

WHAT A DAY!

Text: Job 1.6–22

Theme: God is absolutely sovereign over all things, events and people

INTRODUCTION – What if you had no choice but to suffer?

- no matter the size of the trials or suffering, you know you'd have to endure them
- what would you do?
- what would hold you through them?

This is what Job is about to discover

- we've seen Job, man of outstanding character and piety before holy God
- he's blameless, upright, fears God and turns from evil
- he is, as the text tells us, the greatest of all the people of the east
- he is a great man, and will remain great; he does not cease from being great
- he doesn't count his blessings as something to be grasped
- he finds himself willing to be made nothing for the glory of God
- as such, he is pointing us to One far greater, who did even more
- Jesus, not counting equality with God a thing to be grasped, emptied Himself
- He was born in the likeness of men, humbled himself, became obedient
- even to point of death, death on a cross

What we are about to see, hear and discover should astound us

- Job has no idea of any of what occurs in 1.6–12; none at all
- don't ever forget that as we walk through this book
- but what Job is going to learn, now and thru/out is this:

God's glory is more important than our personal comfort

Let's listen in and see... [read 1.6–12]

I. SATAN'S FIGHT AGAINST IT

- "Now there was a day" – what a day this will be!
- sons of God gather: seems rather routine to the writer
- talking about supernatural beings, most likely angels, meeting with God
- they present themselves, much like servants giving updates & reports
- and "the Satan" joins them

1. Not Satan as we might know him

- word literally: "adversary, opponent, enemy"
- but not anywhere fully developed as think of him in NT or even now
- Satan not mentioned great deal in OT
- perhaps this is to show us our hearts are far greater threat

2. What have you been up to?

- God knows full well, but wants it out in the open
- it will serve a great purpose quite soon
- Satan's answer, like petulant teenager: "Stuff"
- as if, "It's none of your business"

- “Have you considered Job?” – word here is “taken it to heart”
- note God’s description of Job: God knows Job is godly man
- serious in his piety, faith and trust

3. the Satan’s heart revealed more and more

- has considered Job; it’s his job, to wander around looking for these types
- hoping to oppose them, trip them up, cause them to stumble
- *“your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”* 1 Peter 5.8
- cynical heart becomes clear: he’s far too intelligent to believe Job is for real
- Does he fear you for no reason?
- the Satan is charging Job with being mercenary in his faithfulness
- he thinks Job has bought prosperity gospel hook, line & sinker
- only in it for the blessings, the riches, the great success
- also accuses God of playing favorites with Job
- challenges God: Job won’t worship you as God simply because you’re God
- he’s in it for the money
- the Satan’s gauntlet thrown down? stretch out Your hand
- this is a direct affront to the glory and sovereignty of Almighty God

And yet, now we begin to see...

II. GOD’S HAND IN IT

- because God is absolutely sovereign over all things, all creatures, He knows
- He knows what this challenge is all about: about God’s glory for glory’s sake
- the Satan’s cynicism leads him to believe Job doesn’t care about God’s glory
- he’s only in this because of his own glory and God’s gifts poured out
- but God is going to show entire universe something marvelous
- going to show that His glory is more important even than personal comfort
- Job’s comfort, my comfort, your comfort

1. Comes full circle in NT Christians’ lives — 1 Peter 1.6, 7

• In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- Christians endure and believe fully even when all blessings removed
- purpose: test the genuineness of their faith
- this is done, so when Jesus Christ returns, praise, glory & honor go to Him
- these sufferings & trials to prove God is worthy of all worship & glory

2. God’s hand seen even in the Satan’s working & testing

- Satan opposes, accuses, tempts us
- yet even these activities can point us to the glory of God
- Satan doesn’t intend this, but God does, why else is he still around
- why else, even though a sick, feeble lion, is he allowed this task?

3. God is not callous or cold-blooded

- something deeper at work here
- does God give permission to the Satan to afflict Job? yes
- but note carefully: God is even giving instructions to the Satan

- while powerful and dangerous, he is, as Martin Luther said, “God’s Satan”
- John Piper once put it this way: Satan is dangerous, but God Almighty has him on a leash and he can do nothing without God’s say

4. But oh, how we try to help God out and get Him off the hook

- Rabbi Kushner, *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People*, does it
- believes God’s doing best He can, but just can’t manage everything perfectly
- so, bad things slip by
- some put it this way: God, like Grand Chess Master taking on many games
- wins most, but loses a few here & there
- some teach: God doesn’t know all future choices everyone will make
- some make foolish choices and bring suffering upon themselves or others
- God, didn’t know it was going to happen, but is strong enough to see you thru
- why must we try to be more merciful than God?
- why do we try to be smarter than God? more caring than God?
- because we have believed the Satan’s lie: God’s glory is that big a deal

5. God’s glory at stake here

- if God is not glorified in and by all things, whole universe in big trouble
- God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him
- this is true, no matter what, but it is proven especially true in suffering
- so, read this plainly, clearly, simply
- the Satan challenges God, v. 11: stretch out Your hand & touch Job
- word for “touch” here means “to smite, to strike a blow”
- and God does...by allowing the Satan to do terrible things
- and Satan goes out from Lord’s presence
- Job doesn’t know it, but it will ultimately reveal God’s greater glory

Even as we see challenge to God’s sovereign glory, we see...

III. JOB’S RESPONSE TO IT

- [read Job 1.13–22]
- we just commemorated the 25th anniversary of Sept 11, 2001
- what a day! I’ll never forget so many details of that day
- it started out: “Now there was a day...”
- Job 1.13 and following started out so normal for Job; just another day...
- “Now there was a day” and “there came a messenger
- keep track of the repetition here; it’s important to these events

1. Sabeans, v. 15

- roving thugs of ancient Middle East
- unexpected, violent, sudden, destructive, devastating
- messenger: I alone have escaped to tell you”
- words barely out of mouth, when...

2. Fire from heaven, v. 16

- descriptive of lightning, a terrible act of God
- in fact, many insurance companies still call certain disasters by these words
- sheep and servants gone, consumed

- I alone have escaped to tell you
- words still settling in when...

3. Chaldeans, v. 17

- nomads from region of Mesopotamia, part of what will become Babylon
- three groups raided vast herds of camels & servants
- again, total devastation
- and again, I alone have escaped to tell you

4. Job bankrupted, news comes in matter of just minutes

- riches – gone; reputation – gone
- everything he owned, gone...or is it

5. Great wind, v. 18

- the final blow: it was one of those days, a feast day for sons & daughters
- and I alone have escaped to tell you
- all gathered under one roof when crushed in this storm
- four messengers fade away, out of room; Job left alone with his thoughts
- how will he respond? will his heart truly be revealed?

6. Job's response

- arose — he is going to act, but how?
- tore his robes – symbolic of the way his heart has been torn from his chest
- shaved his head – another symbolism of death, identifying with the dead
- and in a way, Job did die that day
- but would his heart, now numb with grief, respond like the Satan hoped?

7. v. 20b — fell on ground and worship

- he worshiped
- v. 21: talks about birth and death, beginning and end of our life on earth
- in-between, Job acknowledges everything else is a gift from God's hand
- possessions, children, spouse: all gifts from God
- even breath, next heartbeat: gifts from God
- Job worships and acknowledges God is good & God is sovereign
- God is God, praise His name
- we'll talk about this more as we keep on going thru Job
- but this is huge: right out of gate, Job's heart stands firm

8. v. 22 — just as significant: Job gives glory to God

- Satan was wrong here; Job did NOT curse God
- he didn't believe God was wrong, nor did he sin in any way
- Job is pointing us to Someone greater here
- in Job's sacrifices for his children, he's pointing to the need for a sacrifice
- One would come, much later, who would be the ultimate sacrifice for us
- He would give His very life as a sacrifice for us
- Job also points to One who would suffer and overcome
- Jesus suffered more than any other human... and overcame for God's glory
- in fact, it was for the glory of God Jesus did all these things and more

CONCLUSION — How do you respond to suffering and loss?

- grief, for sure; sorrow that seems overwhelming
- perhaps a sadness that you wonder if it will ever leave you

But when that sadness, grief or pain lingers, what do you do?

- do you start to entertain thoughts of blaming God?
- no, most of you would never, ever do such a thing
- but you know, you just know it wasn't your fault, so someone's to blame, right?
- do you seek them out, find them, let them know it?
- do you, unlike Job, begin sinning as a reaction to serious grief and pain?
- do you hurt those around you, because it's not fair that they shouldn't hurt too
- do you, rather than outright blaming God, just cut Him off?
- you stop listening to His voice in His Word
- you cease from fellowship through prayer and His Holy Spirit
- the people of God become pariahs to you and you forsake them
- as sinful and as wrong as all this is, there is still forgiveness
- Jesus preaches to you, as He did so long ago: "Repent and believe"

Others of you have found, like Job, that God is glorious and sovereign

- even in the midst of the most sorrowful pain, He is there
- you have found shelter in Jesus Christ, the One who suffered for you
- it hurts, more than you think you can bear
- but you know it's been born by Another, your shelter, rock, your fortress
- Jesus Christ is yours and you are His
- this is what brings the glory all to God in all things