

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

May 30, 2010

The Test of Suffering

Focal Passage:

Job 1-2

Cross References: 1 Corinthians 10:13;
1 Thessalonians 4:13; James 1:2-4,13;
1 Peter 5:8-11

Central Idea: God allowed Satan to put Job's faith to the test.

Lesson Idea: When suffering comes, we should remain loyal to our Lord.

Historical Context: See insert with intro to Job from *Halley's Bible Handbook* pp. 309-311.

Bible in a Year Daily Readings

May 16-23, 2010

May 23 Nehemiah 8 - 10
May 24 Nehemiah 11 - 13
May 25 Esther 1 - 5
May 26 Esther 6 - 10
May 27 Job 1 - 4
May 28 Job 5 - 8
May 29 Job 9 - 12
May 30 Job 13 - 16

Highlights of the Week:

Nehemiah 9: Confession of sin
Esther 1-2: Esther becomes queen
Esther 4: "For such a time as this"
Esther 5-10: God rescues His people
Job 1-2: Heavenly confrontation
Job 3: Job's lament
Job 4-16: Questionable counsel

Job 1:1-12

Job's Character vs Satan's Challenge

¹*There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.*

²*Seven sons and three daughters were born to him.*

³*His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

⁴*His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.*

⁵*When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.*

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

⁷*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."*

⁸*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."*

⁹Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

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.

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

¹²Then 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.

DISCUSSION:

How do these verses describe Job?

- How closely does your life match that description?

Verse 6 says that the "sons of God (angels) came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them." We don't know why God allows Satan to come into His presence, but the phrase "to present themselves" implies a subordinate checking in with a Superior. This passage clearly shows God's sovereignty over His angels and over Satan. God asks Satan where he has been (not because God did not know the answer, but to set Satan up for a confrontation).

- Read 1 Peter 5:8. What is Satan always doing?

In vs 8 God directs Satan's attention to the righteousness of Job. Why did God do that?

In vs 9-10 Satan accuses Job of only being faithful because of God's blessings.

- Are people today only faithful to God when things are going well for them?
- What evidence in your life indicates that you would be faithful to God regardless of your circumstances?

Some have objected to God allowing Satan to afflict Job, but what do vs 11-12 indicate about God's love and control over the extent of suffering He allows?

- Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. How does this promise back up the truth of this verse?

Job 1:13-22

Satan Allowed to Test Job

¹³Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

¹⁴a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them,

¹⁵and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

¹⁶While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

¹⁷While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

¹⁸While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

¹⁹and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

²⁰Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

²¹He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

²²Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

DISCUSSION:

What all did Satan take from Job?

One of my favorite sayings teaches that "when you are bumped, whatever you are full of will spill out." How did Job respond to Satan's destruction?

- How would you have responded?
- How hard is it to worship the LORD during bad or sad times?

- Notice in vs 20 that Job showed his grief in the tearing of his robe and shaving of his head. Grief in the midst of loss is normal and not sinful unless it consumes you. Paul told the Thessalonians to “not grieve as the rest of men who have no hope” (1 Thess 4:13).

Paraphrase vs 21 in your own words and think about the profound truth it teaches.

What two things did Job avoid in the midst of his trial?

- Why do people often fall into sin or start blaming God when things go wrong?
- Read James 1:13. What does it teach about God and evil?

Job 2:1-13

Job Loses His Health but not His Faith

¹Again 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."

⁴Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

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

⁶So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."

⁷Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

⁸And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.

⁹Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"

¹⁰But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

¹¹Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him.

¹²When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky.

¹³Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.

DISCUSSION:

In vs 3, the original Hebrew verb for “still holds fast” implies that Job’s faith has gotten stronger through the suffering.

- What does James 1:2-4 teach about the effect that suffering and trials have on our lives?

When God says that He was incited against Job “without cause,” He uses the same wording that Satan had used to accuse Job in 1:9 when he asked if Job served God “for nothing.” This verse does not imply that Satan tricked God into doing something, but is meant to put the accuser in his place and emphasize that Job’s faith was stronger than Satan admitted.

In vs 4-6 Satan still sought to discredit Job and God allowed Satan to tempt Job with physical ailments, but note again that God set limits on what Satan could do. Praise the Lord for setting limits on Satan’s attempts at harming you.

In vs 9 Job’s wife wanted him to give up his integrity and curse God. How did Job respond?

- What influence do family members have on each other’s faith in the Lord?
- How do you actively try to influence your family for good?

Vs 13 says that Job and his friends sat silently for a whole week when they saw his pain. Their dialogue over the next 30 chapters brings no comfort to Job and expresses their wrong ideas about God.

- Sometimes when you don’t know what to say in a time of grief, the best thing you can do is just be present with the person and not say anything at all. Love and prayer are the most powerful sources of comfort we have.

APPLICATION:

Job did not know why he was suffering. He did not know that God was allowing him to suffer to both strengthen him and to weaken Satan. But Job remained faithful in spite of what he did not know.

- Read 1 Peter 5:9-11. What truths does Peter teach that should comfort us when we face suffering?
- When times of suffering come in your life, do you grow closer to the Lord or drift away from Him?
- How can the story of Job encourage you in your daily walk with the Lord?

Note: The scriptures printed in this lesson come from the New American Standard Bible (NASB)