

# Ephesians: What's God Saying to You? What are You Going to Do About It?

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## I. Introduction

The reality of life is that there are only two choices in this world, that are two paths and only two which we can travel down: the road paved by Satan's advice or the one paved by the Lord's. And it doesn't matter if we know this or not, if we're willing to acknowledge it or not, we choose one of these two roads every day of our lives and it begins with what we see and hear.

## II. Ephesians: What is God Saying to You and What are You Going to Do About It?

### Chapter 6

In Ephesians 6:10-18, God warns us that Satan will attack. He and his minions will try to derail you at every turn. So when things go wrong, when we fight and argue with others, when the economy takes a turn for the worse, when presidential elections don't go our way, when the government tells us that we can't gather as a church, when a pandemic takes our loved one, it's not just people or events we're facing. Satan's at work and he won't stop until he's destroyed us and everything connected to us. But God also promises that Satan cannot win; ultimately, he cannot win *if* we stand in the power of His might. If we listen to the Lord's voice, then Satan will lose. Try as he might, his attacks will simply bounce off, 6:16.

*How Satan attacks and what we can do about it.* The most important thing in life and the most difficult one is to have the right reaction. That is, when something significant happens, Satan is hoping that we'll react the way *he* wants us to, which is why he's desperate to interpret events for us. He can't wait to tell us what happened so he can then tell us what to do. This is what we've seen in Job. When Job began his journey, he reacted perfectly to his circumstances. He didn't let Satan interpret events for him. Instead, he let God tell him both what happened and what to do. But then things fell apart ... will Job recover?

### How Satan attacks, a case study: Job,

**Job 1-31**, Job was minding his own business, living his righteous life but unbeknownst to him God used him to prove a point to Satan, a point which is never revealed.<sup>1</sup> God pointed Job out to Satan, how awesome he was: he was completely righteous and completely faithful to God. And God knew how Satan would react: "Oh, yeah! Take everything away from him, and he'll curse you to your face!" So God allowed Satan to take all of Job's wealth and his ten children (presumably his grandkids too). But Job clung to his righteousness and said,

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<sup>1</sup> We're never told why God picked this fight with Satan and made Job suffer this way. I offer a guess: God may have wanted to show Satan that he chose the wrong path, that he didn't have to become God's enemy, that he could have actually remained faithful to God instead of spitting in His face. Consider the similarities between Job and Satan: they're both #1, Satan was the #1 angelic being; he had it all; he was the wisest and most beautiful, Ezekiel 28:12-15. Job was also #1; he had it all too, he was the most righteous man on the planet and the wealthiest of all the people of the East, 1:3, 8. And Satan thought that this #1 would do exactly what he did: spit in God's face, Job 1:11; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:15-18; Revelation 12:4.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD," 1:21. The chapter ends with an interesting comment: "In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong," 1:22. There was another meeting between God and His angels and Satan was there. And once again God points Job out to Satan, how he held on to his righteousness and faithfulness to God even though God struck him. Satan is certain that Job will break if God takes his health. So God allows Satan to do whatever he wanted, except to kill him. Satan proceeds to cover Job's entire body with painful boils. But Job didn't break; the one who broke was his wife: she told Job to curse God and die, but Job refused and instead said, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" 2:10. And we have another editorial comment very similar to the end of chapter one: "In all this Job did not sin with his lips," 2:10. It is crystal clear that Job refuses to listen to Satan's voice; he will not let Satan interpret the events of his life. He will only accept God's interpretation and therefore his reaction was right. He didn't know why God had done this to him, but he was not going to turn his back on God; he was going to implicitly trust Him regardless of the circumstances. When Job's three friends hear of the dire straits their friend is in, they rush to his side. When they saw him from a distance, the state he was in, they lifted their voices and wept. Realizing how tremendous his grief was, they utter not a word. Instead, they sit with him in silence for seven straight days. And here too we see that Job's friends are also listening to God's voice, not Satan's. Instead of analyzing the situation and figuring out why God did this to him, they simply acknowledge his deep suffering and grief and seek to comfort him with their presence and silence. They empathize and mourn with their friend (Romans 12:15).

But then everything changed. For the next 28 chapters, Job and his three friends fall into Satan's trap. They all grab Satan's calculator and start adding things up: Job looks at his loss of family + loss of wealth + loss of health = "I should have never been born," 3:3. Likewise, his friends, instead of refocusing Job's eyes on God, also begin to calculate: God struck Job with horrendous suffering + God only strikes sinners with suffering = Job must have sinned terribly. What's Satan's next piece of advice for Job's three friends? "Accuse Job of sin," and that's exactly what they do. Over and over they accuse him of sin, 4:7-9; 8:4-6; 11:5-6. And it's clear that Satan whispered it into their ears, 4:12-21. Job kept defending his righteousness, 6:22-29; 23:1-12, but in the process began to question and say some sinful things about God, 7:20-21; 24:2-12. By the time it was all over, Satan had all of them reacting exactly how he wanted: Job's three friends were saying things about God that were completely wrong and accused Job of sin without any evidence. And Job had drifted so far away from God, that he was now making demands of God and sitting in judgment of Him! 10:2-3; 13:23.

**Job 32-37**, a younger man named Elihu speaks up and rebukes all of them, Job for justifying himself instead of God and his three friends for sitting in judgment of Job without any evidence whatsoever, 32:2-3. Elihu refused to go down the path of either Job's three friends or Job. He refuses to listen to Satan's voice about the whole matter. Instead, he makes a conscious decision to only listen to God's voice, 33:3-4; 36:2-4. And in doing so, he's the only one who's trying to refocus Job's eyes on God. Elihu wanted to see his friend justified, 33:32, so he urged him to wait on God, 35:14. There are four reasons we know that Elihu was listening to God's voice instead of Satan's: he was pointing to Job's current sins not the imagined sins of his three friends, his remarks are similar to God's (both God and Elihu condemn Job for justifying himself, 32:2; 35:2; 40:8. They both condemn him for speaking ignorantly, 34:35; 35:16; 38:2. They both point to creation to show Job that in order to criticize God, to judge Him, you have to be God, 36:24-37:24; 38:1-39:30; 40:15-41:34), Elihu wanted to see Job cleared of all charges unlike his three friends, 33:32, and God never condemned Elihu's words, but He did condemn what Job's three friends said, 42:7-9.

**Job 38-41**, after all this God finally shows up. He speaks, but what does He say to Job? And remember Job's condition, he's lost all his family, all his wealth, and he's covered in boils from head to toe, sitting on a pile of ashes in deep grief. What do you think God would say to a man in this condition? You'd think that God would seek to comfort him after all this grief and suffering. Instead, God confronts him ... or does He? He does confront Job, but even though this confrontation is designed to actually comfort him absolutely and completely, on the surface it doesn't look like it. Notice what God says to Job; He in essence says,

"Who are you, with such an ignorant mind, to question Me? Now, sit up straight like a man because I'm about to question you and you have to answer Me: where were you when I created the earth? Do you know how it was created? Who told the mighty sea, 'This far and no farther'? Were you the one who told the morning and dawn what to do? Do you know how death works? Tell Me, surely you know. Where does daylight come from? What about darkness? You must know since you were there at the beginning of time, right? Do you know where snow comes from, how about ice, how about wind? Who controls rain drops and tells rain what to do, what about lightning bolts? Can you move the planets and stars wherever you wish? Who gave man his wisdom and understanding? Who can number the clouds and make it rain? Who provides food for the lions and ravens? Who determines when mountain goats and deer give birth or how long they should live or how they should behave? What about wild donkeys, or onagers, or oxen, or ostriches, ...?"

God goes on and on like this, relentless in His questioning of Job, one after another for four chapters! In chapter 40, Job wants to apologize but God won't let him, 40:1-14. How is this supposed to comfort Job? It sounds cruel to question such a broken man. Why is this God's response to Job's accusations? The answer is found in what God said at the beginning and middle of His interrogation of Job, 38:2-3; 40:2, 8, 9-14. God is essentially saying to Job, "The only way you can sit in judgment of Me and question My decisions is if you're Me! Unless you're God and know the end from the beginning, how this entire universe and everything in it works and can control all of it, unless you can do that, you have no place to talk." He's in essence saying, "I'm God and you're not," but not the way we might think.

This is designed to comfort Job, to reassure him that everything God decided to do to him was right, was loving, was just, was perfect, ALL OF IT! Why? Because of who God is: absolute justice, absolute love, absolute compassion, absolute mercy, absolute everything! When He makes a decision, it's a gazillion percent right. So, if He allows tragedy to strike you, guess what? That was the best thing for you. What?! How can this be?! Think back to the beginning; what was Job's reaction in the beginning? Absolute trust and peace in God, 1:21; 2:10.

**Job 42**, what's his reaction now? Did God's interrogation work, did it comfort Job? YES!! 42:1-6. God refocused Job's eyes on Him and Job was at peace, even though all his children, all his wealth, and all his health is still gone. Then God doubled his wealth, gave him another ten children, and a long happy life, 42:10-17. But what if God hadn't? Would He still be loving and perfect? YES! We only have two choices, Satan's voice or the Lord's (Ephesians 6:10-13).

### III. Conclusion

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*