

# Job 2:4-6

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## *Satan Alters His Accusation*

*Satan asks God for permission to harm Job's body, saying that the suffering of physical pain will cause Job to turn from God. God allows this, forbidding Satan from killing Job.*

In the last section, God confronted Satan again, as He had in Chapter 1, using the identical question: "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" (Job 1:8, 2:3).

The word translated "considered" is the Hebrew word "leb" which is usually translated "heart." God asked Satan if he had seen, understood, and learned the proper lesson from seeing Job's righteous response to adversity. Satan again scoffs at the notion—*Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life"* (v 4).

Satan now has changed his framing. This is one of the main ways Satan is a liar and deceiver—he frames questions based on false premises. He did this to Eve, delegitimizing God's commands (Genesis 3:1) and asking her why she would not desire to have knowledge as well as benefit from eating the juicy fruit, since she had been granted the power to choose for herself (Genesis 3:4-6). Satan framed his question to Eve with the false premise that what God had defined as death (Genesis 2:17) would actually lead to life (Genesis 3:4-5). Satan used the same basic approach in tempting Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11).

In Chapter 1, Satan essentially accused God of bribing Job to follow Him by "paying" him with possessions and land (Job 1:10). Now that Satan has been proven wrong, he does not repent. Rather he reframes; he changes the accusation, saying that the only reason Job maintains his integrity is because God has spared his health. Satan asserts:

*However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face* (v 5).

The Hebrew word translated *touch* in the phrase *touch his bone and his flesh* can also be translated "strike," as in Genesis 12:17 where God struck Pharaoh with plagues. Satan is asking God to strike Job's body (*bone and flesh*) with sickness. Even though it was Satan that ruined Job's possessions in Chapter 1, God took responsibility for what was done to Satan because He authorized Satan to do it (Job 2:3).

Consistent with this viewpoint, it seems clear that in asking God to plague Job's health, Satan is asking permission to attack Job. God authorizes the action: *So the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life"* (v 6).

There are numerous ramifications to this episode. One is that sickness can have a spiritual cause. We see this numerous times in the New Testament, where Jesus heals physical ailments by

removing demonic influence (Matthew 9:33, 12:22, 17:18). Another is that God puts hedges of protection around His people (Job 1:9) but sometimes chooses to remove the hedge and allow Satan to act upon us, as in v 6. In this section, it is apparent that God is seeking to prove to Satan and other principalities in the heavenly realm that Job's righteousness is genuine.

We know the angels are peering intently at humans, seeking to gain understanding (1 Peter 1:12). The New Testament asserts that the heavenly beings are actually learning God's wisdom through watching His people, "the church"—those who believe in Him.

“...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)

It appears therefore that humans are playing an outsized role in proving who has the right to reign over the earth. Through Jesus's unflinching testimony of righteous living, He regained the right for humanity to be restored to the “glory and honor” of being placed over creation (Psalm 8:5-6; Hebrews 2:7-9).

It appears that during this entire episode Job was unaware of the intense focus upon him from the heavenly beings. From these New Testament verses, it seems that this heavenly focus on humans and their choices is more the norm than the exception, and all our lives are a riveting source of fascination and learning for the spiritual inhabitants of the heavenly places.

God has now granted Satan permission to ravage Job's health, while requiring Satan to *spare his life*. In the next section the story continues, as Job is stricken with a severe skin disease that causes him to be close to despair.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>4</sup> Satan answered the Lord and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. <sup>5</sup> However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.” <sup>6</sup> So the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.”**