

{Read Passage}

i. Opening Illustration

On September 24, 1757 that the son-in-law of Jonathan Edwards, Aaron Burr, died unexpectedly at 42 years of age. This was a mere 2 days b4 he was to make his public commencement as t/1st president of t/College of New Jersey (now Princeton University).

Shortly after his death, Burr’s wife, Esther (daughter of Jonathan Edwards) wrote this letter to a close family friend ==>

“Your most kind letter of condolence gave me inexpressible delight, and at the same time set open afresh all the avenues of grief, and again probed the deep wound death has given me. My loss—Shall I attempt to say how great my loss is—God only can know—And to him alone would I carry my complaint. . . . Had not God supported me by these two considerations; first, by showing the right he has to his own creatures, to dispose of them when and in what manner he pleases; and secondly, by enabling me to [someday] follow [my husband] beyond the grave, into the eternal world, and there to view him in unspeakable glory and happiness, . . . God has wise ends in all that he does. This thing did not come upon me by chance; and I rejoice that I am in the hands of such a God.”

Less than 8 months later, Jonathan Edwards, Esther's father, also died.

On April 3, 1758, Sarah Edwards, Jonathan's wife, wrote a letter to her daughter (both women now being recent widows)==>

“My dear child, what shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands on our mouths! The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness, that we had him so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. O what a legacy my husband, and your father, has left us! We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be.” [Account taken from

Douglas Sean O'Donnell, *The Beginning and End of Wisdom*, 91-92]

ii. How do we, who profess to know and love God, respond to suffering . . . to death?

Do we, or will we, be able to say ==>

“God has wise ends in all that he does. This thing did not come upon me by chance; and I rejoice that I am in the hands of such a God.”

And

“A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod [t/rod of discipline], and lay our hands on our mouths! The Lord has done it. . . . We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be.”

iii. I can say that I am yet living in such suffering

While I can agree w/these 2 saints, who long ago rec'd their reward, I also know what it means to wrestle w/G., to find His dark providence a hard pill to swallow.

iv. Let me bring you back to Job chapter 1, vv. 6-12

Title ==> "Setting the Stage for Disaster"

Big idea from this text is in t/form of a ? ==>

"Will Disaster Derail *Your* Devotion?" {repeat}

That is t/? Job is unwittingly facing in this passage.

"Will Disaster Derail *Job's* Devotion?"

The Satan sure thinks so ==>

9 [he asks] . . . "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 "Have You [G.] 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. 11 "But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."

v. In the unfolding story of Job we have now changed scenes

Vv. 1-5 give us an earthly scene; a happy scene. There we see a man, a good man, named Job. He's godly, has an unparalleled reputation, & has been blessed w/wealth & family.

This is living in t/burbs w/a happy family and a nice home surrounded by a white picket fence w/a BMW parked in t/driveway!

We get to v. 6 and the scene changes. T/curtain comes down on vv. 1-5 & when it comes up again, we are no longer on earth. We're in a different realm; t/realm of heaven. The presence of G.

vi. We have several such scene changes in chapters one and two
(in theatrical lang. "scene shifting")

Earth 1:1-5

Heaven 1:6-12

Back to earth in 1:13-22

Back in heaven in 2:1-6

Back to earth in 2:7-13

That brings us back to t/extended dialogues between Job & his friends that dominate t/rest of t/book all t/way up to chapt. 42.

Just as Dorothy discovered that she wasn't in KS anymore, as we come to v. 6 we find that we're not on earth anymore.

I. A Scene in Heaven: Setting the Stage for Disaster (1:6-12)

A. The Council (6)

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

A. The Council (6)

1. That's the picture being painted here: A celestial council

OT scholar John Walton:

On the basis of [the] biblical and ancient Near Eastern background, we can conclude that Job 1 features a gathering of the divine council as the sons of God come together to give their reports and to do the work of heaven. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 63]

Similar picture in Psalm 89 ==>

Psalm 89:5–7 5 The heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. 6 For who in the skies is comparable to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD, 7 A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, And awesome above all those who are around Him?

Similar thing here in v. 6 — pic. of a council gathered in heaven....

2. Note how verse 6 begins

6 Now there was a day . . . [NASB]

(Other translations simply say “one day”)

a. We have these time markers throughout the first 2 chapters

1:1 “Now there was” (brings us in time to Job’s life)

1:4 “On his day” (“birthday”)

1:5 “Days of feasting”

1:13 “Now it happened on the day”

2:1 “Again there was a day”

6 Now there was a day . . .

T/Jewish Targumic & Midrashic trads thought this to be Jewish NYD.

May have simply been an instance when t/heavenly court came together to do business.

A. The Council (6)

B. The Characters (6-7)

Who are the characters convened in this drama? 3 Players ==>

1. The Sons of God

6 **Now there was a day when the sons of God came . . .**

a. “Sons of God” in Hebrew = “Bene Elohim”

(phrase only found here & in Gen. 6:2,4; Job 2:1; 38:7).

3x in Job; 2x in Gen.

(1) Who are the “Bene Elohim”—the “Sons of God”?

(a) Two basic options: Angelic or human

John Gill seems to think that the Sons of God here are believers in heaven. However, while that is possible, the use elsewhere in Job indicates angelic beings.

Chapt. 38 Job is asked if he was there when G. created t/earth & when 38:7 . . . the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

“SOG” there are clearly angels. Man hadn’t even been created yet. Here in v. 6 we’re talking angels.

1. The Sons of God

2. The LORD

6 . . . the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD . . . [God is present]

a. Isn't God present everywhere? Yes!

While He is omnipresent, t/Bible indicates that there is a place / another dimension / where G. dwells in t/fullness of his glory.

Cf. Matt. 6:9 (“our Father who is in heaven”)

Isaiah 6:1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple

b. Here's the first use of “YHWH” (Jehovah) in t/book of Job

When we think of t/BOJ we think of Job being t/central character. Reality is that G.'s t/central figure of t/book. BOJ is about G's - Sov. // Grandeur // Faithfulness. He's t/One who calls t/shots; He's t/one who blesses; He's t/one who gives & t/One who takes away (1:21).

3. The Satan

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and [the] Satan also came among them.

a. “Satan” = direct translit. from Heb. *śāṭan*) — Why “The Satan?”

(1) That's literally what we have in Hebrew

Every time this word occurs in Job (only in 1st 2 chaps), it is preceded by a def. article: “THE.”

According to Walton, t/Heb lang. does not put a def. article in front of personal names. IOW it's never “The Moses” or “The David”.

So some scholars think this should be translated “the adversary” (what t/Heb. *śatan* means). So every time you see “Satan” in Job chaps 1 or 2 in your Engl. Bibles, read “The Adversary.”

b. Literal translation = “The Adversary” (“The Satan”)

Word *śatan* in Hebrew itself is neutral. IOW - it can refer to any challenger or adversary—even a good one. Numbers 22:22 refers to the angel of the Lord serving as a *śatan*, an “adversary” against Balaam.

Whoever is being described here is an angelic being, is evil, & seems to have an exclusive/high place among t/demons.

Sounds like Satan to me!

(1) Here in Job chapters 1 & 2 the context is angelic—as far as the adversary is concerned “demonic”

The Satan becomes a key player in this story, even though he’s only mentioned in t/1st 2 chapters. But he is mentioned 14x. Cf. 2:1.

2:1 (scene is repeated) Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.

c. Who is this person known as “the Satan?”

(1) Satan is the chief leader of a band of fallen, evil, angels

At some point before t/creation of t/cosmos, G. created a host of beings known as “messengers” or “angels.”

At some point, likely between Gen. chaps. 1&3, this angelic being rebelled & led a host of angels w/him in that rebellion.

They became Satan & t/demons.

(2) It's possible that we see a record of Satan's fall in Isaiah 14

Isaiah 14:12–15 12 “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 “But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 ‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ 15 “Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.

These words are being addressed in their context to t/King of Bbylon.

But they are so lofty, they seem to be looking past him to a supernatural being; why many think it's referring to Satan.

Theologian Wayne Grudem agrees and writes that ==>

“It would not be uncommon for Hebrew prophetic speech to pass from descriptions of human events to descriptions of heavenly events that are parallel to them and that the earthly events picture in a limited way.” [Grudem, 413]

(3) Greek word is (διάβολος = accuser / slanderer — cf. “diabolical”)

This N.T. word is transl. “devil”. Far from t/caricatures of him as wearing red w/horns & a tail, carrying a pitchfork—he is a powerful force of evil in t/world.

(4) His names are descriptive

He is *śaṭan* in t/Heb. lang.—t/adversary. He is *διάβολος* in t/Grk. lang.—t/accuser / slanderer.

He slanders t/name of G.; he accuses & opposes all that is good—incl. G's saints.

Zech 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan (*śaṭan*) standing at his right hand to accuse (*śaṭan*) him.

3x in t/GOJ, Jesus calls Satan “the ruler of this world.”

Satan counterfeits God's plan & attempts to subvert it. He ultm stands behind t/godless worldview of our contemp. culture.

John 8:44, Jesus calls him “a liar and the father of lies” - no truth dwells in him. In Gen. 3 he appears as a crafty snake — an animal that fascinates by t/flickering of his tongue—until he strikes w/a deadly bite. He appears as an “angel of light” in his deception (2 Cor. 11:14).

(5) His power is limited

(a) He's not God; he doesn't possess the attributes of God

He's not all-powerful; all-present; all-knowing.

He cannot take possession of true believers, tho he can afflict them.

There's no indication that he can read your mind.

He is always subject to God and cannot do anything apart from God's permission (as we'll see later in Job)

(b) He has been defeated at the cross

(c) But we need to be aware of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11)

Jam 4:7 . . . Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

4. So as verse. 6 sets the stage, we see:

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God (good angels) came to present themselves before the LORD, and The Adversary (The Satan) also came among them.

A. The Council (6)

B. The Characters (6)

C. The Conversation (7)

7a The LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?"

Hear we have this heavenly court—this council of angelic beings before t/throne of G.—and the Lord calls out Satan: "*From where do you come?*"

1. God, being omniscient knew the answer

This was more of a conversation starter; a leading ?:

"So, what have you been up to?" ==>

Exodus 4:2 The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff."

7b Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”

a. Think about that . . . Instant access to heaven & earth

Heb word “*halak*” is in a form that implies walking or wandering around; exploring; even pacing. Word in t/Gk transl. of t/OT is *παριπατεω*. Satan is peripatetic.

T/Arabs have a name for Satan that means ==>

“the active, busy, industrious one.” [K&D, 55]

1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

9 But resist him (so James), firm in your faith . . .

D. The Consideration (8)

8a The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? . . .”

1. Wait a minute!

If Job knew what was going on, he’d say, “Wait a minute G. I’m not looking for a fight.”

2. Here we see God’s Omniscience

Read between t/lines. G. knew what t/Satan was up to.

He was looking for a worthy candidate to devour.

Someone who knew & served G // he might get to turn against Him even as Satan himself had done.

E. The Characterization (8) <== How God describes Job ==>

8b “. . . For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

1. What did we see last time? From verse 1? (cf. 2:3)

This elicits a challenge from the Satan
(some even charact. it as a “wager”) ==>

F. The Challenge (9-11)

9 **Then Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing?”**

1. “For nothing” = Lit. “without cause” (as used in 2:3)

10 **“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.”**

2. What did we see in vv. 2 & 3?

Job may have been industrious // worked hard // feared t/Lord // Job had 10 kids — but it was ultimately due to G’s blessing.

Why we ought not be jealous of someone else’s blessed life. Whether they acknowledge it or not, it’s ultimately bc G has permitted or orchestrated that blessing.

a. Romans 12:3 applies

Rom. 12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

3. The Satan says, “You’ve hedged Job in” (for good)

a. Paints a vivid picture

Hedges were used to mark boundary lines. Still used that way.
Thorn hedges were used to keep out intruders.

Some translations use t/metaphor of a wall

“have you not put a wall around him?” [NJB]

Others ==>

“you protect him all around like in an enclosure.” [FRCL; TEV]

(1) It’s like an invisible fence!

You’ve seen those — used to keep dogs at bay within t/confines of their yards.

Imagine going out for a walk one eve. You come up to a house & a 200 lb Rotweiller comes running at you. No fence; no chain. He means business. B4 he can reach t/sidewalk he stops dead in his tracks. He knows what you can’t see: there’s an invisible fence keeping him out.

T/invisible fence around Job isn’t meant to keep Job in. It keeps Satan & his demonic forces out.

F. The Challenge (9-11)

11 “But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.”

4. Who’s in control of that invisible fence? Satan? No!

a. Look at how verse 11 is phrased [^]

Satan rightly affirms G’s sov. Anything that the Satan can do has to first come thru G’s hand. Satan wrongly affirms that Job serves G. merely for selfish reasons. *“Sure, he fears you // loves // serves: You bless him! Take away t/blessings and he will respond w/cursings! He will curse you to your face (i.e. openly; brazenly)”*

5. You think Job is on trial?

Reality is, God is on trial every bit as much as Job is being tested.

a. Satan’s accusations extend to the very character of God

This isn’t just about Job. Satan knows that God is omniscient; He knows t/motives of Job’s heart.

Satan is basically saying, *“God, you are buying Job’s worship, and you know it. This is a quid quo pro arrangement. He wouldn’t serve you if you weren’t giving him all these blessings.”*

It’s like a wealthy yet undesirable man who buys love w/riches.

And he knows it. So he lives with a wife who “loves” him, not for who/what he is, but for the riches he gives her.

b. Satan thinks God is complicit in Job's supposed hypocrisy

He's buying Job off. G. knows that's not true. But does Satan?

Does Job?

(1) Swindoll:

“It’s a clever plan. . . . [However] Job does not deserve even the suggestion of mistreatment. Job has walked with God, certainly in his adult years. He is now the best of the best, ‘greatest of all the men of the east.’ On top of all that, he is a servant of God. But none of that impresses Satan. Evil suspicions prompt his insidious plot: ‘You want to know what [Job’s] really made of, remove all that indulged treatment and pervasive protection. Strip away the veneer of the man’s comfort, and You’ll see right away; he’ll turn on You. ‘He will surely curse You to Your face’ . . . Satan’s prediction, ‘Instead of treating him like an overindulged child, why don’t You treat him like anybody else on earth? [Then I nearly wept as I read these words] Let him know what it’s like to suffer the death of a child....’” [Swindoll, 10-11]

c. This brings up a relevant question for us . . .

Why do we serve Him? That’s a ? I’ve been faced w/every day—esp. since Xmas Eve of 2015. Like Job, I pray I pass t/test.

What about you? *Will Disaster Derail Your Devotion?*

“Breach t/hedge of your comfort & blessing: Family; children; health—then see how much you really care to serve God.”

d. In N.T. terms, it’s easy to pursue Christ during times of ease, but what about when life seemingly turns against you?

When your sweet cup of blessing turns into a bitter cup of suffering?

BOJ is asking t/? of us all: “Why do we serve JC” Is our worship genuine or counterfeit?

There’s nothing like suffering that will answer that question.

1 Peter 1:6–7 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Matthew 13:20–21 20 “The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

What about you? *Will Disaster Derail Your Devotion?*

G. The Condition (12)

12a **Then the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.”**

Satan is given power; but it’s secondary to, & contingent upon, G’s. G. sets t/condition [^] Touch what he has, but don’t touch him.

The old British theologian H. Wheeler Robinson observes:

“It is God who first calls attention to Job, God who permits the trial of his faith . . . and assigns its proper limits. Throughout it is the will of God that is being done. . . . All that comes to Job comes not by blind chance nor by the compulsion of the Adversary. It is the simple development of God’s first word: “Hast thou considered my servant Job?”” [H. Wheeler Robinson, as cited in Talbert, 39]

12b So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

Setting the stage for disaster. That falls upon Job in t/next set of vv.

II. Some Closing Observations

A. The Picture is Bigger than the Frame

At this point in t/narrative, Job does not know what’s coming or why. As far as we know, Job never understood t/reason all of this happened. He does now.

Lesson for us: we go thru things in this life that make no sense to us. But we don’t know t/big picture.

We see in a mirror quite dimly. Prov. 3:5-6 {cite}

B. God is Bigger than the Picture

BTIM, He knows t/outcome. Many have asked, “Why is Job put to t/test when God, in His omniscience, already knows the answer?”

G. may know; but he’s t/only one that does. Satan doesn’t // demons // t/holy angels // those around us // we ourselves.

Our suffering transcends us in a way that we can't comprehend. When you suffer, you feel alone—like you're in a vacuum of tears.

Others are watching. We've learned this from our affliction.

"I want to live for whatever God chooses to do in my life that will bring Him glory."

G. is glorified when fallen humanity sees us suffer well.

G.IG when t/holy angels see us suffer well. Cf. 1 Peter 1:12

G.IG when t/demons of hell—even the Satan—see us suffer well.

Layton Talbert ==>

“Job suffered to prove, among other things, that there are people who serve God ‘for nothing’ other than for Who He is, people who worship God ‘without cause’ (1:9) even when they suffer ‘without cause’ (2:3). What, then, does our suffering accomplish? When we cling to God amid inexplicable affliction, we demonstrate that we are some of those people. We are not proving anything further about the character and integrity of God; that was eternally substantiated by the case of Job. But we are proving a great deal about ourselves, about the integrity of our faith and the sincerity of our relationship to God. More than any other kind of suffering, this kind of suffering is a testing of your faith (James 1:2-3).” [Talbert, 45]

C. Suffering is bigger than Satan

Not all suffering is due to Satanic involvement. Sometimes we suffer because of our sin // sin of others. We live in a fallen world and are subject to affliction & death. Don't conclude, when you are under fire, that it's due to some heavenly wager between Satan and God.

On other hand, don't discount t/forces of evil—even demonic forces.

Ephesians 6:12–13 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

D. God is Bigger than Affliction

We See that God is Sovereign: Rest in that precious truth.

Nothing can afflict or bless us apart from the permission of God.

People don't reject G's sov. because He blesses.

People reject G's sov. because of suffering.

We don't think suffering is fair (suffering in this life // eternal suffering in hell) // therefore God can't poss. B in control over it.

In 1981 a Jewish Rabbi wrote a best-selling book, “Why Bad Things Happen to Good People” - title is a theological misnomer (should be “Why Do Good Things Happen to Bad People?”).

Rabbi Kushner wrote at least in part due to tragedy in his own family - his young son was stricken with t/disease Progeria (rapid aging) and would not live beyond his teenage years.

In Kushner's book, t/Heb. Patri. Job is considered as 1 of those "Good Ppl who have Bad Things Happen to Them" - and Kushner concludes that Job, "Forced to choose between a good God who is not totally powerful, or a powerful God who is not totally good ... chooses to believe in God's goodness."

Kushner concludes that, "God wants the righteous to live peaceful, happy lives, but sometimes even He can't bring that about. It is too difficult even for God to keep cruelty and chaos from claiming their innocent victims."

Is that a God who can be trusted? Is that t/God Job trusted?

Job 42:2 I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.

Swindoll ==>

" . . . Do not try to grasp each thread of His profound plan. If you resist my counsel here, you'll become increasingly more confused, ultimately resentful, and finally bitter. At that point Satan will have won the day. Accept it, enduring t/trial that has been permitted by God

Nothing touches your life that has not first passed through [His] hands... He is in full control and because He is, He has the sovereign right to permit trials that we do not deserve."

He continues ==>

“I would be willing to wager that most of you . . . are going through something that [seems] unfair. . . . The consequences may have started to get to you. You didn’t anticipate any of this. You didn’t think it would come to this, but it has. Trust me here. What has happened is a necessary part of your spiritual growth. Yes, necessary. . . . The silence of God’s voice will make you wonder if He is even there. And the absence of God’s presence will make you wonder if He even cares. He is. And He does.” [Swindoll, 12-13]

E. Our Hope is Bigger than Earthly life

Why do we serve the Lord?

Donald S. Whitney ==>

“As you are reading this, tens of thousands of the Lord’s pilgrims around the world are threatened with execution, torture, slavery, starvation, homelessness, poverty, imprisonment, and other persecutions designed to destroy their faith in Jesus Christ. And yet ... they find it ‘worth [their] while to endure those hardships’ because of what they have and hope for in Christ. . . . [O]ur endurance testifies to the worthiness of Christ. Unrelenting faithfulness in the absence of all earthly explanation says to the watching world, ‘It is worth enduring all this pain and heartache to know Christ and to anticipate the glory of being with Him forever.’” [Donald S. Whitney, as cited by Talbert, 46]