

Godly Abundance and Prosperity: The Endurance of Job

In my previous teaching in this series, “No Condemnation”, I said the following:

There are numerous examples in the Bible of attacks by the devil against believers who did nothing wrong.

Religious legalism and sin consciousness is an elaborate deception which influences people to keep their thinking in the flesh.

It deceives people to believe that they can protect themselves from evil and please God by obedience to religious law which has been abolished.

Often, this deception tricks people into performing the function of a prosecuting attorney, by engaging in a habit of self accusation and self condemnation.

In this teaching “The Endurance of Job” we are going to examine the life of Job and discover if he did anything wrong or not. We are going to learn about his manner of life, we will learn some details about the calamity which he endured, and the impact of his stand against evil.

(Turn to James 5:10)

The Companion Bible by E.W. Bullinger has some interesting background information about Job. This information can be found on the page before the first chapter of the book of Job.

James 5:10

10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Job is an example of one who endured patiently, and showed how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. These words I have just spoken are dripping with so much religious background that it smothers the thrilling impact of what Job really accomplished and what God did for him.

Turn to Romans 15:4

Remember the purpose of the Old Testament scriptures:

4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Job 1

1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

Uz was to the west of Arabia.

The Revised English Bible say that he “...set his face against wrongdoing.” This is certainly very descriptive of the strong stand that Job took against evil. The first thing that is mentioned is Job's moral and spiritual character. At the time Job lived, there was no written Word of God. Job has been instructed in the spoken Word of God, and he also exhibited spiritual discernment and wisdom which would have come from the operation of holy spirit which was upon him.

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The testimony of Job that he "...feared (respected) God and turned away from evil..." is key to understanding Job. Job was familiar with the holy and the unholy. He knew what was good and what was evil, he could discern what was good and what was evil.

So many times when God's watchmen and women observe and report evil, they have been accused of "thinking evil". To observe and perceive that which is evil is not thinking evil. It is required if we are going to stand. If Job could not perceive and discern good from evil, then he could not turn away from evil, and neither can anyone else! Perceiving and discerning good from evil, the holy from the unholy is a required skill. This is an ability we have which is built into the gift of holy spirit.

2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters.

3 He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east.

The sheep give wool and meat. The camels are beasts of burden used extensively in the caravans for national and international trade.

The gender of the donkeys is noted, as the females are more valuable. They give milk which increases their value. The yoke of oxen were for plowing the fields for growing crops.

Years ago when I began to seriously study the Word of God regarding "Godly Abundance and Prosperity", Job is one of the first books of the Bible I went to. Since Job "was the greatest of all the people of the east" it made sense to learn from Job, his manner of life, how he made use of his wealth, and how he endured.

Job had an abundance of livestock which was his physical wealth. It required a large number of servants, bond slaves and slaves in order to maintain the abundance of livestock. It required great wisdom, good sense, planning and organization to keep this abundance, to keep it growing. Job's household, which included the very many servants all lived off of the livestock and the agriculture. The livestock had to increase every year to meet the payroll, the physical needs of all these people, and others, as we will see. Every employee had to be profitable, producing more value than he or she consumed. Otherwise, even this great abundance would be quickly consumed and dissipated. Job was one of the major employers in the region and contributed greatly to the economic prosperity of the area where he lived and worked.

The servants and slaves working for Job were part of his household. As the head of this enormous household he had the responsibility of taking care of them, making sure their needs were taken care of.

Job 1:4

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 And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did

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continually.

Every year, each of Job's sons would host a day of feasting. Once the seven feasts were done for that year, Job would offer burnt sacrifices for each one of them. Job was concerned about his adult children, as any parent is. Later, we will find out what his concern is.

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God (the angels) came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

7 The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth (East and West), and from walking up and down on it. (North and South)"

8 And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"

God said "blameless and upright", not "faultless and perfect".

9 Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason?"

10 Have you not put a hedge around 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.

Now wait a moment! The devil just projected on to God what he – the devil – practices! He is accusing God of buying off Job, bribing him to respect and worship God.

Lets just find out who buys worship from men. Turn to Luke 4.

Luke 4:5

5 And the devil took him (Jesus) up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,

6 and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.

7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."

Who does the bribing and buying? The devil does! If the devil can't be like the Most High God, then he will accuse God of being like the devil, attempting to bring God down to his level of evil.

(Turn back to Job 1)

Job 1

11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

The devil spoke a prophecy! He said if you take away all of God's blessings from Job, Job would curse God.

12 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Now why would God make such a statement? Some say that God let loose the devil on Job, that he gave the devil permission to rack and ruin Job.

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The devil never asked for permission! He does not need permission for what he was about to do. God recognized this in the first sentence he spoke. In the second sentence he put limitations on the devil and held him back from harming the person of Job.

(Turn to Genesis 3)

We just read in Luke 4 that the devil owns all the kingdoms of this world; he has the authority and glory of these kingdoms. It was given or transferred to him, and he can give it to whom he will. When did this happen? Way back in Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:11

11 He (God) said, *“Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”*

12 The man said, *“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”*

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, *“What is this that you have done?”* The woman said, *“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

14 The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

The devil is cursed! We have had the curse lifted from us, because of the sacrifice of our savior Jesus Christ! There is no savior, no one to lift the curse off of the devil, who remains cursed to this day! From verse 14 on, God declares that the devil will obtain his nourishment from the dust.

15 *I will put enmity (hostility) between you and the woman, and between your offspring (seed) and her offspring (seed); he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

16 *To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain (labor) in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”*

17 *And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;*

The consequences of Adam's disobedience was so cataclysmic that the whole creation is cursed as it is this day. This is why Romans 8:19 - 21 states

19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Next time you read this section in Romans 8 you will have a better understanding of what it is referring to. The curse on creation remains until after we return to the earth with Christ after we receive our new bodies.

18 *thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.*

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19 *By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

Notice that in verse 14 the devil is condemned to obtain his nourishment from the dust of the earth, from the senses world. Verse 19 defines in part what that dust is – it is mankind who descend from Adam. 1 Peter 5:6b states it well -

Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

This is how he receives his nourishment. Turn back to Job 1.

Genesis 3 records the devil receiving the authority and glory of the kingdoms of this world, everything and every creature resident in those kingdoms. This included mankind. By his disobedience, Adam transferred his dominion which God had given him, to the devil. The devil had every legal right to the life of Job and Job's possessions. That is why he did not need to obtain God's permission to attack Job, and why God did not give the devil permission. **God put limits on what the devil could do.** It was Job's faithful stand which gave God access to protect Job against the devil fully exercising his legal rights to Job's life.

Job 1:13

13 *Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,*

A new year of the annual feasts had just begun. This was after Job had offered burnt sacrifices for his sons in the previous year.

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

15 *and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”*

Now think for a moment. Here is an army which attacks the servants working the fields and caring for the donkeys. They killed the servants and stole the livestock. How many widows and orphans were made in that one event? How many of those young men were caring for aging parents who depended upon their income for their care? Remember, just because these assets have been stolen, Job's obligations to his household remain.

16 *While he was yet speaking, there came another 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.”*

Lightning struck until all the sheep and the servants attending them were killed. All of them except for this one servant. How many more widows and orphans were made? How much more hurt was served to the household of Job? Yet Job's obligations to his household remained.

17 *While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The Chaldeans formed three groups and*

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made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Another army fell upon the servants caring for the camels, killing the servants and stealing the camels. More heart rending hurt and destruction.

18 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house,

19 and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

There would have been numerous servants in each sons house. All but one died. How many people died that day? The number is not known, but there were numerous deaths and much destruction. As is done today, God was blamed and accused for all this hurt.

All the people who worked for Job in his household, under his care were precious to him. He loved and cared greatly for his children. The widows and orphans, the remaining families of his servants depend upon Job more than ever now. Now when the need is the greatest, all his physical substance is gone. Job has nothing with which to sustain and provide for the servants which survived – he is destitute.

The devil made a maximum effort in his attacks on Job. He gathered two armies and turned the environment against one man – Job.

Job 1:20

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped.

21 And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job recognized what God declared in Genesis 3, that man is dust, and to dust he would return. What he spoke about the Lord is an idiom, a figure of speech.

22 In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Job 1:8 and 1:22

8 And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”

22 In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

These two verses are like book-ends on the entire account of the first attack on Job. These verses show conclusively that Job did not do anything wrong! He did not do anything to cause this merciless, ruthless attack from the devil. He was attacked by the rulers of the darkness of this world!

The world continues to examine this account of Job to discover the flaw, the shortcoming, the sin of Job in order to determine what HE did wrong in order to bring this evil upon himself. Why not

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accept the testimony of the Creator of Heaven and Earth and accept that testimony?

It is the background of religious training and teaching which blinds people to the truth of verses 8 and 22. In the western culture people have been well trained in self-condemnation and sin consciousness which is at the root of such errors in judgment.

In life we cannot ignore the reality of the spiritual war that rages even today. Some would call it a spiritual competition, as in an athletic competition. In an athletic competition your opponent is not striving to murder you!

Job 2:1

1 Again 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. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

3 And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason."

God remains loyal to Job and proud of him, testifying to his blamelessness. In addition, God remarks upon the wonderful lack of sin consciousness that Job maintains in his life. Job actually has the temerity to hold fast to HIS integrity! He has done and continues to do what he ought to do. He continues to respect God and turn away from evil. In addition God declares that the devil tried to incite God to destroy him without reason or cause. There was no reason no cause for any attack on Job – he had not done anything wrong! God is proud of him for clinging to his innocence and integrity!

4 Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life.

5 But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face."

6 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life."

Again, the devil makes a prophecy. Did his previous prophecy come to pass? No, it did not! The devil was wrong! The devil does not know the future – he does not really know what people are going to do.

Again, God declares the legal right of the devil to attack Job's health, and then he limits what the devil can do, thus saving the physical life of Job.

What is the twice stated objective of the devil in this record? He greatly desires that Job curse God to His face, he desires to turn Job against God, he desires to murder Job.

Just as stated in John 10:10a:

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

We have read how the devil accomplished his first two objectives, of stealing and killing, although he has not been able to kill Job. His objective in turning Job against God is to destroy him. This

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destruction consists of robbing this man of God of his eternal rewards, the dissipation and negation of the impact of his ministry. In short, he strives for the eternal destruction of this man and all his service for God.

In our day and time, the devil cannot cause our eternal destruction, but strives to keep us from earning eternal rewards; he works to negate the impact of our service in the body of Christ.

Now the devil plans to unjustly steal Job's health. In so doing he plans to undermine Job's will. Job must give in to the idea that God has unjustly allowed him to be attacked, that there must be some personal flaw that has caused these calamities.

Do you understand that the devil wants YOU to willingly take the blame for what HE, the DEVIL has done?

Do you understand that the devil wants YOU to willingly blame your loving Heavenly Father for allowing you to experience evil challenges in your life?

Do you understand that the evil challenges you may have experienced in your life is caused by attacks from the DEVIL, that YOU did not cause the attacks?

Many of us have been taught by well meaning religious people and people in the “self-help” business a variety of ways in which WE are to blame for the evil which confronts us in this life. The impact of these teachings, instruction and training is to drive us deeper into religious legalism and self condemnation.

As a final insult, the devil builds for himself and his actions a cover of darkness, a hiding place, when we accept the blame and the condemnation. This is an aspect of being conformed to this world.

I was one so trained and tricked for years in this category of life. God's mercy, grace, and kindness now enables us all to perceive this snare of the devil with the illumination of the Word of God and the spiritual perception afforded us by His gift of holy spirit.

Job 2:

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Now we can understand what initiates illness. Although we know much about the physical processes of disease, man does not know much about what initiates it.

8 And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes.

In the East, pottery has spiritual significance and meaning. Even broken pieces are kept for just this purpose. It is supposed that rubbing or scraping yourself with the pottery will bring beneficial results.

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

His dear wife has succumbed to the hurt and the spiritual pressure. The passionate desire of the devil has been expressed by the one closest to Job. In her words we understand why Job was so

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concerned for his children, and why it is so important to the devil that he do this final deed. Job was concerned that his sons had cursed God in their hearts, that they had turned away from God. The result of this, if found out, was death.

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

Receiving good and evil from God was an idiom, a figure of speech, a manner of speaking in that culture.

Job did not accuse, insult, or rail on his wife. He did not divorce her. He kindly reproved her, saying "You speak AS one of the foolish women...". He did not say she was foolish.

Again, this record of the second attack against Job has two verses, before and after the attack, which testify to Job's integrity and innocence. He did not do anything wrong, nor did he contribute in any way to the completely unjust attacks of the devil.

(Turn to Leviticus 24)

When Job was alive, the law had not yet been given to the Hebrews. However, in the book of Leviticus, there is an account which describes exactly what happened to someone who was discovered to have cursed God.

Cursing God was also known as blasphemy.

Leviticus 24:10

10 Now an Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp,

11 and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.

12 And they put him in custody, till the will of the Lord should be clear to them.

13 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

14 "Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

This is a very personal action. There are accounts of witnesses who were paid to lie about a person cursing God. These false witnesses would have to perform this action of actually laying hands on the accused.

15 And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.

16 Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

This is what the devil was planning for Job, if he could just get Job to curse God, then the devil could have him executed. Job's wife knew what would happen if her husband cursed God. Think of the pressure and hurt that she had been subjected to in order to get her to utter the words

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“...curse God and die”.

This brings up a question – why would the devil go to all this trouble? Why does he care if Job actually curses God or not? As noted earlier, the devil is expert at perverting justice with corrupt judges and hired false witnesses. The actual facts of a case were of little interest to him; the devil was used to getting his way. This question will be handled in part two.

Lets review and see where things stand at this point in the record of Job.

In the presence of God and the angels, the devil made two prophecies regarding Job. In essence, the devils prophecies indicated that by stealing and killing he would pressure Job into cursing God, which would result in the destruction of Job.

The devil spared no effort in his attacks on Job which left Job broken hearted, destitute and ill.

Throughout all these attacks Job continued to cling ferociously to his integrity. He did not succumb to sin consciousness and self-condemnation. He did not examine himself in an effort to discover what he did wrong.

Job's faithful stand blessed God so much that He spoke highly of Job in the presence of his angels and in the presence of the devil.

Job's faithful stand shook the devil spirit realm all the way to the top spirit, the devil himself.

Job's faithful stand had such an impact that it negated the two prophecies uttered by the devil in the face of God.

Job was not born again. He did not have the new nature created within, in union with our savior Christ Jesus. Yet he remained faithful to what he knew, enduring with the spiritual resources he had at that time. Look at the impact he had! By the senses it would seem that this man was done for, he was ready to breath his last. If we look at this account spiritually, we perceive that Job was in a savage battle for his physical and spiritual life. He was deeply hurt, but so was the devil – and the devil was getting the worst of it.

(Turn to Ephesians 6)

What kind of impact do you think you have when you endure and stand faithfully for the things of God? Now you know the true nature of the spiritual impact that you can have when you endure. Now you know where the doubt, the self searching, and the mental pressure of self condemnation come from. Now that you know where these things come from, these old habits can be cast off like an old worn out coat. Now endurance can be a joy in spite of the challenges, in spite of the hurt.

God has not left us defenseless and unarmed in these spiritual battles.

Ephesians 6:10

10 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.*

The flesh has insufficient strength and ability. We have the strength of HIS might available to us.

11 *Put on the whole armor of God (take it, it's yours! Take what belongs to you!), that you may be*

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able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

The schemes of the devil are illuminated here in God's wonderful Word. We can know them so we can stand against them.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God (again, take it, it's yours!), that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

There are evil days, but we have been enabled to stand, to stand firm, to stand together. Its a blessing to God and defeat for the devil when we stand firm, when we stand together no matter what the challenge.