

09b JOB

Let's pick up our study now in the book of Job. We are reviewing a little bit of interesting detail in the first cycle of conversations as we go into the second. And I've been trying to figure out when to do this, and I've about decided I'm just going to go ahead and do it now, because I think it will help us understand the second two conversation cycles that are coming up.

Turn with me to Luke chapter 4, because ultimately, as interesting as all of these conversations and little points and wise needlings that are going back and forth are, there is a point to all of this that we need to get, and that is, so what, for us? How do we respond? How do we cope with the tests that come our way, with the challenges that come our way? And what should the application be of the things that we are observing and interpreting in the book of Job? Well, the fundamental understanding that informs our observation and interpretation in the book of Job is that this is the third satanic attack. The first attack was on his possessions and his family. The second attack was on his person.

And the third attack is on his point of view, on his faith itself, through this dialogue, through these ideas that are introduced. And as I was talking with Ken earlier today about this idea that it's sort of obvious with Eliphaz, in that first response to Job, when he starts talking about the dark spirit and all of that, it's kind of overt and obvious that there's something amiss when he says, well, your hope ought to be your own integrity and your hope ought to be the uprightness of your way and so on, your piety. And that's your first kind of danger flag.

And then he starts talking about this vision he had in the middle of the night and this dark spirit that shakes his bones. And you say, wow, that's pretty obvious. But when you get to Bildad and then Zophar, the satanic component in their speech is somewhat more subtle.

It's a little bit more opaque, more oblique. It's not quite so obvious. And I was telling Ken, it reminds me of these boxes you get in the mail from the Postal Service.

Do you ever go off and order something from eBay or whatever? And it comes back in the mail and it's in one of those U.S. Postal Service boxes. And it's all sealed up real tight. It's designed to survive crushing and banging around in the mail.

But when you get it and you're getting ready to open it, you look around and there's a little tab on one side. And it's got a perforation that says, pull here. And it's got that strip of hard plastic or something.

When you pull it, it rips the cardboard. But that's your way to get into the box. That's kind of the obvious little tab that unzips the rest of the thing.

Well, Zophar's little obvious clue there with the dark spirit and this obvious boo-boo about what are you relying on. That's the pull tab. That's how you get into the satanic.

That's sort of the big little clearly marked. I did the silliest thing one time. I was talking to somebody and I needed to open the old cartons of milk that have the folding cardboard in.

And it's got these two big arrows that says, pull. Well, I was talking to someone and I was working and working on this carton. And it was just getting more and more mangled and bent.

I tore it back and I was mashing the sides trying to get it to open. And it finally started getting all caved in and wrinkled and completely soft and had no form or substance to it anymore. It was starting to kind of melt down into the... And I got to looking while I didn't read the label.

And I was on the wrong side. And by then it was hopeless. I had to cut the top off and pour it into a pitcher because the carton itself was mangled beyond repair.

Well, I think if you miss the fact that there is a clearly marked label here with Eliphaz. This is the third satanic attack. It's waving its arms.

It's got a semaphore and a clearly international distress orange label on it that says, pay attention now. Satan is speaking through these three friends. And so it's real obvious with Zophar.

But the subtlety level then goes back up when you get to Bildad and to Zophar. Well, another point that Ken made, which I think is really good, is this is not unique to the three friends with Job. This has ever been Satan's pattern.

You can see it in the garden with Eve. Hath God not said? He knows that in the day you eat the fruit you will be as wise as God, knowing good and evil. And he presents these arguments.

And we'll look at that before our Job study is over. But you come down through the time of Job. You come down through the time of the Old Testament.

You come down through the time of Christ. You get to Luke chapter 4. Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit. There's nothing wrong with Jesus.

He's not in line for divine discipline. He's filled with the Holy Spirit. He returns from the Jordan and he is led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness.

Into a place of deprivation. There's no shelter in the wilderness. There's no food in the wilderness.

Being tested for 40 days by the devil. Kind of like Job being tested for Nihon 40 chapters. He's tested for 40 days by the devil.

Now, how long does it take to do the three temptations we have recorded in Scripture? You could knock these out in 15 or 20 minutes. Forty days he was tested by the devil. I.E. there is a lot that Jesus did not tell his disciples about that time of testing.

There is a lot of testing that you and I go through. That isn't going to show. And isn't going to be

visible.

It may not ever be the subject of conversation. Because it's something that God brought us to and through. And it isn't a discussable subject.

For various reasons. It's not going to be helpful to others. It's not going to be edifying.

It's edifying for me to know what God has taken me through. And some of the dark spirits that I've had to talk to. And some of the mental attitude tests that I've gone through.

But it isn't grist for the public mill. Everybody has those things. And there is no benefit to bringing that stuff out.

Jesus was tested for 40 days. And out of that he told his disciples about a representative three. There were probably many tests in every one of these 40 days.

Different angles. Different points of view. But these three tests that are given in Matthew and Luke.

Summarize that 40 days of testing. They are representative. Jesus summed up all the law and the prophets in the two great commands.

And he sums up 40 days of testing with these three that he shared with his disciples. Look at the first one here. The devil said to him in verse 3 of Matthew chapter 4. If you are the son of God, command this stone to become bread.

In these 40 days Jesus ate nothing. And afterward when they had ended he was hungry. He's already been tested by the devil for 40 days.

I.e. he has already had the Sabians and the Chaldeans and the great wind. He's already gotten the boils. He's already been scraping himself with the shard.

And now the friends have showed up. And now we're getting idea testing. So the devil says to him, if you're the son of God, command this stone to become bread.

There is a problem. Haven't eaten in over a month. So, here's some rocks.

You've got divine power. Command this stone to become bread. Simple solution.

Who does this sound like out of the three friends? See the hill, take this hill. See the problem, fix the problem. Who's the guy that says, look, it's simple.

Cut to the chase here. You're hungry, make some bread. We're kind of getting the reverse order here.

This is Zophar. Short, sweet. Notice, does the devil quote any scripture here? Does he appeal to

any history and tradition? Does he use any logic? This is pragmatism, isn't it? Hey, you're hungry.

Got a rock here. Kind of resembles a loaf of bread, doesn't it? Kind of looks like that bread they made in the ancient world. Those kind of round, flat things.

Turn that thing to bread. Later on, Jesus is going to turn bread into more bread. He's going to turn fish into more fish.

No problem with using supernatural power to multiply food for the hungry, is there? There is a valid principle involved that Jesus will, in fact, apply and exploit in a miraculous way in the not-too-distant future. Why is it wrong here? Well, it's in Jesus' answer. Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Now, as is always the case, if you ever see somebody say, in the New Testament, It is written, and they give a little snippet, that's like a footnote. That means, go back and get the whole passage. God didn't waste time quoting himself over and over again.

If there's any repetition in the Bible, it's for a good reason. He says, look, I already wrote that down. Man shall not live by bread alone.

Where does that come from? It's Deuteronomy chapter 8 and verse 3. So, go back and look at Deuteronomy 8. Every commandment which I command you today, you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. Now, you say, well, you've got to be obedient. You've got to get these commands and keep them.

It's your participation. This is sort of the Zophar thing. Look, get your act together.

Do what you're supposed to do. Everything will be fine. But look at the next verse.

You shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these 40 years in the wilderness. How long has Jesus been in the wilderness? 40 days. It's the Lord your God that led you these 40 years in the wilderness to humble you and test you to know what is in your heart, not to see what you would do, to know what's in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

So he humbled you, he allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna. Who is the actor here? Who is doing the planning? Who is doing the providing? Who is doing the testing? Who is this all about here? The people are being tested, true enough. And they are to be obedient, true enough.

But the issue, and the essence of the problem is, this is God's plan, and this is God's purpose, and this is God's power. Plan, purpose, and power all belong to God. The discussion here revolves around the plan and purpose of God.

He humbled you. God humbled you. God allowed you to hunger.

God fed you with manna, look at this, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Jesus says, look, the whole reason the Spirit has led me into the wilderness and allowed me to be tested by your sorry self for these 40 days is so that I could learn something, so that I could know something. Scripture tells us Jesus learned obedience by the things that he suffered.

He came to experience it. We talked about this in the first session. It's one thing to imagine what something is like or estimate what something might be like.

It's something else to live through it yourself. And Jesus came to know. He is acquainted with our sorrows.

He is acquainted with our griefs. He's called the man of sorrows in Scripture. He has experienced what we experience.

He is tested in all points like as we are, yet without sin. But he comes to know what it takes to be obedient in the flesh, what it takes to be sustained by God's Spirit in the flesh, because he has been there and done that. He knows exactly what we are going through.

We are not talking to somebody who's imagining what it must be like for us. The Lord Jesus Christ is our intercessor, and he is our high priest, and he is our redeemer, comforter. He is our righteousness, our peace, our sanctification.

He is all things to the church. He is everything to us because he has walked in our shoes. He knows exactly what it's like.

When we pray, and our prayers are translated by God's Holy Spirit to God the Father, the Lord Jesus is sitting right there interceding on our behalf, and he says, Father, I know exactly the kind of pressure that individual is under. That person, part of my body and my bride, I know exactly what that's like, and I know exactly why they're praying what they're praying, and I know exactly what kind of testing they're going through. The Lord led you all the way these 40 years in the wilderness.

You know, they talk about the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness. They didn't wander anywhere. They had the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

That's not wandering. That is directed travel for 40 years. God led them all the way these 40 years in the wilderness for the purpose of humility, for the purpose of testing, so that what is in the heart would emerge.

Those that decided they wanted to sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play, those who

wanted to offer the strange fire, those who wanted to disobey in various ways, those who were thinking of the leeks and garlics, those who died with the quail between their teeth, those who were bitten by the vipers, Miriam grousing about her brother and getting leprosy, what is in the heart comes out. This is what spreads the field. This is what distinguishes the overcomers from the underwhelmers.

This is what distinguishes those who are going to advance and mature from those who are going to be cotton choppers and carrot planters and potato farmers in the millennial kingdom. What is in your heart? You can talk a great fight. Lots of people talk a great fight.

It's not what you say, it's what you do. It's how you live, it's what's in your heart. God takes them through these rough times and if you have a heart full of love for God, if you have a heart with the desire to obey, then these tests are going to reveal that and give you the chance to show it.

This is one of the frustrating things about being a marine in peacetime. You may have all of the professional knowledge and all of the killer instinct and all of the desire to obliterate and annihilate and otherwise decimate and eliminate the enemies of the United States Constitution, foreign and domestic, but if you're languishing in peacetime, you never get a chance to fire a shot in anger. You never get a chance to yank a lanyard and listen to the battle damage assessment on the other end.

You train and you work and you become a consummate professional and you have all of these skills to be an efficient fighting machine and killing machine and agent of destruction and mayhem and it's just all theory. How good are you? Will you really have courage under fire? Will you be able to think and function and execute your mission and be effective and be a component of success in battle? Well, you don't know unless you get into a battle. You've got to go where the shooting is.

You've got to go and do the thing that you have trained to do. And this is true in any field, but it is particularly frustrating if you train to, say, blow things up with artillery shells and all you get to do is watch old car bodies fall apart. And that's not why you invest your life and your time and become a skilled professional so that you can blow up junk in an impact area in a training environment.

You want to go do the real deal. You want to make a difference. Well, listen, we can learn the Word of God and we can come to an understanding and appreciate it, but that's not God's purpose.

God's purpose for us is to make a difference and we are engaged in a war. It is a battle. It is a live shooting, life or death conflict.

Our warfare is not on this earth. It's in the spiritual realm, principalities and powers and so on. And when we come to a time of testing, as Job does, as Jesus did, and Satan is whispering in

our ear, what's he trying to do? Well, it's like one of the most interesting forms of ammunition for artillery is the leaflet round.

We've got all different kinds of ammunition. High explosive, white phosphorus, illumination, smoke, HZ smoke, all kinds of stuff. We've got ICM, Improved Conventional Munitions, where the thing opens up and all these little baby bomblets come out and go across an area and they bounce.

They're like little, you've heard of the bouncing Betty? Well, ICM, Improved Conventional Munitions, there's over a hundred of these little doodads inside this thing and so it fires. And when the fuse functions and the round splits apart, the area gets sprayed with these little bomblets and they go down and then they bounce up and they explode. Some of them explode on impact.

But it's just utter havoc wherever these things go. And you hope that they all go off because if you have to go traipsing through there later and there's some of them laying around, you don't want to just go boot scooting through an area that you just peppered with ICM because a lot of the little things hit twigs and branches and soft spots and didn't go off and you can hurt yourself. You have to sweep after you use these.

Well, one of the more interesting kinds, there's a leaflet round. I've never fired one. I never saw one.

But I understand they've made them. They're full of paper. And instead of bomblets coming out, little idea bombs come out.

You pepper the area with these give up now, come across the line with warm chow, soft bed. We'll welcome you with open arms. You'll be in a little resort area until the end of the war.

Lay down your arms. Give up now. What's the point of continuing? It's a lost cause.

Your guy's on the run. Your stuff is over with. So, come on down.

We'll take good care of you. It's propaganda. It's leaflets.

It's the idea war. Well, this is what Satan does. It's the idea war.

So, what's in your heart? It's one thing to go through the motions and do the rituals and the sacrifices, but what's in your heart? Well, back to Luke 4. It's paralleled over in Matthew 4. The devil says, if you're the son of God... Now, this is a little bit of a needle. It's a little bit of a jab, just like Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar. Hey, if you're as squared away as you think you are, why are you in this situation? And what's the Son of God doing out here forty days with no chow? Son of God, kingdom come, power and glory, white horse.

I remember back when. It wasn't that long ago you and I were both in the heavenly realms. So, what are you doing dragging around out here in your dusty sandals and empty stomach? If you're the Son of God, you've got some options here.

Zophar, practicality, round rock, round bread. Jesus says, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And in the Alexandria Family of Manuscripts, that last part, which is included in Matthew without any doubt.

Sometimes the Luke copyist says, Well, I remember from Matthew, it says this or says that. Man shall not live by bread alone. That's your reference.

It doesn't matter whether the quote is completed here or not. You know you're supposed to go back to Deuteronomy 3. And what Jesus is really talking about is not the difference between bread and the word of God alone, but that whole complex of ideas. God tests us for a reason.

It's so that we can learn. It's not about getting my belly full. Pragmatism is a cover.

Pragmatism is an excuse to ignore and skip over the spiritual battle. This is a danger for us. This is a satanic attack for us.

We think, Well, look, I've got this problem. I need to solve it. And we don't think of it in terms of the spiritual conflict.

We don't think of what God wants us to learn. God puts us in the wilderness, not to see how resourceful we are in finding food, but to see what is in our heart. Are we obedient? Are we faithful? Do we trust God when we can't see the answer? We get in conversations.

We get in situations. We are in relationships. We are in business and civil and social circumstances where there's a problem.

And we want to go for the quick fix. Fix this problem. Stop this pain.

I've got a rock in my shoe. Somebody says, Well, take your shoe off and get the rock out. How hard is that? And it sounds great.

It makes a superficial kind of sense. But if God has said, I'm giving you this shoe that's got a nail sticking up through the heel and I want you to walk in this not one mile, but two. Remember Paul with the thorn in the flesh? God says, I don't want to take away the thorn.

I want you to have this thorn. It's needful. You'll learn something by dealing with this thorn instead of removing it.

That's what happens in a lot of our testing. Pragmatism is very appealing, but pragmatism is dangerous. And it's the first attack in this list that Jesus gives his disciples that he went through in

the 40 days.

Don't settle for the easy out and miss the spiritual victory. It's not the bread alone. It's not the physical parameters of the test.

It's the Word of God. It's the plan and purpose of God. It's what God has brought us to the wilderness to teach us.

Jesus isn't in the wilderness by necessity, is he? The Spirit took him out there for this very purpose. Well, this is the Zophar test. And Satan, it's got his trademark and copyright stamped on it.

Copyright Satan, year zero. All rights reserved. It's right there.

It's vintage, classic, shatan. Well, let's look at the second one in Luke chapter 4. The devil took him to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. The devil said to him, all this authority I will give you and their glory, this has been delivered to me and I give it to whomever I wish.

Therefore, if you will worship before me, all will be yours. Now, if you're like me, you're scratching your head and you're thinking, well, I remember Eliphaz, and I remember Bildad, and I remember Zophar. I can see the Zophar thing, pragmatism, practical solution, that's pretty clear.

But I'm thinking through Eliphaz, the tradition of the elders and so on. I'm thinking of Bildad, I'm thinking of Eliphaz with the dark spirit and can a man be righteous and so on. I don't see any correspondence between here are the kingdoms of the world, I have the authority and I'll give it to you if you skip the cross, cut to the finish here and get to the applause scene and you don't have to go through the hardship.

How does that match up? Well, keep your finger in Luke 4 and turn back just for a second to Job chapter 8, which is the speech of Bildad. Bildad from Shuach. How long will you speak these things, the words of your mouth like a strong wind? Does God subvert judgment? Does the Almighty pervert justice? If your sons have sinned against Him, He has cast them away for their transgressions.

If you would earnestly seek God and make your supplication to the Almighty, if you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you and prosper your rightful dwelling place. Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly. Inquire of the former age, consider the things that the fathers knew.

For we were born yesterday and know nothing, our days on earth are as a shadow. Will they, the fathers and the elders, not teach you and tell you and utter words from their heart? Now look at verse 11. Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the reeds flourish without water? I told you we would come back to this papyrus deal.

While it is yet green and not cut down, it withers before any other plant. So are the paths of all who forget God, and the hope of the hypocrite will perish. His confidence is cut off.

His trust is a spider web. He leans on his house. It doesn't stand.

He holds on to it, but it doesn't last. He grows green in the sun. His branches spread.

His roots wrap around the rocks. He looks for a place in the stones, but he's destroyed from his place. It's denied him.

It's like he was never there. What is the thrust here? He says, look, this is what we have seen from the beginning. This is what the fathers and the elders... What are the fathers and the old timers and the tradition, what is that an appeal to? This is human authority, isn't it? This is our guide.

This is our precedent. This is what we have learned from our human experience, our human forebears have told us this. Now he's going to explain it.

This is what we didn't talk about in the Bildad speech beginning in verse 11. Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? I can explain the whole rest of this paragraph with one phrase that you will recognize from Senator Clinton. It takes a village.

What's her argument? You can't just raise a child by yourself. It takes a village. You can't bring up the next generation on your own steam.

We've got to be a community. We've got to all work together. We've got to stick together, fight together.

All our cause is lost. It's the community. It's the ones who have gone before.

We inherit their wisdom. We stand on one another's shoulders. We make our environment.

The papyrus can't grow if you don't have the marsh. You've got to have the marsh with the water. And what's the marsh made of? Lots of other plants.

You don't have a single little papyrus stem sticking up. It's a marsh of papyrus. Papyrus is unique.

I say unique. It's notable in this regard that there's a bunch of it there. It's all there and its roots and everything kind of hold the water and that's how you get a marsh.

Remember the Reed Sea? It's the papyrus reeds. They're all there. Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the child grow up without a village? Do you get the idea here? We've got to have the human community here.

We've got to have what we've learned, what we've built in our civilization. Can the reeds flourish without water? While it's green and not cut down, it'll wither before any other plant. If you don't have the right environment, you've got to create an environment.

So what is Bildad saying here? If you forget God, He's going to take that environment away. What did Job say after Eliphaz? My brothers have forsaken me. The caravan has got lost.

I'm not getting the goods. My community isn't helping me out here is what Bildad hears. And Bildad says, see there, of course.

God's taken away your community. God's dried up your marsh. You're like a papyrus with no water here because you're out of line.

He's hooking into Job's argument and turning it around against him. Well, so the idea is the guy is going to lean on his house and it won't stand. Eldest son had a house.

They depended on it. It didn't stand. And Bildad is basically saying, you know, this structure, this tradition, and this civilization, and this surrounding marsh of people and people and support and everything good that comes from that, God's going to take that away if you're an evil man.

Well, this is a variation on a theme. The theme is you can build an environment where everyone will flourish. You can build an environment where everyone will get the water.

It takes a marsh, is Bildad's argument. You've got to have a marsh. And basically the reason you don't have a marsh is you're an evil man.

You lost your marsh. You're like a single strand out there. And while you're still green, you're going to wither.

You're trusting, but your trust is going to be like a spider web. You're going to lean on your house, but it's not going to stand. You're trying to hang on to it, but it won't endure.

That's why, in other words, yes, absolutely, the caravan didn't show up. Yes, absolutely, your friends are turning against you and your brothers are abandoning you. And you know why? It's because you're an evil man.

Come back to the village. Come back to the marsh. Come back to the tradition of the elders.

Come back into the fold and into the family. Come back into the human support mechanism. It takes a village.

It takes a marsh. It takes a kingdom. Well, you go back to Luke chapter 4, the devil takes him up on the mountain, shows him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment.

Shows him the big human equation. Here's all the people that you need to help. Why are you

doing this whole plan of God thing anyway? Why are you incarnate? You're shuffling around out here in the desert doing nobody any good.

Why are you in the desert when you ought to be over here in the middle of the marsh? You ought to be over here in the middle of the village. You ought to be out there helping these people. That's where things happen is in the community, in the environment of the people.

This is the build-out argument. You can make a difference. You can get in with the group.

The devil says, I'll give you the authority. I'll give you the glory of the kingdoms. You can get with the people.

You can help them. Don't be shuffling around out here in the dust looking at the rocks. If you don't want to turn the rocks into bread, then go in amongst the human milieu with the roar of the grease paint and the smell of the crowd.

Or maybe it's the other way around. For this has been delivered to me and I give it to whomever I wish. I can give you the milling throng.

I can put you in the middle of the marsh and you can all benefit. It's all about humanity. It's all about people helping people.

Let's mentor one another. Let's disciple one another. You can get in there and skip all of this nonsense about suffering and cross and redemption and that.

Just get in there and help everybody. So this is the little thread. This is the little insinuation.

They're not identical arguments by any means. But the premise is the warmth of human contact, the benefit of human fellowship, all by itself, is the key. And I think that's the build-out argument.

Now let's look at the response that the Lord gives. If you'll worship before me, all will be yours. As Jesus answered and said, get behind me, Satan, for it is written, what? You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.

It's not about people. It's about God. It's not first and foremost relationship with people.

That's the second commandment. The first commandment is love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength. First commandment.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. And you can make a God out of service. You say, well, this seems all kind of tenuous.

Listen. Look around in the church today. Look around in the Christian community today.

How many people have made a priority, and their first and foremost goal and value, ministry?

We've got to reach this group. We've got to help this group. We've got to communicate.

We've got to go here. We've got to do this. We've got to help that.

We've got all of these things being done in the name of the Lord. And all these people are going to be standing at the door saying, Lord, Lord, in your name did we not do these things for people? And what's the reply going to be? I never knew you. You skipped the relationship with God that has to precede and condition and define all of this effort.

You can't skip it. You can't skip testing and get to prosperity. You can't skip testing and get to inheritance.

Nor can you skip relationship with God on your way to being a blessing to people. God comes first, not people. Whether it's the kingdoms of the earth, or whether it's the marsh full of reeds, and the friends who are sitting at a distance.

Bildad says, yeah, we're sitting at a distance. Look at you. You're an evil man.

How do you expect us to be cozying up and nourishing your papyrus self here when you're evil? Fix the problem and all of this will return. But now, all your supports are going to be spider webs because you're out of line. So the essence of this argument is the same.

Look at the third argument in Luke chapter 4 that Satan brings against the Lord Jesus. He brought him to Jerusalem, set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If you are the son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written. Now, Satan has wised up in this order.

Now, of course, the order, the second and third, are reversed in Matthew versus Luke. Which tells us that it's not the order that's important, it's the content that is important, and it tells us that this is not a sequential account. These are three chosen out of many from those 40 days, or three that occurred as the culminating and summing up that occurred at the end of the 40 days.

But the devil hears Jesus quote Scripture, says, you know, you've got to live by the words that proceed from the mouth of God. And you'll find this same argument in Job's replies to Eliphaz and to Bildad and to Zophar, where he corrects him and he says, Look, it's not about this stuff you're bringing me from T-man and from Shua, and it's not about the dark spirit who spoke, and you want to talk about some wind, you want to talk about some ruach, listen to my ruach, listen to my spirit. I'll tell you that lack of righteousness is not the issue, and works are not the issue.

My flesh isn't made out of the kind of enduring stuff that's going to survive the judgment of God. Nobody's is. We're talking about God, we're not talking about me, we're not talking about people, and we're not talking about the big spiritual miasma out there, and this abstract attack on relationship with God.

Well, you might as well give up on ever-pleasing God. So, when he brings him to Jerusalem, and sets him on the pinnacle of the temple, and says, if you're the son of God, throw yourself down from here. Now, I ask myself this question.

Have you ever seen the pictures of the Holy Land, like out there where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found? Have you seen the cliff where they found the Dead Sea Scrolls? It's amazing to me that the little goat-herd shepherd boy ever got into that cave to see those, because those are sheer cliffs, and those cliffs are taller than the temple at any stage of its existence in Jerusalem. So, if you're going to scare somebody with a height, or you're going to prove something by jumping off the equivalent of the Brooklyn Bridge or the Empire State Building, why did the devil not take him to Masada and say, jump off? Why didn't he take him to the Judean wilderness and take him to a high mountain or a cliff and say, jump off? He took him to a high mountain and showed him the kingdoms of the world. When they were there, why didn't he say, well, since you're not going to go for the kingdom thing, why don't you just jump off of this high mountain? He takes him specifically to the temple.

What is the significance of the pinnacle of the temple? And we've talked about this once before, so you might remember. Why is it the pinnacle of the temple that the devil encourages him to jump off? What is the big center of attraction if you go to Rome? St. Peter's, the Pope building there, big dome and everything. Milling throngs are always out there in the square in front of that cathedral.

What do you think in Jerusalem? Where's the hub and center of life and activity in Jerusalem? It's the temple. If somebody were to jump off and be miraculously borne up by angels, it would make a big difference if he's out in the middle of nowhere and he comes walking into town and says, you know what, I jumped off a cliff and I didn't die. Or if he does it in the center of town where there are hundreds and perhaps thousands of witnesses.

This is a public display of God's favor. What is the appeal here? If you want to prove to the people that you're the Messiah, if you want to get this show on the road, if you want some good PR, some good advertising, well, step off this pinnacle and when the angels bear you up so you don't dash your foot against the stone, you're going to be a sensation. Forget about withered hands and blind eyes.

You're going to be an instant celebrity. Who's going to be able to deny this? So, if you're the son of God, throw yourself down from here and now he's going to quote scripture. And he's going to try to cite the word of God itself.

He shall give his angels charge over you to keep you, and in their hands they shall bear you up lest you dash your foot against the stone. Do you know off the top of your head where this is from? If you check your little footnote in the New King James, you'll find that we have memorized part of this chapter. This is from Psalm 91.

Psalms 91. And a lot of times people say, okay, well, let's go check out this reference. And so they'll dive down to Psalm 91:11.

He shall give his angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways. Verse 12, in their hands they shall bear you up lest you dash your foot against the stone. And they say, well, I should claim this.

What is the context of that promise? What is the context of that statement? What is the part that we have memorized? He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress. What is this? How many different times does God get mentioned here? The Most High.

The Almighty. The Lord. My God.

He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler. He will deliver you from the perilous pestilence. He will cover you with His feathers.

Under His wings you'll take refuge. His truth will be your shield and buckler. It's all about God.

It's all about the promises and the protection of God. If you are dwelling in His secret place, if you are abiding in His shadow, if you are keeping company with God, if you are close to Him, all of these things are going to be true. You can't just jump down into the middle.

Look at verse 9. Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. Because you have made Him your dwelling place. Satan didn't quote that part.

He says, listen to me and jump off. God has made a promise, but He has separated God from the promise. No evil shall befall you, no plague will come near your dwelling.

He will give His angels charge over you, keep you in all your ways, bear you up, won't dash your foot. Now look at verse 13. The serpent didn't quote verse 13.

You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. Genesis chapter 3. He will bruise your head, O serpent. Well, the serpent conveniently omitted that little part.

But isn't it interesting that Satan knows Psalm 91 and could quote it? Satan's got a Bible. Well, now go back and take a look at the words of Eliphaz in Job chapter 4. If he puts no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed, they are broken in pieces from morning till evening, they perish forever, verse 20, with no one regarding. Where is the regard of God? Does God regard you or not? Is God looking out for you or not? Satan's argument to Jesus is let's see if God's really looking out for you or not.

Let's see if God's really going to bear you up and preserve you or not. If you are the son of God, then you should be born up. What does Eliphaz say? If you're really righteous, then you shouldn't be getting crushed.

You shouldn't be dashing your foot against the stone, so to speak. The element, the essence, the ideas in these arguments are always the same. And they're going to be the same for you and for me.

To try to erode our confidence in God, to try to erode our faith that He is looking out for us, and that our testing has a purpose and has a reason, and that God knows what He is about, and that it is His word that needs to sustain us, not the immediate circumstance. Look at those testings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at these three conversations.

We're going to see echoes of these same ideas in the next two conversation cycles when we continue our study of Job next time. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for revealing to us not only Your word and the object of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but also the sinister and seductive and insidious attacks of the enemy.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will give us the ability to discern, to see the better things, to detect the false note in the ideas and the concepts and the propositions that are put to us as we face our tests and challenges day by day. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.