

# Satan's Challenge and Job's First Test

In the heavenly court, Satan challenges Job's motives for serving God. God permits Satan to test Job by taking away his wealth and children.

Job 1:6-22

CHARACTERS: God, Satan, Job, Messengers

THEMES: Spiritual warfare, Testing, God's sovereignty, Grief, Worship in suffering

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ONE DAY, THE angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. The scene shifts from earth to heaven's throne room, where a conversation takes place that Job knows nothing about.

'Where have you come from?' the Lord asked Satan.

'From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it,' Satan replied—a restless adversary, searching for victims.

Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.'

God Himself initiated this test. He was so confident in Job's genuine faith that He pointed Job out to the accuser. But Satan had a cynical response: 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.'

The accusation was devastating in its implications. Satan claimed that Job's righteousness was merely transactional—that he served God only because it paid well. Remove the blessings, Satan argued, and Job's faith would crumble into cursing.

The Lord accepted the challenge. 'Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.' Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Then catastrophe struck with stunning speed. One day while Job's sons and daughters were feasting at the oldest brother's house, a messenger came running to Job: 'The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived: 'The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

While he was still speaking, another came: 'The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

While he was still speaking, yet another messenger arrived: 'Your sons and daughters were feasting at the oldest brother's house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

In one day—perhaps in one hour—Job lost everything. His wealth was gone. His servants were dead. And most devastating of all, all ten of his children were killed in a single disaster.

Job's response is one of the most remarkable moments in Scripture. He got up, tore his robe, and shaved his head in grief. But then he fell to the ground in worship and said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.'

In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. Satan's accusation was proven false. Job's faith was not dependent on blessings. Even in crushing loss, he worshiped. The test had begun, and Job had passed the first trial.

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