**Drama During Difficult Times Series**

**“The Drama in Heaven”**

**1.6-12; 2.1-7**

**Introduction:**

Last week we begin a series on the book of Job entitled “Drama During Difficult Times.” I have given the series that title because the book of Job is structured like a play on stage in a theater. Often, when we go through difficult times we feel like we are one of the actors on a stage. The book of Job begins by introducing us to Job and his family. Job was a godly man and together with his wife enjoyed a great relationship with their 10 adult children. Job was very wealthy and was admired by people throughout the region. (1.1-5) But through a series of devastating events Job lost all of his possessions by foreign invasions, his children were killed by a terrible tornado, Job developed a serious life threating illness, and his wife left him. (1.13-19, 2.7-10) However, *through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.* (1.22) Job endured this suffering by believing that the Lord was full of compassion and merciful. (Js.5.11) This type of faith surpasses human understanding because this type of faith believes that God loves me and is caring for me even when I experience the tragic lost of loved ones, financial collapse, physical suffering, and being deserted by someone I love. This is not cheap dime store faith. This is glorifying faith in a compassionate and merciful God.

**The Drama in Heaven**

This morning we come to Act Two – The Drama in Heaven. As we were introduced to Job and his tragedy in Act One we are now allowed access to witness a cosmic scene behind the curtain of human reality. We are exposed to the “Drama in Heaven” between the Lord and Satan. Remember, Job had no idea this interchange was happening. This Drama in Heaven is only revealed to the reader. But this behind the scene view makes the reader uncomfortable. As weird as it sounds we are in many ways more confortable to deal with Job’s tragedies and dreadful disease than we are with dealing with this drama going on behind the scene. It is easier for us to explain that the reason we are suffering is because we live in a fallen world. And most of the time we would be correct to come to that conclusion. But there are times when something more is going on and that is what we will discover in this drama in heaven recorded in the first two chapters of the book of Job. No matter how you look at it the first thirty-two verses in the book of Job are some of the most disturbing and difficult verses in the Bible. In thirty-two verses the reader is tossed back and forth like a rag doll on a violent emotional rollercoaster from first being exposed to a man enjoying wonderful earthly possessions and beauty of faith and family to that same man sitting on an ash heap smitten with sickness and sores from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head. (1.7) We are introduced to the greatest man in the east enjoying the good things of life to that same man encountering destruction, disease, and possible death. We witness a man serving the Lord with integrity and holy reverence only for that same man to be assaulted by the wicked and evil enemy – Satan.

As we watch Job walking with God, enjoying his family, and experiencing supreme financial success in Act One we are now handed a back stage pass to see what was happening behind curtain. Hear now the Word of God.

*Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” The Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.” Then Satan answered the Lord, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about 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. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.” Then the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.* (Job 1.6-12)

**Heavenly Convocation**

From viewing the beauties of Job’s life on earth we are transported to a holy convocation in the heavenly realm with the Lord and His holy angels. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord,* (1.6a) This holy convocation is the first scene in Act Two. These holy angels are described in this text as *“the sons of God”* who have gathered *to present themselves before the Lord*. The verb *“to present”* means to “station yourself in front of someone” as soldiers stand in rank and file before their commanding officer waiting for their marching orders.

The Bible tells us that angels are ministering spirits sent out by the Lord for the sake of those who will inherit eternal life. (Heb.1.14) Therefore, angels are ministering spirits sent out by the Lord for the sake of believers in Jesus Christ! Statistics show that 8 out of 10 Americans believe in angels, even though many people don’t understand their existence. The Bible tells us that angels are spiritual beings created by God sometime during the six days of creation. (Gen.2.1) They have no flesh and blood. (Lk.24.39) They do not marry or procreate. (Mt.22.30) They can be visible or invisible. (Gen.19.1) They are servants of God that serve at the Lord’s pleasure. (Heb.1.14)

But this morning it is most important to understand that God created all the angels that ever existed at one time, a heavenly “host.” Originally all angels were created holy. (Gen.1.31-2.1) But like man, at the beginning of creation, God placed angels under a probationary period during which some of the angels revolted against God. A chief angel named Lucifer, the beautiful one, who is filled with pride and conceit, organized this revolt. This rebellion against God caused the Lord to condemn these fallen angels into irrevocable state damnation. (Jd.1.6; 2 Pt.2.4; Is.14.12-14; Ez.28.11-19; I Tim.3.6)

Unlike humanity these fallen angels (often called demons) were destined to a fallen condition for the rest of time – with no chance of redemption. The leader of the heavenly revolt goes by other names as well. His proper name is Satan (1.6; I Chr.21.1) who is the commander of spiritual forces of wickedness on earth. (Eph.2.2; 6.12) Scripture also refers to Satan as the serpent of old (Rev.20.2; Gen.3.1), a dragon (Rev.12; 20.2), a roaring loin (IPt.5.8), the tempter (Mt.4.3; IThes.3.5), the evil one (Jn.17.15), a liar and a murderer (Jn.8.44), who sinned “from the beginning.” (IJn.3.8)

**Satan**

I think this would be a good time to quote C.S. Lewis from Screwtape Letters when he wrote, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence and the other is to believe and feel an unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased with both errors and hail the materialist and the magician with the same delight!”

Brothers and sisters, there is a spiritual world that we cannot see that is raging war against kingdom of Christ and His people. Even though the modern mind would like to dismiss the thought of the existence of this spiritual world, the Bible tells us that *our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* (Eph.6.12 NIV) God’s Word is clear that there is a spiritual force of wickedness in this world and that this spiritual force of wickedness is the driving influence working in the sons of disobedience. (Eph.6.12; 2.2) Scripture calls for believers to stand firm against the schemes of the devil and not to be ignorant of how he works. (Eph.6.11; 2Cor.2.11) The Bible describes Satan as the prince of the power of the air (Eph.2.2) that prowls around seeking someone to devour (I Pt.5.8) but it important to understand that the Lord has limited his destructive behavior. Satan is not all-powerful, all knowing, nor everywhere at the same time. These are attributes that God enjoys. Satan, like any other creature, has limits and because of his fallen condition he has been limited all the more. The best analogy is to see Satan as a vicious dog that the Lord has chained to a tree until the day when the Lord will throw him and his demons into the eternal lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Rev.20.2, 10) But until that day if you get too close to this furious dog he will hurt you. Sometimes his chain is tangled causing his reach to be shortened. But at other times his chain is at full length causing us to be frightened by his range.

But as we return to the drama in heaven in the book of Job we are confronted with a disturbing scene, *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.* Satan also came with them! (1.6b) What!?! I can handle holy angels standing before the Creator in a holy convocation. I can handle the fact that there are fallen angels creating spiritual havoc in this world. But to see Satan standing in this holy convocation is difficult for most.

There has to be a reason why the Lord would allow Satan to weasel into this holy convocation. It’s not like the Lord doesn’t know that Satan snuck in. The Lord is all knowing! So, what’s going on? And why would the Lord give us this behind the scene look into the heavenly realm?

**The Dialog**

I think the answer is found in the dialog that ensues. As Satan lurks in the background trying to disguise himself as one of God’s holy angels, *The Lord said to Satan, “From where do you come?”* (1.7a) In essence the Lord is saying, “I see you, Satan.” The Lord calls Satan out by questioning where he has come. In this simple question the Lord is humiliating Satan by having him admit his limitations (the length of his chain) to the entire convocation. In this simple question that Lord reminds Satan that he is under the divine control of God. *Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”* (1.7b) This is the confession of a vagabond spirit pacing back and forth in frustration yanking on the chain the Master of the Universe had snapped around his neck.

Knowing Satan’s real motive was to devour some unsuspected victim, the Lord says, *“Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”* (1.8) The Lord is the One that mentions Job by listing Job’s fruits of faith. It is comforting to know that the Lord sees our love and devotion for Him! But Satan responds by accusing Job of living a life of faith out of the selfish motive only to get good things from God asking, *“Does Job fear God for nothing?* (1.9) Satan accuses Job’s motive for living for God only to get and not to glorify. Here we see Satan acting of out his true character as the “*accuser of the brethren*.” (Rev.12.10) Satan is incapable of appreciating Job’s faith. For Satan every act of righteous behavior must have a self-serving explanation.

But Satan isn’t content to just accurse Job of having selfish motives for living a godly life but he continues by slandering God for the goodness and grace that He had poured out upon Job’s life saying, “*Have You not made a hedge about 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.”* (1.10) Satan’s cynical explanation was that the Lord had protected and prospered Job and if that divine protection and prosperity was taken away that Job’s faith would crumble and Job would curse God. It is true that the Lord cares for and protects His people. God cares for us and the evil one does not touch us. (IJn.5.18) So, Satan is asking the Lord to lengthen the chain just a little so that he can attack Job. If the Lord will loosen the chain just a little bit then Job *will surely curse You to Your face*. (1.11) *Then the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.* (1.12)

**Flash Back to Act One**

At this point, Scene One of Act Two is over and we have a flash back to Act One when through a series of messengers, Job hears the news that his employees had been slain, his livestock is stolen, and his children were killed by a storm. (1.13-19)

Job responds to all of this tragedy by tearing his robe and shaving his head. Tearing his robe showed that the lost of his children had ripped Job’s heart into shreds and shaving his head showed that the lost of his children had cut off all fleshly adornment in his life. For Job there was nothing to celebrate. But during his lament instead of cursing God like Satan had presumed, Job falls to the ground and worshiped saying, *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.* (1.20-22)

As Job laments the lost of his family, possessions, and employees he maintains his integrity before God. But now we see Scene Two of Act Two. *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. The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” The Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.” Satan answered the Lord and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.”* (2.1-5)

**Scene Two**

The Dialog in Scene Two is almost actually the same Scene One. The Lord affirms Job’s integrity in the midst of all the despair in his life telling Satan that Job *still holds fast his integrity.* This divine confirmation caused Satan to burst out, *“Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.”* (2.5) So the Lord loosens Satan’s chain just a little bit more and says to Satan, *“Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.* (2.6-7) The scene transitions to Job sitting in darkness on an ash heap with devastating anguish piercing his soul, excruciating pain ravaging his body, and receiving verbal scorn from his wife. Job responds to all this adversity asking, *Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.* (2.10) Satan’s ultimate attack against Job did not stop his overwhelming dependence on his sovereign God. Satan exits the stage with his forked tail between his legs never to be seen or mentioned again in the entire book. Like Job’s wife, Satan walks off the stage despondent and defeated.

And I can imagine as Job watched Satan leaving the stage gasping to breathe and in extreme weakness of his soul and body saying*, I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Rom.8.38-39) The lights fade out and the audience sits in silence. Act Two is finished.

**Act Two is Finished**

I want to remind you that Job knew nothing of this drama in heaven. For Job the events that took his possessions, his family, and his health could all be explained in the natural realm. Job did not feel the need to find a demon behind every bush or blame the devil as the cause of anything. Job’s focus was on his faith in Christ and maintaining his belief that God is sovereign and in control – no matter what!

Even though this drama in heaven is difficult for us to completely understand, we see clearly from the drama in heaven that God and God alone is in control of all things. Brothers and sisters, there will come times in our lives when we will be sitting in the darkness just like Job. During those times it will not be easy to believe. Those times require great reservoirs of faith to survive because our most basic beliefs will be called into question. It is during those excursions through the valley of the shadow of death that we should fear no evil for the Lord is with us, and His rod and His staff will comfort us. Even in presence of our enemies the Lord prepares a banquet of grace before us for us to enjoy, He anoints us as His children, and He overflows His goodness upon our life. We know that even during the most difficult times that the Lord’s goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Ps.23)

**Closing Thoughts**

Brothers and sisters if there is anything we can learn from Act Two – The Drama in Heaven it is this:

That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ created and controls, upholds and governs all things. Therefore we should trust that He will provide us with all things necessary for body and soul, and will also turn to good whatever adversity He allows in our lives. Our great God governs every leaf in the trees and every blade of the grass in the field. He governs the rain and the drought, the fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty; indeed, all things come not by chance but by His fatherly hand. Therefore, as His children we will seek the Lord’s strength to be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with the view to the future we ask the Lord to give us a firm confidence that nothing will separate us from His love. For we know that all things are so completely in His hands that without His will nothing will come upon us. (paraphrase from the Heidelberg Catechism Questions 26-28)

Brothers and sisters, *whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* (I Jn.5.4-5)

Brothers and sisters, we must place our faith in the love of God even when we don’t know why certain things happen to us. We must be steadfast in our faith in our sovereign God even when darkness surrounds us and we are assault by vicious attacks. This is what we learn from Acts Two – the Drama in Heaven

**Call to Prayer**

*Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*(Js.4.7-8a)

**Benediction**

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.* (Jude 1.24-25)