

# Job 1:6-12

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## *Satan Challenges God*

*Satan appears before the throne of God after roaming the earth. God boasts about how righteous Job is. Satan scoffs, claiming that Job only fears God because God protects Job, and has given him wealth and many children. Satan claims Job only does what is right because of the transactional benefit he gets from God. God permits Satan to test Job, but not to harm him physically.*

The next section is arguably one of the most intriguing and insight-offering sections of the entire Bible. The scene now shifts to heaven, where we are allowed to peek in and listen to a dialogue between God and Satan:

*Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it" (vv 6-7).*

This verse is packed with intriguing insights. First, it appears that the *sons of God* refers to heavenly angels. Since Satan was among them, it would seem that the demons also are checking in to give an account to God. This is consistent with the passage in Revelation where Satan is banned from heaven, indicating that he has free access to heaven until that time (Revelation 12:10-12).

That the angels would *present themselves before the LORD* infers that Satan and his demons are constrained by God, and are accountable to Him. This is confirmed other places in scripture, since some demons were thrown into the abyss for disobeying and crossing their allowed boundaries (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6).

It is clear that although Satan came to present himself before God, that he has spent much of his time supervising events upon the earth. God initiates the conversation with Satan, asking him "*From where do you come?*" Of course God knows all, so He already knows the answer. Yet He engages with Satan on his terms. This would demonstrate that, unlike God, Satan is limited.

It seems that Satan is not particularly forthcoming, answering only that he has been *roaming about on the earth and walking around on it*.

*The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil" (v 8).* It is interesting to note that God is the one who brings up Job. God is confronting Satan with Job's righteousness, and asking Satan to acknowledge that Job is *blameless and upright*.

Connecting this episode with Psalm 8:2, we can infer that God is offering Job as an example to Satan in order to make a point. Psalm 8 indicates that God appointed humans originally to reign over the earth. God made this choice even though humans were lower than the angels. Psalm 8:2 indicates that God's intent in making this assignment was to silence Satan. We can infer from this that Satan demanded to reign over the earth instead. It seems therefore that Job's righteousness is being used by God to repudiate Satan.

Of course Satan is a murderer and a liar (John 8:44). There is no truth in him. But apparently God desires Satan to be proven wrong rather than just telling him he is wrong. Of course Satan does not accept God's example, and answers:

*Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face" (vv 9-11).*

Satan is in heaven, speaking directly to God. God has asserted that Job is *blameless and upright*. Satan disputes this assertion, and makes a series of accusations. This fits with Satan's name. Satan is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "satan" which means adversary. It seems that whatever God does Satan will oppose.

First, Satan accuses God, saying that He has *made a hedge about Job and his house and all that he has, on every side*. This indicates that God had placed a special protection around Job. Given subsequent events, it would seem that the hedge of protection was not only spiritual, protecting Job against Satan, but also physical, protecting him against human attackers. Satan infers that God's special protection of Job means that Job's example of righteousness "doesn't count."

Next, Satan accuses God of essentially buying Job's allegiance with favors. Satan asserts that God has *blessed the work of Job's hands*, causing his *possessions to have increased in the land*. Satan's point is that Job is basically giving allegiance to God as a sort of protection racket: "You protect me and prosper me, and I will follow you and your ways." Satan infers that anyone would do this. In Satan's accusation he essentially is saying that God's assertion of *blameless and upright* is really "knows a good deal when he sees one, and is simply making a lucrative transaction."

The *LORD* answers Satan's accusation by removing the *hedge of protection*. At this point in the story nothing is said on behalf of Job. This scene is taking place in heaven, but there is no indication that Job is put on notice that his hedge has been pulled down. His life is about to change radically, and he has no warning.

*Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD (v 12).* God gives Satan permission to test Job by lowering His *hedge of protection* in all but one respect. God gives to Satan *all that he has*, saying to Satan that Job's possessions are now *in your power*. But God preserves Job's personal health. The hedge of protection still applies to his person, as God says *only do not put forth your hand on him*.

It seems now that Satan is provoked. He apparently turns his full attention toward proving that Job is not actually *blameless and upright* but rather transactional. Satan's clear objective now is to provoke Job, so he will *curse* God to His *face*. God has now placed upon Job an incredible opportunity to silence his adversary (Psalm 8:2). At this point in the story, we are left to wonder "Will Job pull it off?" Job has no idea what is coming next.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>6</sup> Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. <sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." <sup>8</sup> The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." <sup>9</sup> Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? <sup>10</sup> Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. <sup>11</sup> But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face." <sup>12</sup> Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.**