



Sunday School Lesson for January 4, 2004.  
Released on January 2, 2004.

Study Job 2:1-10. Integrity in the Midst of Suffering  
Questions and answers below.

TIME: about 2000 B.C.  
PLACE: Land of Uz

Job 2:1-10

1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord .

2 And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

3 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

4 And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

6 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord , and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

### Lesson Background

We are certain that Job was not a fictitious character (see Ezekiel 14:14, 20; James 5:11). He lived in "the land of Uz" (Job 1:1), which was in the territory of the Edomites, south of Palestine (Lamentations 4:21). Job was wealthy—perhaps the wealthiest man of his time (Job 1:3). Job was the head of a large family (1:2). Job was a man whose reverence for God caused him to lead a righteous life (1:1). Job lived sometime in the age of the patriarchs, between 1000 and 2000 B.C. There is no evidence that Job was aware of the Old Testament law.

In order to appreciate fully this week's lesson text, you must read Job 1 as background. There you learn about Job's character, position, and family (1:1-6). Job is about suffering, patience, faith, and trust. It is also about the righteousness and sovereignty of God.

Listen to God's opinion of Job: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job: and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1). We are then given one of the most unusual heavenly scenes described in the Bible. As the angels of God gathered before Him, God noticed Satan among them.

"Whence comest thou?" God asked. "From going to and fro in the earth," Satan answered (Job 1:7). God was very pleased with Job and wanted to be certain Satan was aware of his godliness. Satan, however, used the occasion to accuse Job of selfish motives in his faithfulness to God.

The Lord then gave Satan permission to test Job without harming him physically. This is a genuine tribute to the godliness of Job, for God knew he could be trusted with testing beyond what most men and women would endure.

### God's Test

(Job 2:1-3)

Satan's Appearance (vs. 1, 2)

#### 1. Who are the "sons of God?" (v. 1). Why was Satan "among them?"

We are not told how much time elapses between the appearance of Satan before God in Job 1 and the beginning of Job 2, but we are told that once again Satan appeared in the presence of God's angels ("sons of God") before Him. We cannot help wondering about the meaning of these gatherings. Do the angels regularly gather before God to give an accounting of their activities? It appears that was what was happening here.

Satan is the head of the unholy angels and is a created being, as are all other angels and humans. It seems he originally occupied the highest position of leadership in the angelic world (Ezek. 28:12-15); but because of his pride and rebellion and desire to take the place of God (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:15-18), he is now in a fallen state. The name "Satan" means adversary or opponent, and he can be described appropriately as the archenemy of good. He is characterized in John 8:44 as a liar and murderer with no truth in him.

#### 2. How did God initiate the conversation with Satan, who appeared among the angels (v. 2)?

It is interesting to note that in Satan's second appearance before God, he did not offer a report on his encounter with Job. Obviously his inability to get Job to deny God made his former accusations worthless and his attempts total failures. As on the previous occasion, God initiated the conversation by asking Satan where he had been. Also as on the previous occasion, Satan replied that he had come from moving around over the earth.

It should be encouraging for believers to realize that Satan is not omnipresent, as is God. We sometimes refer to someone's being under satanic attack. In most cases Satan himself is not personally present in those situations, for he certainly has more important interests in this world than most of us. He does work through his demons, however; so he is able to accomplish much in his opposition to God and His children.

Knowing we have the Holy Spirit present within us assures us that we can be victorious over these demons.

### 3. What did God point out to Satan (v. 3)?

As God confronted Satan the second time, He pointed out to Satan that what he had said had not come true. Once again God named Job's godly qualities. First, He said Job was perfect (Job 2:3). A comparison of several translations shows that most of them use the word "blameless." No human being is perfect in the sense of being without imperfection. It is possible, however, to be blameless by maintaining a close relationship with God. Job dealt with sin as soon as he was aware of it. He did not let it continue in his life.

Second, God said Job was an "upright" man. The Hebrew word comes from a root word that means in a literal sense "to be straight." There was nothing spiritually out of line in Job's life because he measured his activities by his knowledge of God and His will. Third, God said Job feared Him. This fear is a reverent respect for God, the kind that causes a person to want to never displease or disappoint Him. Perhaps Job revealed this best every time he offered sacrifices on behalf of his children just in case they had sinned (Job 1:5).

Fourth, God pointed out to Satan that Job shunned evil. He turned away from evil rather than entertain any possibility of participating in it. Finally, to complete His glowing report on Job, God reminded Satan that in spite of all he had been through, Job had maintained his integrity. He did this even though Satan had moved God "against him, to destroy him without cause" (Job 2:3). Satan cannot make God change His mind about anything. God, however, knew how Job would handle the tests and approved Satan's plan.

### Satan's Accusation (Job 2:4-6)

### 4. What did Satan suggest was Job's reason for remaining faithful to God (v. 4)?

Just when we think Satan should have been left speechless, he responded with another charge against Job. "Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job 2:4). Satan claimed that personal well-being will motivate even the most godly to put God in second place. This was a serious accusation and one that we should perhaps think about.

Granted, one of the most difficult tests we humans sometimes have to face is physical suffering. No doubt there are many who give in to the temptation to become despondent and blame God for not giving them relief, and there are probably some who turn against Him in bitterness over their situations. Such is not always the case, though. Satan did not realize that Job was wholly devoted to God and was sustained by God's Spirit.

How would we respond if, along with the loss of everything material, God also allowed the ruination of our health? No one doubts that would be a most serious trial; but would it cause us to turn against God and complain bitterly that we did not deserve such treatment? Satan knows human nature all too well and probably felt quite confident in his accusation against Job. As it turned out, though, Job was not like most other believers. His faith was strong enough to carry him through the greatest trials any of us can ever imagine.

5. What did Satan say Job would do if God tested him severely enough (v. 5)?

Satan again tries to get God to afflict Job. Although Job has suffered great emotional stress and personal loss, he has not yet suffered physically, since his own bone and his flesh have not been affected. Satan's method changes, but not his goal. His goal is still to get Job to curse God and thus destroy their relationship.

This is Satan's goal even today. He works on Christians to get them to give up on God. He knows God will not give up on us, so the breaking of the bond between us has to be our doing. C. S. Lewis's classic book *The Screwtape Letters* provides marvelous insight into the deviousness of Satan. We must be aware of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11), and we must not let him succeed (Ephesians 6:11)!

Once again the sovereign Lord, knowing the end results ahead of time, gave Satan permission to move against Job (v. 6). As difficult as this may be to understand, we must accept that God was working His perfect plan in allowing Job to be so severely tested. Because of it Job has been an example and encouragement for believers through many centuries.

6. To what degree was Satan allowed to test Job after he accused him before God the second time (v. 6)?

The one boundary God placed on Satan was that he could not take Job's life. That allowed Satan room, however, to bring severe trials upon Job. When you begin to feel your trials are unbearable, you need to remember that "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

Job's Infirmity  
(Job 2:7, 8)

7. What kind of suffering did Job experience as a result (vs. 7, 8)?

Coupled with the losses Job had already experienced, this attack would seem to be more than a human being could bear. Satan struck Job with painful boils from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. We do not know exactly what this disease was, but we have some details of the suffering that resulted from it. Job 2:7 says it affected his entire body. The word "sore" means the boils were very painful, and verse 13 indicates they caused him much grief. Verse 8 indicates the boils caused him intense itching everywhere.

Later we learn that Job's body was crusty and covered with ulcerous sores in which worms embedded themselves (Job 7:5). His skin turned dark and flaky, resulting in peeling and further pain (30:30). He had a fever and aching bones (v. 17). He became depressed (3:24,25), had difficulty breathing (9:18), grew dark under his eyes (16:16), and had bad breath (19:17). All of this caused him insomnia, leading to great weariness (7:4). Satan had done everything he could to cause the greatest amount of suffering possible.

A potsherd was a piece of broken pottery, and it would have been found among the ashes in the garbage heap outside the city walls. This man who used to sit in the city gates as one of the most respected fathers of the city (29:7) now found himself an

outcast. How did Job handle such painful disgrace and physical suffering? How would we have done in such a situation?

Job's Integrity  
(Job 2:9, 10)

8. What did Job's wife challenge him to do about his situation (v. 9)?

For some reason, when Satan took the lives of Job's children, he left his wife alone. Some Bible students think it was part of his plan to use her later as a further temptation in Job's suffering. She is finally mentioned as challenging Job to forget about his integrity, curse God, and as a result have his life taken; thus he could be released from his suffering.

But remember that Job's wife, too, has lost children and financial security. She has suffered tremendous loss. Perhaps she thinks that some sin of her husband is responsible. Either way, Job's wife was telling Job to do exactly what Satan had said he would do if tested severely enough (Job 2:5).

Some have seen a parallel between Eve and Job's wife. Both presented temptation to their husbands. Job's wife, however, was responding to the despair in her life. She lashed out at her husband and at God.

9. How did Job view his suffering (v. 10)? How does Job serve as an example for us, and how can we prepare to maintain our integrity in testing?

Job remained strong in his faith in spite of this suggestion. What his wife suggested was not a proper response to the testing God had allowed. The word "foolish" (Job 2:10) indicates someone without spiritual discernment. The wise person realizes that God sometimes allows periods of great testing to enter the lives of His children for a reason.

Job's integrity is confirmed. He refuses to "sin with his lips" (curse God). He will not give up. He has faith in the ultimate goodness of God. Even when he does not understand God's ways, he acknowledges God's sovereignty and righteousness.

Since God is ultimately in complete control of every situation in our lives, should we not accept the bad as well as the good as coming from Him? The Apostle Paul wrote that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Granted, this does not help us understand why He does some of the specific things He does, but it does give us the reassurance that He does not act without purpose.

God can be trusted. He is not vindictive or unreasonable. He just wants us to maintain our spiritual integrity in times of testing.

## CONCLUSION

"When the Going Gets Tough . . . "

When life gets tough, what do you do? When the road of life gets rocky, are you tempted to take a detour? Job's integrity and trust in the face of adversity provide a powerful example for us. Remember that God knows our limits, and that He will not permit us to be tested beyond what we are able to bear (1Corinthians 10:13). Satan loves quitters! God, on the other hand, loves those who hold on. Job did not understand everything about God, but he knew not to let go of God.

## PRAYER

Father, help us hold on to You! When we are weak and struggling, help us remember Job. Reinvigorate our faith. Increase our trust. Remind us that You are always with us, even in the midst of our struggles and pain. Help us rely on the Holy Spirit's power. In Jesus' name, amen.

## THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Without God, what else is there?

## ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Our lesson next week shows us how Job sought God in the midst of adversity. Study background Scripture Job 9:21-35; 13:1-27; 19:2-29; 23:2-17.

may God's blessing continue to be with you in the "New Year!"

Visit us on the web at:  
[www.JesusIsAll.com](http://www.JesusIsAll.com)