

“For 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.” - Ephesians 6:12

“The Devil’s Arsenal”

Job 1:6-2:10; Ephesians 6:10-12

I. Job’s trials serve as an example of Satan’s work in spiritual warfare:

1) Satan has a full arsenal (Ephesians 6:12)

2) He doesn’t always use tragedy, but can be just as effective with worldly pleasure and wealth (Luke 8:14, 12:16-21, 18:24-25)

3) His timing is precise (Job 1:16a, 17a, 18a; Luke 4:13)

II. Applications:

1) Take comfort that Satan and his arsenal is limited. Satan is neither omniscient nor omnipresent, but God is (1 Kings 6:18; 1 John 4:4)

2) God sets the limit on what the devil can do (Job 1:12, 2:6; 1 Corinthians 10:13)

3) God provides His people with strength (10) and armor (11).

“The Devil’s Arsenal”
Job 1:6-2:10; Ephesians 6:10-12

We often take for granted what a blessing it is to have both the Old and New Testament in our possession. Because we have the complete canon of Scripture we have an insight that Old Testament believers could not have. A striking example of that can be seen in the life of Job. Consider our Scripture reading from Job 1:6-2:10:

⁶ One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.”

⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”

⁹ “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. ¹⁰ “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

¹² The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.”

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ One day when Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, ¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

²⁰ At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹ and said:

*“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
and naked I will depart.
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised.”*

²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Job 2

¹ On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. ² And the LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.”

³ Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

⁴ “Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. ⁵ But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

⁶ The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

⁷ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. ⁸ Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

⁹ His wife said to him, “Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!”

¹⁰ He replied, “You are talking like a foolish[] woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

We read this by way of background to our text in Ephesians 6:12: “For 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.”

Congregation in the Lord Jesus Christ,

When all these terrible things happened to Job he had no conception that he was an object of spiritual warfare. Neither did his wife, who told him to curse God and die; nor his friends, who accused him of being a great sinner, for surely, they reasoned, these tragedies would not have come upon him unless he had sinned grievously.

But from our vantage point we see that what happened to Job was a result of Satan's work. We are clearly told that Satan came into the Lord's presence. Job 1:6 says, "*One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.*"

Furthermore, verse 7 speaks volumes about the activities and intents of Satan: "*The LORD said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?'*"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

As he roams to and fro "*he seeks,*" as Peter says in 1 Peter 5:8 "*someone to devour.*" In this case, figuratively speaking, he was out to devour Job; he was intent on doing everything possible to cause Job, - an upright, honorable, godly man - to curse God.

Although Job and his friends didn't realize it at the time, Job was an example of what the Apostle Paul would be inspired to write about much later in time. Job's trials serve as an example of Satan's work in spiritual warfare. All that transpires in Job 1 and 2 is linked to what Paul is writing about in Ephesians 6:12: "*For 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.*"

Satan Has a Full Arsenal

Job's trials remind us that Satan has a full arsenal. It wasn't just the Sabeans, Chaldeans and natural disasters that Job faced; he faced the powers described in Ephesians 6:12. Did you notice the use of the word "against" there in Ephesians 6:12? Did you notice that the word "against" is used five times in just that one verse?

We might think that is redundant and wonder why the Holy Spirit would inspire five uses of the word "against" in one verse. But the reason that word is used five times over in one sentence, one verse, is because the Lord wants us to realize that this is no mere skirmish that we face as Christians. We are in an all out war, and the five-fold use of the word "against" re-emphasizes time and again that we are up against the insidious and on-going forces of the evil one.

What are the specific forces of evil that verse 12 refers to - the rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world and spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms? As you might imagine, there are many different views on what these spiritual forces really are. Some believe, that

because Satan and his demons are not omnipresent this description represents different geographical areas...

Others believe that those various powers represent all the evil that we find in our lives. The rulers and authorities refer to the darkness of political power that is influenced not by God but by the evil one. These commentators see the secular media, the materialism of the world, and the values - or should we say, lack of values, - in a culture, as part of the many things the Christian is up against in this spiritual warfare.

While there is truth to both of those views, a third view is more comprehensive in saying that the rulers, authorities, powers and spiritual forces represent the fallen angels, whom we know as demons.

Both Ephesians 1:21 and Colossians 1:16 use similar terminology to describe the order of angels. Demons, in Scripture, clearly refer to fallen angels, and thus it would be most likely that the description of what we are up against is a spiritual order of demonology over which Satan reigns. And we certainly see this manifested in political powers and cultural norms, and we see where certain geographic areas, those that have the least exposure to the gospel, often have the greatest amount of evil.

While there may be more than we can comprehend, this side of heaven, in the description of verse 12, it certainly teaches us that we, like Job of old, face a full arsenal of evil.

Tools of Tragedy and Success

However, in reading about the trials of Job we might mistakenly believe that the evil one always works with tragedy. Satan doesn't always use tragedy, but can be just as effective, or even more effective, with worldly pleasure and worldly success.

Consider the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:16-21. *“And he told them this parable: ‘The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’*

¹⁸ “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.””

²⁰ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

²¹ “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”

In that parable, riches kept that man from the Kingdom of God and the treasure of heaven. Or consider the account of the rich young ruler and the statement of Jesus that amazed

His disciples: *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”* (Luke 18:25).

Likewise, in the parable of the sower, what is one of the main obstacles for the seed that fell among the thorns? Luke 8:14 says, *“The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.”*

We are often tempted to think that the biggest tests and temptations come to us through tragedy. But often just the opposite is true. When are we most likely to pray? In times of trial, disease, injury, loss of job, or other hardship. The biggest tests often come, not through trials, but when we are blessed with worldly wealth and pleasure. That is when we are most likely to leave the Lord and rely on the gift instead of the Giver.

There is nothing inherently evil in wealth itself. Money is not the root of all evil; 1 Timothy 6:10 says it is *the love of money* that is the root of all evil. Job was among the wealthiest of his day. And, when the book of Job ends, in chapter 42, we are told, *“The Lord blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the first.”* (Job 42:12). The chapter goes on to describe how the Lord gave Job twice as much materially later in life than he had earlier in life.

Job’s unique and painful experience serve as a reminder that the evil one can cause great sorrow and tragedy as he works his evil schemes against God’s people. But we must always remember that he can also use wealth and worldly pleasure just as effectively in his attempt to derail and seduce the Christian.

Timed With Precision

As the devil uses his arsenal, his timing is precise. Whenever I read the first chapter of Job I can’t help but be amazed at how all these events followed one right after another. After describing how a messenger had reported the attack of the Sabeans, verse 16 says, *“While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”*

Then, verse 17 says, *“While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”*

And verse 18 and 19: *“While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”*

Job's trials are the supreme illustration of our phrase, "When it rains it pours." The devil's timing, whether in bringing tragedy or in dangling the treasures and allurements of the world before us, is precise, and put before us with great cunning.

There are at least three classic works on spiritual warfare written from a Reformed perspective. One is by the Thomas Brooks, called *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*. Another is a two-volume set by Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones. The first volume is *The Christian Warfare: An Exposition of Ephesians 6:10-13*; the second volume is *The Christian Soldier: An Exposition of Ephesians 6:10-20*. The third major Reformed work is by William Gurnall, a Puritan pastor who wrote over 1200 pages on just these 10 verses in Ephesians 6 describing spiritual warfare. In his book, *The Christian in Complete Armor*, Gurnall points out that the devil has specific timing in sending his temptations to us, whether trials or worldly pleasures and wealth:

a) Often he attacks those who are newly converted. When someone is a new Christian the devil is quick to attack and plant seeds of doubt and temptation. CS Lewis, who wrote the popular and excellent book, *The Screwtape Letters*, picks up on this. The book describes correspondence between a senior demon, Screwtape, and his diabolical nephew, Wormwood. As mentor, Screwtape coaches Wormwood how to tempt his "patient," that is, a newly converted person, from the "enemy," - i.e. God.

b) Another situation Satan is sure to seize on is when we are afflicted, just as with Job. While Job was strengthened by God, and by God's grace sets an excellent example of godliness amid sorrows, he nevertheless rued the day he was born, and understandably had his time of doubts.

c) Satan also loves to tempt the Christian who has achieved notable success. This evening, in our series on Revelation, we will read how the church at Laodicea thought she was rich, but was in reality very poor. The Lord said to them, "*You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked*" (Revelation 3:17). So many people today still stumble over the temptations brought our way at times when we think we have attained "success."

d) The devil, as he roams "*to and fro on the earth*" also loves to see an idle Christian. There is a lot of truth in the old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's hands," and, "If you don't have anything to do, the devil will give you something to do." David, idly passing time on the roof of his palace when it was the seasons when kings go out to war (2 Samuel 11:1), serves as a classic and tragic example of the devil's use of timing with the idle Christian.

e) The evil one also loves to find believers who are isolated from other believers. Just as David serves as a negative example, that when he was alone on his roof top, idle, he sinned with Bathsheba, so Joseph, who was isolated in Egypt serves as a positive example in resisting temptation. He was young. He was single. He was in a foreign land. He could

have reasoned, with the devil's subtle prompting, that no family was nearby to know or concern themselves with what he did... But he sets the excellent example of living out Paul's warning, written centuries later, "*Flee from immorality*" (1 Corinthians 6:18a).

f) The devil, with his timing, also takes note of those who have terminal diseases, who are approaching death's door. Gurnall writes: "As they say of the natural serpent, he is never seen at his full length until dying; so this mystical serpent never strains his wit and wiles more than when his time is thus short." As death approaches and thoughts reminisce back, the devil seizes the opportunity to instill doubt. Even at death's doorway he lives up to his descriptive name, the Accuser.

We can be sure that just as the devil used timing to his advantage in the temptation of Job, he will do the same in the temptations and pitfalls he sends your way and mine. After all, he did the same with Jesus. After unsuccessfully tempting Him in the desert at the weakest time for Jesus, as He had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, we read in Luke 4:13, "*When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left Him until an opportune time.*"

If all that we looked at was the arsenal of the evil one and his timing in using that arsenal, we would be greatly discouraged. We would see the five uses of the word "against" in verse 12 and say, "I can never stand against all that the devil and his cohorts send my way." However, by way of application, and for comfort and encouragement:

His Arsenal Is Limited

Know that Satan and his arsenal is limited; Satan is neither omniscient nor omnipresent; God is. Since the devil is not omnipresent he cannot directly tempt every person. He tempts each person through his influence, but directly he cannot tempt each person.

It has been pointed out that in the Bible only 6 people are mentioned by name as having been directly tempted by Satan: Eve (not Adam), Job, Jesus, Judas, Peter and Ananias (but not Sapphira, his wife). We know that far more people were tempted and are being tempted directly by the devil. But often his temptations and evil work has to be done through his subordinate powers described in verse 12 as "*rulers, authorities, powers and spiritual forces of evil.*"

Two verses of great comfort remind us that God and His angelic hosts are far greater than Satan and his forces. The first verse is in 2 Kings 6:16, as Elisha's servant is traumatized at the sight of the Aramean army which has surrounded them at Dothan, Elisha says to his servant: "*Don't be afraid... Those who are with us are more than those with them.*"

Elisha then prayed that his servant's eyes would be opened, and they were. Then the servant saw that the hills around Dothan were filled with horses and chariots of fire. His

eyes were opened to see that the angelic army of God's is far greater than the fallen army of the evil one.

The New Testament counterpart is in 1 John 4:4. John has been warning his readers to test the spirits to see whether they are from God or from the evil one. He warns about the antichrist, whose spirit, John says, is already in the world. Then he writes "*You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*" (1 John 4:4). Both those verses, as well as many others, remind us that although the devil has power, our God is far greater and more powerful.

God Sets the Limit

Second, take comfort in the fact that God sets the limits on what the devil can do. Did you notice in Job 1:12 how God set the limit? "*The LORD said to Satan, 'Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.'*"

We see the same thing in Job 2:6. "*The LORD said to Satan, 'Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.'*"

In each case God clearly set the limit. The same is true in your life and mine. We face an evil adversary, whose intent is to use his power to harm us, but God will always clearly set the limit on what the evil one can do. 1 Corinthians 10:13 reassures us: "*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*"

God Provides Strength and Armor

A third application of comfort: God provides His people with strength and armor. God does protect us; He provides us with His own strength, as we saw last week where Ephesians 6:10 says, "*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.*"

And He provides us with the armor that we will look at in the coming weeks, the armor Ephesians 6:11 speaks about, "*Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.*"

We certainly need to be on guard against the devil's schemes. We must never underestimate our foe. But we are also to take great comfort in the knowledge that his doom is certain and that the Spirit within us is far greater than Satan's spirit in the world.

Martin Luther put it well in the familiar hymn "*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.*" The third stanza:

*And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

Amen.