Job 1:6-12; 2:7-10; Matthew 4: 7-11; Job’s Enemy I. Satan’s Presence II. Satan’s Limit III. Satan’s Defeat

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the battle between good and evil is one that rages on. Beginning at creation- only to be concluded when Jesus returns on the clouds of glory. We are in fact part of the church militant- we battle against our sworn enemies. And one of these sworn enemies is the devil- Satan- that deceiving snake of old. Last week we began by considering the problem evil events. Why do evil events happen to good people. Now Job- he was a righteous man! He was upright- he feared God and turned away from evil. So these evil events will not fall on him because he deserved them. Rather, through these events God was going to strengthen Job’s faith- Job would be sanctified through the fire of trouble and persecution. So the first error we dealt with is this- only good things and happy events happen to God’s people. The opposite is true- we should expect trouble and persecution because we are joined to Christ! This week we deal with another false teaching- that good and evil are equal powers. Why do bad things happen? Well, the devil must be in control! The devil must be able to outmaneuver God or frustrate God’s plans as some would say. This is the error we deal with today. Good and evil are not equal powers- they are not opposite sides of the same coin. Unlike the dualist teaching of the Yin and Yang- black and white are not equal colors that can only exist in a balanced state. Not only is Karma wrong- but so is the idea that everything happens in balance. When asked- what is the opposite of good people will say evil. What is the opposite of God- people will say that Devil. But is the Devil the opposite power of God? Does the Devil have freedom and power all on his own? So we return to Job this morning to see the enemy that Job faces. In fact, Job’s name means “persecuted.” So who will persecute Job? Who is Job’s enemy? Last week we also defined true faith. Does Job have true faith or just surface faith? Will Job forsake the LORD when hard times comes? Will his faith crumble when he is tested- or will his true faith hold? So we consider this theme: Jesus Christ defeats the devil as Job’s faith remains steadfast in the face of the accuser.

**I. Satan’s Presence**

In our first point we consider Satan- where he comes from. Now the name- Satan- means the accuser or adversary. He is the enemy of God and his people- and his desire is to accuse. He points out guilt! He accuses people in the presence of God- and he brings up sin as a reason and grounds for people condemned and cast out. Satan is a fallen angel- he fell shortly after creation. And as Jude 6 puts it, Satan led a rebellion in heaven against God and lost- thus these fallen angels were removed from their position of authority. Satan’s sin was that of pride- he did not want to stay in his place- but longed for greater power and authority! Basically, he wanted to be God. So pride was the cardinal sin of Satan. But now that Satan has fallen, he goes around the world trying to find others to take down with him. Satan is like a detective of sorts- he is looking for clues or grounds by which to accuse and condemn. He is making a list of reasons why people cannot come into the presence of God. It is this fallen angel that tempted Adam and Eve in the garden- tempting Eve to eat the fruit and thus be like God. So Satan is that ancient serpent of old who uses deceit to try to get people to fall into sin. But where Adam and Eve were righteous and without sin- having everything and needing nothing; Job lives after the fall and will be tempted after having lost everything! As you know- Adam fell while he still possessed all of these blessed gifts- will Job fall when his gifts are taken away?

Satan has great power. He has powerful influence and ability. He can whisper or speak through dumb animals. He can even stir up nations to wage war. Revelation even says that he can perform fake miracles and deceive the nations. So in our text, Satan has we wandering around the earth looking for his next target. Hating God and his people, Satan is all too happy to provoke people and tempt them to sin. And after they fall into sin, he will accuse these same targets before God. So Satan is going to tempt Job- specifically tempting Job to curse God. Satan is going to take everything away- stealing his possessions, killing his family- robbing him of his health. All with the desire to get Job to curse God and die. So Satan is the enemy- a liar and deceiver- the accuser and enemy. As I Peter 5 identifies, Satan is a prowling lion who stalks the earth- looking for someone to consume! Looking for prey to destroy- looking for a helpless soul that he can tempt into sin. The war he is fighting is against God and his people- he wants to rob God of his glory; to deceive the nations and destroy the truth. This is Satan’s power and desire- so that is why we need to pray! Deliver us from evil- protect us from the evil one! And as a church, we must always be watchful. One of the primary ways that Satan works today is by heresy- keeping churches and Christian weak so that they are tossed back and forth by every doctrine or teaching that comes along. We must not be unwise as to his tactics- do not be ignorant as to his devices.

**II. Satan’s Limit**

But as I said before, Satan is not a rival to God! Satan is limited. He is not all knowing nor is he all powerful. Although Satan stands for everything opposed to God- Satan can do nothing apart from the permission of God! This is what we find in both 1:12 and again in 2:7! Behold- the LORD said- you may do this. You may go so far and no further. In fact, it was the LORD that allowed Satan to consider and attack Job in the first place as we see in 1:8. So although Satan was one of the highest angels- he remains a creature that can only do what the LORD permits. Satan is on a chain if you will- he remains fully under God’s control. Like a fierce lion in a cage- or a dog on a leash- Satan is restrained! Satan has to ask for permission- and he can go only where the Lord directs- and he can do only what the Lord permits. The fact is- Satan’s desire and Satan’s ability are fully under God’s control. As I said in the introduction, the Chineze concept of dualism is not true. Yin and Yang- white and black- good and evil are not in a state of balance. No- evil does not have the same power as good. Satan does not balance God- God remains the only supreme power and authority. So Satan is bound by his very nature- as a creature he can only do what God allows- only act as God permits- and only go where God sends. But the Bible speaks of a further binding of Satan as well. In Rev. 20:2-3 we read of a mighty angel who binds Satan with a great chain. The ancient serpent and dragon is then cast into the bottomless pit so that he can deceive the nations no longer. This binding of Satan- the chaining of the lion- refers to a period of time when his power will be even more limited! After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was unleashed- poured out upon the nations. During this 1000-year reign of Christ- in which we now live- the Devil’s ability to deceive the nations has been stopped. Now, as we can see, believers are being gathered from all nations! Not just from one people group- but all peoples and nations and tribes are hearing and believing the good news! Remember, Job himself was not in the line of Abraham- Job was not a Hebrew either! So Satan is bound- currently kept under lock and key until the Millenium is over when he will be released again for a short time.

**III. Satan’s Defeat**

Now that we have considered the binding of Satan- or his limits- in our last point we will consider his defeat. Satan may try to get Job to sin- he may try to accuse Job of wickedness- but to no avail! As 1:22 reads- and again in 2:10- in all this, Job did not sin! Job was able to resist- he was able to stand up under this temptation. You see, in spite of all the devil’s power he cannot force people to sin! He cannot make you do something. This is an important reminder- we should never say something like the Devil made me do it. The devil cannot force you to act. Added to this, the fact that Job withstood temptation and did sin is proof of the validity of his faith! In other words, Job did have a true and living faith! The devil cannot separate Job from his Lord! The devil cannot accuse someone who has been washed by the blood of the lamb! Job does not believe in God because God gave him good gifts- rather Job’s faith is deeper; strong and pure! He trusts in the LORD with a heart of true faith- not a superficial faith! And for this reason- because Job has true faith- he is justified! And since it is God who justifies, who can condemn? No one will or can accuse because God has forgiven! So Job held fast to his integrity- and the faith produced in his heart remained even after this trial! In fact, Job’s faith, being tested, would be further refined! In this we too find good news. By our faith, we too will overcome this world! How was Job able to withstand this attack of the devil? How was he able to stand firm in his faith even when everything had been taken away- when his life was crashing down? Well, Job had access to the same strength that we have- and that is in the power of the Holy Spirit! As I John 4:4 makes clear, He who is in us greater than he who is in the world. In other words, the Holy Spirit who lives in our heart is greater than the devil- who is the prince of the power of the air! When tempted, we like Job can rely on the Holy Spirit so that we too might resist temptation! To apply this, there are two main errors that need to be avoided when it comes to the Devil. One is fascination- being preoccupied with the Devil and the Occult. We are finding this more and more in our society- as North America rejects Christianity. The other error is fear- to see demons and devils behind everything and lurking behind every door. We need not live in fear- because the Holy Spirit is within us! Our house is filled- our home is occupied- and if the HS is living within the Devil cannot reside there as well!

In this testing of Job, we catch a picture of the tempting of Jesus in the wilderness as we read in Matthew 4. After the 40 days in the wilderness, the same Satan will go after Jesus to try to get Jesus to fall into sin. If Jesus could be defeated, then Jesus could be accused and salvation for a fallen race would remain out of reach! But Jesus did not fall- rather he rebuked the Devil with the Word of God and told the Devil to leave! Be gone, Satan- you shall worship the LORD your God and him only shall you serve. Even as Jesus teaches us- resist the Devil and he will flee from you. But in this resisting of temptation, something more significant happened. Jesus was able to face the tempter and prove His power of him! Jesus righteousness remains- and he triumphed over evil. Because although Job resisted his temptation, Job would still later on question God’s purpose. But here, Jesus submits the Father’s will and resists temptation proving that He alone is the source of all our comfort and hope. So in Job’s resisting- we catch a glimpse of Satan’s final defeat. Jesus will be the seed of the woman that would crush the head of the serpent! So although Satan is still on the prowl like a lion- this lion is chained to a millstone that is sinking to the bottom of the sea. In other words, his doom is sure! His end is certain! He may continue to wage war, but the ultimate end is clear! Jesus has defeated Satan and He will deliver His people! As Jesus said in Luke 10, I saw Satan fall like lightning. Satan has now been cast out of heaven- and one day he will be cast out of earth!

As we close, having faith in God does not mean that your life will be easy. You will be tempted, tested and tried! But by your faith in Jesus, you will overcome! Jesus Christ defeats the devil as Job’s faith remains steadfast in the face of the accuser. Satan can only do what the LORD allows- but His time is running short! One day soon, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire where the devil and the beast will be tormented night and day forever and ever as Rev. 20 assures us. So may we all resist temptation by the strength of the Spirit- as we place our faith fully in Jesus who has conquered the foe!