Now, there are God's servants who have wives like that, unfortunately.

And Satan says, well, Job loves his life. Why don't you kill him? Why don't you touch his body? And God says, okay, his body also is in your power, but you cannot touch his life. Even there, way back in the first book of the Bible, we are told Satan cannot take the life of a child of God.

No. Satan cannot even touch his body. He cannot touch his property.

He cannot touch his children. He cannot touch any of that without God's permission. And here we read here that Satan went out, verse 7, Job 2-7, and smote Job with sore boils.

Here's the first place in Scripture where we read about sickness, boils from head to foot. We don't know whether this is probably leprosy because we read here Job had to sit outside the city and scrape himself with hot shirts, as you read in the rest of the chapter. Sickness comes from Satan.

It never comes from God. But God permits it. In a child of God, Satan cannot send it without God's permission.

You know, if you take time to read 2 Corinthians 12, Paul had a sickness, which he called a thorn in my flesh. But it came from Satan. He says that very clearly in 2 Corinthians 12.

It's a messenger of Satan, not a messenger of God, but something God permitted. So a lot of lessons we learn right from the first book of the Bible, Job. God permits sickness, but he says thus far and no further.

Like we read later on in the book of Job, God says about the waves. The waves are stopped by the sand on the seashore. God says to the waves, thus far and no further.

You can't go further and flood that city. No, thus far and no further. In the same way with Satan, when he comes to attack any of God's children, God stops it at a certain point and says thus far and no further.

You can't touch his body, he said. You can't kill him, but you can give him sickness. And when he's in that condition, you see Job's wife's attitude.

His wife should have been compassionate to her husband suffering like this. And she says instead in verse 9, curse God and commit suicide. That's the meaning of it.

Curse God and die means how can he die? Commit suicide. Why do you hold fast to your integrity? His wife was not like him. She was not a godly woman.

She was ready to curse God because her children had died, her property had gone, now she was poor, and her husband was sick. Many godly women, godly men, unfortunately have ungodly wives. That does not prevent that man from being a godly man.

Don't ever say, my wife is not converted, that's why I'm ungodly. Absolute rubbish. In the first book of the Bible, God shows you the example of the most godly man on the face of the earth who had such an evil wife who told him to curse God and commit suicide.

I don't think you've got a wife like that. So don't ever make an excuse saying, my children are like this, that's why I can't be godly, my wife is like this, I can't be godly. You alone determine whether you'll be godly or not.

You can have the most evil wife in the world who's like a witch, and you can be godly. So we see here Job speaks to her straight and says, well, you speak like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from the hand of God and not accept diversity? And Job did not sin.

Now in the new covenant, we are taught to speak more graciously to our wives. He did not have the Holy Spirit, he was not under grace. You would not turn to your wife today and say, you're a foolish woman.

He'd say, well, my darling, I'm ready to accept punishment and discipline from God's hand, because if I accept good from his hand, I must be willing to accept discipline as well. But we have to take the same stand that Job took and be firm. And say, I stand with God.

Here is an example of a man who stood with God against his wife. He loved God more than he loved his wife. He loved God more than he loved his children.

This is the condition of discipleship that Jesus spoke about. So once Satan found he didn't succeed with test number one, he didn't succeed with test number two, and he didn't succeed with test number three by accusing him through his wife, then he goes to a fourth step and gets a whole lot of so-called friends of his to come and speak against Job. And you read the rest of the book is all that discussion between his friends accusing him.

And see, what a lot of lessons we learn from this, that you can have people who appear to be your friends who are actually secretly delighted when you're suffering. There are many people like that, especially if they see a brother is not only spiritual, but he's also pretty well off financially. They're really jealous.

If he were poor, they'd say, okay, spiritual. But he's not only spiritual, but he's well off financially, and his children are doing well. Boy, there's a lot of jealousy among believers, I tell you that.

They appear to be friends, but you see here in the book of Job, his so-called friends accusing him and finding fault with him. And every time he has an answer, he justified himself many times, and that's

because he was under the old covenant. We don't do that.

We don't justify ourselves. We leave our cause in God's hands. Jesus didn't justify himself before the people who accused him.

The most godly person who walked on the earth, Jesus Christ, was accused by religious people. So don't expect that you will not be accused by religious people. Paul was accused by the religious Jews of his time, and if you're a godly man and you stand up for the truth, you'll be accused.

And throughout history, you find even in Christian history, godly men who stood up for God's principles, whether it's John Wesley or other men like that, they were attacked by other Christians, so-called Christians, but it didn't affect them. They continued standing up for God, whether it's William Booth or George Muller or John Wesley. They were attacked and accused, but it did not affect them.

They stood for the Lord, and they did not have any resentment in their heart against their enemies. But we read finally in the book of Job how God humbled Job finally, and that's by speaking to him directly. And that is ultimately the way God humbles us.

We have to hear God speaking to us directly. And when he hears that, Job says in Job 40, verse 3, I am a zero. That's the first place in Scripture where a man says, God, I am a zero.

And that's the place to which God seeks to bring all of us so that he can fulfill his purpose. Throughout Scripture, you find God seeks to bring a man down to zero. And he succeeded in bringing Job down to zero.

He says in Job chapter 40, verse 4, I am a zero. So I leave my hand on my mouth. I won't say anything more.

I should not have spoken so much. And later on, he says in chapter 42, O Lord, I repent, verse 6, in dust and ashes. And Job 42, 6, I take back everything I have said.

In all these chapters, I said things against you. I criticized you, God. Please forgive me.

One word. That's all he said in Job 42, 6. I take back everything I said, and I repent. And God says, forgiven.

How do we know he's forgiven? Because later on, in the remaining part of Job 42, verse 7 onwards, he says these other three friends of yours, they've spoken a lot of wrong things against me. But they have not spoken what is right, Job 42, 7. Just read these amazing words. They did not speak of me what is right, like my servant Job has, Job 42, 7. But you look at the book of Job and say, did Job speak everything that was right? He criticized God so many times.

How could God say that Job spoke what was right? I'll tell you why. Because of one sentence, Job 42, 6. He repented and took back everything. Great Old Testament example.

God says, I will not remember their sins anymore. And what is written in the record of Job's life is all the good things he said. There were some good things he said.

My Redeemer lives, and I know I shall see him face to face. He knows the way that I take. And when he finishes with me, I'll come forth as gold.

Many, many good things he said. Those things remain. And all the other things where he criticized and found fault and justified himself and all blotted out.

That's a tremendous encouragement to us to know that if we live before God's face and are faithful, and if we repent and take back the words we spoke in anger or in doubt, God blocks it out. But I believe in the new covenant we should go higher, that once we have learned our lesson, that we don't keep on saying it again and again and again. We should make progress.

So I hope you have learned a lot of good things from here in the book of Job. One last verse before we finish. In the book of James, James is probably the first book of the New Testament that was written.

In James chapter 5, when he tells people to be patient for the coming of the Lord, James 5, verse 7 and 8, be patient for the strength and brethren unto the coming of the Lord. The example he takes to be ready for the coming of the Lord is the example of Job. James 5, 11.

What is the example for us as we approach the coming of the Lord? James 5, verse 7 to 11, verse 11. You have heard of the patience of Job and you have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings. It says here you have seen the ultimate result.

Or it says here in the margin of my Bible, the steadfastness of Job. What a testimony. You've seen the steadfastness of Job.

James 5 and verse 11. And what was the Lord's final purpose? How he acted full of compassion and mercy. That's a great word, James 5, 11.

That's how we are to be prepared for the coming of the Lord, which he mentioned in verses 7 to 9. So let's pray. Please meditate on all that we heard in this. Take time to perhaps listen to the message again and see how it applies to you.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we think about this wonderful man who lived 4,000 years ago, what an example he is to us even today. Help us to learn lessons from him.

For you have called us to go even higher. Thank you. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/HMegI3qt5rA.mp4>

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