

Understanding Satan's Power



Why Do These Things Happen to God's People? (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

Point number two is that God took the initiative and pointed Job out. If you look in chapter 1, verse 8:

> "Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job, there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?'"

You might feel honored if God would say that about you but bear in mind that a lot goes with it. Because, when the Lord pointed Job out to Satan He made him Satan's number one target. So, don't be in a hurry to apply. Be sure you can take what goes with it.

As many of you know, my first wife and I had a children's home. We raised a number of children. Like other missionaries we would send newsletters—occasionally, not very often. And every now and then we'd give a glowing report of some particular girl and we noticed without fail that created special spiritual problems for that child. It exposed them to something that they wouldn't have been exposed to if we hadn't praised them. God has spoken to me personally, be very careful about praising people because you create problems for them in two ways: number one, you tend to get them with an inflated ego and, number two, you, as it were, make them lightning conductors for Satan's lightning.

What I want to point out to you now is God took the initiative. It wasn't Satan who said that man Job, it was God who said, "Have you considered my servant Job?" I think I have to say reverently God was proud of Job. Is that acceptable? So, why don't we ask ourselves, is God proud of you and me? Is there anything in our lives to make God proud?

The third point about Satan is in relationship to God's people Satan can only go as far as God permits. So, let's look at some example of that. Chapter 1, verse 12:

> "The Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all that Job has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.'"

You can take all his property but don't touch him. And Satan could not go one inch further than God permitted.

Well then, Satan came back with this answer, "Well, that's all right, he's still got his body intact." So in chapter 2, verse 6 the Lord said to Satan:

> "Behold, he is in your hands but spare his life."

You can do anything to his body but you can't kill him. And in a few days Job came out with boils all over him from the crown of his head to the souls of his feet. And boils are very painful, they're also very humiliating. Who caused the boils? Satan. So he has power but he can go no further than God permits.

This has got an application and it's this, if we are in some kind of spiritual struggle and we feel that Satan is oppressing us—and I frankly find myself in that situation pretty often—it's legitimate to resist Satan. The Bible says resist him and he will flee from you. But if you go on resisting him and he doesn't flee, then the wise thing to do is stop and say, "God, what are you trying to teach me?" Because until you learn the lesson God won't call Satan off. That's very, very important. Don't go on bombarding God with prayers that get you nowhere. Stop praying and ask God to teach you what He has for you to learn. Remember, Satan couldn't do it if God didn't permit it.

Now, within those limits this passage reveals Satan has certain areas of power which are important. He has power to some extent over human agents. He stirred up the Sabeans and he stirred up the Chaldeans to raid all Job's flocks. They came because Satan stirred them up. I think it's not difficult for most of us to believe Satan still can stir people up, make them enemies.

Secondly, and this is more perhaps surprising, Satan has a measure of power over the elements. Listen to what he can do. In chapter 1, verse 16 it says:

> "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them..."

Who was responsible for that fire that fell from heaven? Satan, that's right.

And remember, in the book of Revelation it affirms again that there will be a false prophet, a servant of Satan, who will be able to call down fire from heaven. You better adjust your thinking. See, one problem with many Charismatics is we automatically assume that if somebody can do something supernatural he represents God. That is not necessarily true. You are a candidate for deception if you accept any supernatural manifestation as automatically coming from God. That's very, very important.

Also with regard to the elements in verse 19 it says:

> "...suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young men, and they are dead..."

All Job's children perished in one abnormal climatic experience. A wind came and struck the four corners of the house. I tell people whenever a wind strikes all four corners of your house at once you may know it's from Satan. And they were all killed. Satan had that power. He could control the fire from heaven, he could control the wind up to a point that God said.

He also had power to inflict sickness because in the next chapter it says when God gave him permission to attack Job's body he went out and smote him with boils from the crown of his head to the souls of his feet. Not all sickness is from Satan but some sickness is directly from Satan. And sometimes if you can deal with the satanic element in a sickness there will be immediate healing.

Now that's not always true, it's only sometimes true and what you need is discernment to know what it is that you're dealing with. But bear in mind some sicknesses are directly caused by Satan. You probably will not achieve healing until you identify the cause and deal with it the right way.

The final fact that I want to point out about Satan is that he attacks the character of God's servants. He is a cynic. He can always find some way to question the integrity of God's servants. And so you find him saying in chapter 1, verses 9 to 11:

> "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge around him..."

In other words, he gets all the good. Why shouldn't he fear you, imputing Job's motive.

And then in chapter 2, verses 4 and 5:

> "Satan answered the Lord, 'Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will

surely curse you to his face!'"

You understand? Satan always has a way to impute the worst motives to God's servants. And this contends a warning because there's a lot of that being said about the servants of God in America today. And some of it unfortunately is true. But let's not help Satan do his job, he's the accuser of the brethren, we don't have to do it. Is that right? Some of you need to repent because you've become accusers. And remember when you're doing that you're doing Satan's job. He doesn't need your help. Discontinue.

Along come Job's friends and, as I've said, they sit for seven days speechless. Perhaps it's difficult for you to imagine that but having been in the Middle East I can easily picture Middle Easterners acting like that today. They're different. And in many ways if you know them you understand the Bible better because the Bible basically is a Middle Eastern book, is that right? And all its authors but one were Jewish, don't forget that.

So all I'm saying is you could think the behavior of the people in the book of Job is incredible but in actual fact it's Middle Eastern. I mean, there's been great changes in the last 40 years because Western culture has corrupted almost everybody everywhere. I don't say the Arab culture was altogether in line with the Bible but much of it was. I'm grateful for having been exposed to it for at least a little while because it gave me an understanding of the Middle Eastern way of thinking which is very, very different from contemporary Western thinking, especially American thinking.

I wince when I read or hear about American diplomats negotiating with Arabs because they don't think on the same terms. And let me tell you basically the Arab rulers haven't changed one thing as a result of all the negotiations. They still have the same purpose and they'll stick to it. I'm not going to go into that because it's political but the Bible is very illuminating on things like that.

Now, along come Job's friends and they are men of words.

First of all, they said in a very roundabout way to Job, "You have sinned and that's why all this has happened to you." They didn't come right out and say it that way straight-away but Job knew well enough what they were saying and they knew what they wanted to say. The implication was this wouldn't have happened to you if you hadn't sinned. So you'll find all the way through Job is maintaining, "But I haven't sinned." And you know, he was right, he hadn't sinned. You'll find right from beginning to end God never charges Job with sin. He was righteous at the beginning and was righteous at the end. That's what makes the book puzzling. And a lot of religious people just don't make room for that, they think like Job's friends, "Well, this happened to him so he must have sinned." It's not so. Now as I say, they don't come right out and say that immediately but that's what they mean.

Radio Program

Transcript: TS-R187-102-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

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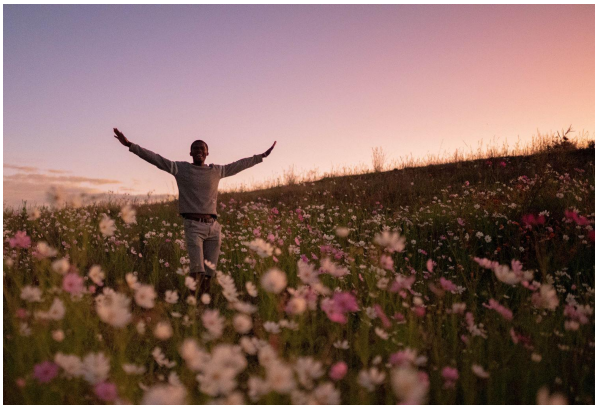

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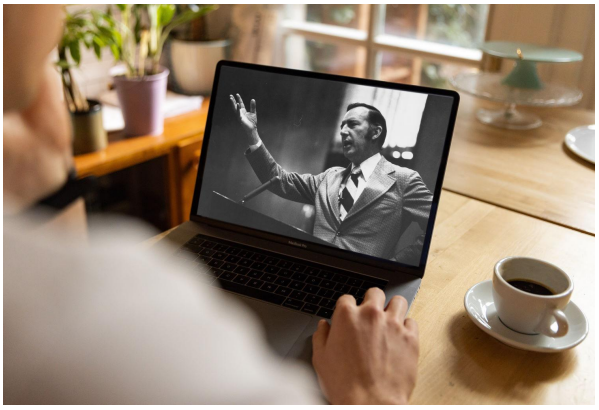

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