

Job 2:1-3

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God Rebukes Satan

Satan appears before God's throne again. God speaks of Job's continued righteousness, despite the loss of his children and wealth due to Satan's actions. This proves that Job trusts in God, and is not swayed by circumstance.

In the previous chapter, God provoked Satan, asking him to admit that Job was *a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil* (Job 1:8, 2:3). Satan denied that to be the case, accusing God of purchasing Job's affinity, asserting that Job was a shrewd actor and knew a good deal when he saw one. Therefore, God lowered his "hedge about him and his house" (Job 1:10) and authorized Satan to harm Job in any manner other than attacking his health.

Satan then caused the death of Job's children and the wreckage of his business in such a manner that it was clear the loss was connected to supernatural events. Chapter 1 ended with "Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God."

Now a new scene opens in heaven. We are once again allowed the privilege of peeking in on a conversation between God and Satan. This second conversation takes place before God's throne: *Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord* (v 1).

The word *God* in the phrase *sons of God* translates the Hebrew word "Elohim" which is used in scripture to refer to the LORD God. However, "Elohim" is also used to refer to other types of rulers, including angelic beings and even human judges, or those in authority (ruler). In Psalm 82:6, God calls humans "gods" ("Elohim"), making specific reference to the judicial power God granted humans. Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34 to make the point that if the scripture calls humans "gods" (because of the power delegated to them to make judgement), then He should not be taken to task for calling Himself the "Son of God."

In this context, the *sons of God* include Satan, so the phrase is best taken to refer to the angelic beings. That they are *sons* in this instance would seem to refer to the fact that they are created beings. Scripture refers to "rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10) and "spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). In each case these spiritual beings are in "heavenly places." This episode in Job provides a rare glimpse into a conversation between God and one of these beings in a heavenly place. That *Satan* and the other *sons of God* come to heaven in order to *present themselves before the Lord* has numerous implications. Some of them include:

- These principalities and powers recognize that they are accountable to God, and stay within their allowed boundaries. We see this with the demons who speak submissively to Jesus (Matthew 8:29). We also saw it in Chapter 1, where Satan complains that God has created a "hedge" to protect Job from Satan's wiles (Job 1:10).

- Satan and the demons have free access in and out of heaven in this era.
- However, heaven is a place where God's will is done (Matthew 6:10). This is confirmed by the fact that the basic goal Satan seems to have in both conversations with God is to obtain authorization to take certain actions.

As with the initial engagement between God and Satan, this conversation supports the assertion of Psalm 8:2 that God created humans and gave them dominion over the earth in order to silence His enemy, Satan. Just as with the first engagement, God opens the dialogue with Satan by asking him about his latest activities:

*The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"
Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it" (v 2).*

Although *Satan* presents himself in heaven, it seems he spends most of his focus on earth. From this story we can infer that his primary goal is to tempt, demoralize and persuade humans away from walking righteously. It would seem that this is an attempt to perpetuate his claim to rule earth, in their stead (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). Because Jesus lived a fully righteous life, He has reclaimed the right of humans to reign in the earth (Matthew 28;18; Philippians 2:8-11; Hebrews 2:7-9).

Just as with the first recorded dialogue in Chapter 1, God initiates the subject of the life of Job: *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 3).* This is the same question God asked Satan in Chapter 1 (Job 1:8).

The word *considered* is the Hebrew word "leb" most often translated "heart." It is in the "heart"/"leb" that people take in information and make decisions. Here it appears to be used similarly as in:

"... but he who paid no regard ("leb") to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field."
(Exodus 9:21)

God seems to be saying "Have you considered what you are seeing and learned the proper lesson from it?"

God now asserts the primary point that Job has remained a *blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil* in the face of the greatest of difficulties:

And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause (v 3).

It is clear from Chapter 1 that Satan is the one that inflicted the pain and ruin upon Job. However, it is also clear from verse 3 that God takes responsibility for Job's suffering, saying *you incited Me against him to ruin him*. Although God did not inflict any pain or suffering upon

Job, God did give Satan permission to do so. Therefore, God takes responsibility for Job's ruin. We see in scripture that nothing occurs on earth without God authorizing it to be allowed.

Many bad events happen in the book of Revelation, but all are authorized by God before they occur. It is notable that in the book of Revelation, the word "throne" appears over forty times, and primarily refers to God's throne when it appears. This emphasizes that no matter what we see occur, God has allowed it.

We see here in Job an example of how all things that occur upon the earth are authorized to be allowed. We can presume that Job is unaware that he is the topic of focus in the heavenly realm. It is interesting to note this verse from the New Testament showing the intense interest heavenly beings have in human choices:

"It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look."
(1 Peter 1:12)

This verse tells us that the angels are quite attentive in watching humans in order to gain understanding for themselves. We also see this verse from Ephesians that tells us that heavenly beings ("rulers and authorities in the heavenly places") are learning the "manifold wisdom of God" from watching humans:

"...so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places."
(Ephesians 3:10)

What is it that these heavenly beings can learn from watching humans that they cannot learn from speaking to and being in the presence of God (as we see is transpiring in Job 1-2)? One thing that seems apparent is that the heavenly beings that are able to see and know God by sight are not capable of knowing God by faith. As Hebrews tells us, faith is believing things we cannot see as much as if we did see (Hebrews 11:1).

As the narrative of Job unfolds, it shows that Satan has the amazing benefit of seeing God, speaking to God, and learning from God. But Satan rejects God and does not benefit from his access. On the other hand, we will see the human Job come to know God by and through his faith. And when he sees God, he gains an immense benefit (Job 42:5-6, 10).

We will learn that God intends a substantial benefit for Job, that he may know God by faith, which leads to the greatest possible experience of life (John 3:17). But here the focus is on the cosmic conflict between God and His adversary (Psalm 8:2). Satan is a murderer and a liar (John 8:44). His goal is to deceive and destroy. In the next section, he makes this apparent, refusing to acknowledge Job's righteousness, and only seeking further permission to bring adversity upon Job.

Biblical Text

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. ²The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” ³The 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. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.”