

**Job 1: 6-12; “Integrity & The Spiritual Battle”, Sermon # 3 in a series entitled –
“Remember To Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
On January 13th, 2019, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

This afternoon I want to introduce to you a very important component of your living the Christian life and learning to glorify God. It is your learning by God’s grace to become a person of integrity, of proven character and being of value to God in regard to your service to Him. Job was a man who was blameless and upright, one who feared God and shunned evil. Now, you would think that having attained this stable righteous position in God’s sight that he would have been rewarded continually for the rest of his life with peace and blessing, and that no great trial would ever befall him. Job had seven sons and three daughters, and he also had great possessions and he was known to God and probably many men as well, as the greatest of all the people of the East. What then do we behold taking place in the heavenly realm? We find a discussion taking place between God and Satan over whether Job’s integrity was real or not.

This discussion which we find in these verses tells us more about God’s sovereignty over Satan than any other place in all the Bible. It reveals to us many good things about why God ordains the trial of integrity in the life of any believer in Christ. And so, this is why I believe that you and I need to think about these things together. It is so that we will be watchful and prayerful in regard to Satan’s attacks. It is so that we will be better equipped to do spiritual battle and to overcome the evil one when that time comes. God’s sovereignty over Satan in the spiritual battle is plainly declared in the 3 visionary scenes of interaction which are brought before our mind’s eye for our instruction. The 1st visionary scene is the day of presentation, God called Satan into His presence. The 2nd visionary scene is God’s challenge to Satan to consider His servant Job. The 3rd visionary scene is God’s granting permission for the trial and testing to take place. In all that I present to you, I want you to see God’s loving sovereignty being exercised toward Job, so that you will believe in His loving sovereignty over your life and respond to it in faith.

The 1st Visionary Scene of God’s sovereignty over Satan is seen in the day of his presentation before God. (verses 6 and 7)

Verse 6 says – “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.” I believe that this was a certain “day” in heaven related to a certain day on earth. God as the Creator of the day, created the 24-hour period of time which we are so familiar with. We who live upon the physical earth that He made, we mark these days in which have evening and morning as essential parts of them. And therefore since God created the day, we only need to understand that He also knows perfectly well how to mark off a specific day and have the angels come to Him on that specific day. The calendar of days for the angel’s presentation of themselves before God, must be implicitly coordinated with the calendar of time which God has made for men, or the things which we read about here would not make any sense to us. But God wants us to understand these things in the normal way that we conceive of them, so that we can understand them better. And so that is why we find this visionary scene taking place; even as an earthly potentate would call a grand council or assembly of his nobles to sit and interact with him over matters of state, God called the sons of God, the angels, to present themselves before Him on a specific day.

When the Bible speaks of God as the Ancient of Days, it does not mean that He had an actual beginning, for He is without beginning of days or ending of life. With Him it says in 2nd Peter 3: 8 – “One day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as a day”. And also, God the Father speaking prophetically through Ethan the Ezrahite, of the reign of David and the promise given to Him of Messiah, his Seed, says in Psalm 89: 29 – “Also I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.” “My mercy I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall stand firm with him.” “His seed also I will make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.”

Are there days in heaven? Listen to the commentator Daniel Whedon – “Now when the Hebrew says ‘Now it came to pass on the day’; perhaps some fixed time when the sons of God came together, ‘a Sabbath day’, ; says Lightfoot. Greswell adduces from Psalm 89: 29, and Deuteronomy 11: 21, in illustration of his speculation, that it may not be merely in the analogy of, or of accommodation to human ideas, that inspiration itself speaks of the days of heaven, or gives us reason to conclude that even in heaven, as well as on earth, the lapse of time is measured and numbered by days of some kind or other.” “In keeping with this, the *one who wrote* the Chaldee paraphrase *of Job* has presumed to specify the day: ‘Now it happened in the day of judgment (that is – the day of scrutiny) in the beginning of the year, that hosts of angels came to stand in judgment before Jehovah, and Satan came.’ (end of quote) I believe that this is an accurate assessment because God is concerned with everything that goes on in time and space in relation to this world that He has created.

Although God stands outside of time, He is always intimately involved in the events of time. He sovereignly interacts with men and angels in relation to all the events which take place in time, and He is not an abstract spectator. He is the Prime Mover who providentially upholds and governs all of creation; the earth, men, and the angels. They were all created by Him, and they are all governed by Him, and they will all be held accountable to Him. In relation to all the events of people and nations and human history, and in accordance with His eternal purposes, God called this particular convocation of the angels on this particular day. That is how important this man Job was to God. Let us understand that God created the angels to do His bidding in relation to the all things that He purposes to do in relation to His elect people; their being saved, and their being sanctified, and their coming to know Him better by the providential things that He ordains for their lives. In this great and important work He uses the angels in relation to His Providential working in the lives of men.

This term “the sons of God” refers to the angels, and in this case it probably refers to all the angels of God who at certain times of God’s appointing come to Him for formal presentation and instruction as to what they should be doing to further and establish His providential will. For angels are spirit beings who were all created originally in holiness, and their express duty was to do His bidding and obey His word. Psalm 103, verses 20 and 21 – “Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word.” “Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.” But when Satan fell from his original righteousness at the Beginning of the world, he convinced a very great number of the angels to go with him, and so all of these rebellious angels all fell together, at the same time, and they became the demons which do the bidding of the head evil spirit – Satan.

Satan is a literal spirit being, and so he also was made to understand that he must appear before God as a part of this great convocation of all the host of heaven. He must present himself before God in order to give an accounting of what he had done, and what he was doing, and what he intended to do; and to interact with God over what God would sovereignly permit him to do. The sons of God came to present themselves because God caused them to understand by some direct communication to their minds, or some message conveyed to them by other angels, that they must be present to hear God, and to know His will concerning what would take place with Job. Not one of them, Satan included, could miss this great convocation; nor would he want to.

So, I want you to see from the things that I have related to you thus far, is that Satan is not an independent agent going about doing as he pleases. He, as an evil spirit, is under God’s rule, and he must present himself to God to learn what God’s providential will is concerning all men great or small; believing or unbelieving. This should teach us to fear God rather than Satan. The Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew 10: 28 – “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.” “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.” “But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” My brethren, even though Satan schemes are great in evil, and he goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he

may devour, yet know that at the very time you are under attack, you should fear God more. God has him on a long chain, and He can reign him in any time that He wishes. Even Satan's most vicious schemes against God and against God's elect people, will not ultimately prevail. Therefore, you should trust in God.

The 2nd visionary scene which speaks to us of God's sovereignty is God's challenge to Satan to consider His servant Job.

Verse 7 says – “And the Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ “So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’” “Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?’” “So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’” “Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?” “You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.” “But now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse you to Your face!”

Here we see portrayed for us Satan's sordid self-appointed mission in his rebellion against God. It was to go to and fro on the earth, and walk back and forth upon it, looking to see whose faith in God he could bring low, and whose soul he could destroy through finding either supposed or real inconsistencies in their walk with God. He would ferret the truth out concerning them. I believe that he came to this meeting knowing that the testimony of this man Job would be brought up. He had probably watched him often, in his living of his righteous life, and Satan greatly desired that he could bring him down to the dust, and destroy all the faith that He had in God, and tarnish the good reputation for good works that Job had; the things that he did for other people, in His service to God. We see from this conversation that Satan was particularly concerned to devour the good testimony of Job, to seek to find out how he could possibly gain permission to destroy Job's blessed estate; the estate of his having so many blessings, both earthly and spiritual, that was a witness to so many people on the earth who thereby had come to know that God was true in regard to all His promises of good that He would bestow upon the one who fears Him.

Satan saw that Job had many righteous desires, and that he made many strong efforts daily to do what was right, and to promote God's kingdom and His glory. This was bothersome to Satan. We are not to think that somehow that the Lord did not actually know where Satan came from, or where he was going, or what his plans were, nevertheless, we are to see this questioning of Satan by God as a very real interaction which actually did take place between them over the righteousness of the man Job. God knew already what was on Satan's mind in regard to Job. But he wanted to boast in Job in the holy way that only He could do it. So the Lord would have Satan to consider His servant Job, that there was none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who feared God and shunned evil. And Satan was truly disgusted with God's boast. But God by His sovereign care, and because of His everlasting love for Job would speak in this way of boasting, to show Satan how impotent he was to take away the work of grace which He had done in Job's heart.

I think that it is hard for us who understand the sinfulness of the human heart, to imagine God boasting in any man other than our Lord Jesus Christ. But this is because we do not clearly see just how sovereign God's good grace, was in the life of this righteous man Job. We often do not see what God's grace can do in raising up great and godly men. The apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians 15: 10 says – “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” Even so, we must understand that not all men who are called by grace are the same; neither do they all make the same progress in holiness and righteous as some others do. Job was a man of sterling integrity and quality, in his spirit. He was joyfully reverent in His spiritual life and in his interaction with God, and he was always thinking of how he could bring glory to God and help others in his doing of good works for them. There was none like him on the earth, in terms of his having made progress in holiness and in being pleasing to God in his thoughts, his words, and his

actions. Not all men are alike, because not all men improve upon all the grace that they are given by God. They are slow to believe that God can help them put the flesh to death, and give them the power to live a beautifully holy and righteous life. Oh, there is every reason for us to trust in Christ, my brethren. His grace can cleanse and purify and empower and beautify the heart and soul of a man or woman so they look in their character like gold, and silver, and precious stones!

I want you to see that God could boast in Job because He knew what, by his grace he intended to do for him, and with his sterling testimony, as well. He was going to take his life and use it to destroy the works of the Devil; to overthrow his schemes to make Him, God, look like He was wrong to bless him so mightily. The Devil's scheme was to have the bald audacity to say that Job served Him because He, God, had blessed him on every side. Job's service to God was somehow a mercenary service. "Does Job fear God for nothing?" "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?" "But now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" What a blasphemous, hateful, murderous creature Satan became when he says these things. His whole purpose for existence is to make God and the finest of His people look bad; to accuse them day and night, and see if there is any way that he can utterly destroy their service to God and their worship of Him. But let us see, dear brethren, and be very thankful for God's sovereign control over our lives; that he protects us from all evil and He keeps our soul. He is continually watching over us to deliver us from the evil one.

The 3rd visionary scene which speaks to us of God's sovereignty is God's granting permission for this trial and testing to take place.

Verse 12 says – "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.'" "So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord." Now, you might think that this was not right in God, to permit Satan to have this power over Job that he did, for a time. Why would God permit it? It is because God is infinitely wise and holy in regard to you, dear Christian. He knows what would be for your good and what will build your faith and what will make you more like His dear and perfect Son. There was another reason which we see here that this permission was given, and that is that there was a spiritual battle going on in the heavenly places between Satan and God. This vision is the proof of it. This was a spiritual contest taking place between God and Satan, and God fully intended from the first, to prove Satan accusations to be false, and to prove him to be a liar. At the same time, He intended to refine Job and bring him through this trial; to confirm, strengthen and establish him in his integrity. Coming through this trial, God would then bless him greatly for holding fast his integrity.

We need to see that it is always Satan's purpose to cast doubt upon the integrity of any Christian. Satan will attempt to cast doubt on the profession of every Christian here in this place, and all Christians in all generations. Satan's grand purpose is to attempt to find fault with the way that God governs His world, and the way that He teaches His saints; the way that He works in His providence to raise them up to be more than they can be on their own, without His grace. Satan hates God, and He hates grace being given to God's saints; grace which will make them men and women of integrity. Satan wants Christians to think for themselves and act apart from God's word, and join Him in rebellion against God. Our purpose, dear brethren, is to trust in the Almighty, even when we do not understand what God is doing and what He is permitting in our lives; to trust in Him even though Satan gains permission to take people or things away from us that we think that we must have in order to glorify Him and to lead a joyful Christian life. Let us learn from these verses that we have studied today, that there is a spiritual battle going on for all Christians, and that the issue is your integrity. If you have integrity, you will ultimately approve of whatever test God brings to you, so that both you and Satan will know, that your faith is genuine, and more precious than gold.

