

INTRODUCTION

School has started back and most folks are settling in to the school year routine. I have the utmost respect for schoolteachers. It’s tough being a schoolteacher, especially an elementary school teacher. Recently someone sent me a humorous list of seven ways to know if you’re an elementary school teacher.

You might be an elementary schoolteacher if:

1. You think caffeine should be available in intravenous form.
2. You can tell if it’s a full moon without ever looking outside.
3. You believe the teachers’ staff room should be equipped with a Valium salt lick.
4. You laugh hysterically when someone calls the teachers’ staff room a “lounge.”
5. You want to strangle the next person who says, “Must be nice to work 8 to 3:00 and have summers free.”
6. You believe “Shallow gene pool” should have its own box in the report card.
7. You would approve the aerial spraying of Prozac. All joking aside, you’re probably a schoolteacher if you love children and love a challenge! We should pray for all of our schoolteachers and administrators. If you can read your Bible, hug a teacher!

This is the second message in the series from Job entitled “Turning Tears into Telescopes.” In this book we are going to discover that God utilizes a variety of ways to teach us—and adversity is one of His most effective teachers. The story of Job begins with a description of a man who is happy and wealthy. He owns great riches and has ten children. But all of that was about to change because of a conversation that took place in heaven between God and Satan.

Job 1:6-12. “One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. 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.’ 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.’ ‘Does Job fear God for nothing?’ Satan replied. ‘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. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.’ 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.”

In this message I want to focus on the statement Satan made in verse 10. Satan observed God had built a hedge of protection around Job. Based upon that observation, I want to talk about being “Surrounded by God’s Hedge of Protection.”

1. GOD PROVIDES A HEDGE OF PROTECTION FOR THOSE WHO HONOR HIM

Did you notice God’s evaluation of Job? He said, “Have you considered my SERVANT Job?” (Job 1:8) It would be nice to think God builds a hedge of protection around everyone, but the

truth is, He is looking for people who have surrendered their lives to Him to become His servant. Do you want to have a divine hedge in your life? Then your goal should be to become a servant of God.

When you hear the word “hedge,” what you think of? Most people think of a hedge made of plants. You may have a set of hedge clippers somewhere in your garage that you use to trim plants. But the word “hedge” in the Bible describes something more substantial than a bush. The Hebrew word really means “wall.” A hedge was a defensive wall often built around a city. The bottom part might be comprised of stones or hard packed dirt, and there might be thorny plants on the top of it.

The general idea of a hedge is that of a protective fence—a barrier. In his conversation with God, Satan pointed out that God had built a spiritual hedge around Job, around his family (household) and around all his possessions. Job couldn’t see the hedge, but Satan could. As I mentioned in the last message, there are many things that exist in the spiritual world that are invisible to our eyes, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t real—they are. It is a wonderful insight to realize God can provide a spiritual barrier around His servants to protect them from spiritual attacks. Let’s notice a couple of things about this divine hedge of protection:

(1) We need God’s hedge individually

God’s hedge of protection around His servants is part of God’s promise. This hedge can only be removed by God’s permission. The great Bible teacher, Dr. J. Vernon McGee, was born in Hillsboro, Texas and pastored in Los Angeles for many years. He had a radio broadcast called “Through the Bible.” Dr. McGee wrote in his commentary on Job: “I believe there is a hedge around every believer today, and I do not think that Satan can touch you unless God permits it. And IF God permits it, it will be for His purpose.”

There are many examples in the Bible of God’s promise to protect His servants. For instance the Bible says, “His faithfulness will be your shield and your rampart...If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;” (Psalm 91:4,10-11)

God’s hedge is not a hedge of stones or a hedge of plants; it’s a hedge of angels. In my book on angels I recount the story of missionaries John Pollock and his wife who went to the New Hebrides Islands in the South Pacific. When they arrived, they were the first Europeans the natives had ever seen. The tribal magician feared these white intruders, so he convinced the members of his tribe these strangers had come to kill the children of the tribe.

On that first evening, the natives surrounded the hut John and his wife were in, planning to attack and kill them. Expecting to be attacked at any moment, the Pollocks stayed on their knees praying for safety all through the night. The night passed and the native warriors never attacked. Gradually, the Pollocks learned the local language and won the trust of the people. Many of them came to know Christ. After the chief of the tribe became a Christian, John said to him, “We have always been curious about the first night we were here. Your tribe surrounded us with your

spears, but you didn’t attack. Why not?” The chief replied, “Because of all your guards. Where did you get all those men?” John said, “It was only my wife and me.” The chief responded, “Oh, no. All that evening we saw large men with swords in their hands surrounding your hut. We were afraid so we never attacked.” It’s great to know God can dispatch angels to provide a protective hedge around his servants.

Before I leave this point about a personal hedge of protection, I want you to notice something very important: **You can pray for a hedge of protection around those you love.** Parents and grandparents you should pray for a hedge of protection around your children and grandchildren. Husbands and wives, you can pray for God to put a hedge around your mate so they will stay faithful to you. This can be illustrated from the story of Hosea and Gomer in the Old Testament. Hosea’s wife, Gomer, was an adulteress. When she wandered away from her husband God put up a hedge to keep her from being unfaithful. The entire story is an allegory of how Israel tried to be unfaithful to God. God said, “Therefore I will hedge her way with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but not catch them...then she will say, ‘I will go back to my husband as at first, for I was better off than now.’” (Hosea 2:6-7) If your mate is working or traveling in an area where there is sexual temptation, you should pray for God to hedge them in!

Job was the kind of father who prayed for a hedge of protection around his children. Job 1:5 says, Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular custom. (Job 1:5) Job realized God had called him to be the spiritual leader of his family. There is an important question I want to ask every man: Are you being a good spiritual leader for your family? Is it your regular custom, sir, to worship and pray and intercede on behalf of your family? If you want to learn what it means to be a spiritual leader I challenge you to join me starting this Friday morning at 6 a.m. in the Galilee Room as we start Men’s Fraternity. I’m going to start a study for 10 weeks this fall called “The Quest for Authentic Manhood.” If you need something new in your spiritual life, this can be what you’re looking for. It’s for men of all ages, both single and married. You can sign up at the table in the foyer, or just show up at 6 a.m. this Friday. I dare you. I double-dog dare you guys to apply yourself to become a real spiritual leader!

(2) We need God’s hedge nationally

I believe God puts hedges of protection around nations as well. Since our nation’s birth, it’s obvious God’s hand of blessing has been on us. It’s because people who feared God and acknowledged God was the source of all liberty and freedom founded our nation.

The television station I watch more than any other is the History Channel. During the past few weeks I’ve watched some programs about the battles in the South Pacific and the D-Day Invasion. God’s blessing and guidance was obviously upon our nation during that time. But as you know during the 1960s a trend started to kick God out of the public arena. It’s been gaining momentum over the past three decades.

As I’ve said before, the attacks of 9/11 weren’t just a wake up call; they were a kneel-down call

to America. The Bible says, “Blessed is the nation who God is the Lord.” (Psalm 33:12). The scripture is clear about what happens to nations who reject God. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” (Psalm 9:17)

Historical revisionists are trying to rewrite American history to remove any reference to God or the Bible. They are doing it to try to promote their secular humanist philosophy and to justify their own godless lifestyle. Because they know if they can successfully remove God and Bible from the public forum they can omit the troubling truth concerning abortion where God says that He knew us in the womb, and that God hates hands that shed innocent blood. If they can remove the Bible from the public discussion, they can eliminate the clear teaching that says marriage is between one man and one woman until death do us part.

But make no mistake about it. While all of our founding fathers weren’t evangelicals, they honored and revered God. Consider the words George Washington spoke at his presidential inauguration on April 30, 1789: “It would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplication to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States...We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained.” *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-44, vol. 30, pp. 292-6.)

We live in a time when we talk a lot about homeland security. We need something much more important than that: We need heavenly security. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ should be Department of Heavenly Security! So, let’s pray that our nation will remain one nation under God—and one nation under God’s protection.

2. SATAN’S ACCUSATION IS AN INSULT TO GOD’S CHARACTER

Satan: “Does Job fear God for nothing? ...Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has?...stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” (Job 1:9-11)

Satan’s accusation was that the only reason Job honored God was because God bribed him. He was insinuating God cannot be loved unless He buys that love. God knew Job’s heart. He knew that Job would still love Him even if he lost it all. Satan suggested God strike Job—but God never did. It’s because God is good. He just allowed Satan to carry out a test.

Sometimes people who suffer pain and sorrow get angry at God. I know the feeling, but it is misplaced anger. If you want to express your anger and hatred, direct it at Satan.

In his book, *Don’t Waste Your Sorrows*, Paul Billheimer wrote: “Satan is the agent of destruction, not God. Who was it that destroyed Job’s fortune, family, and health when God permitted it done? Satan. Satan brings about accidents, sickness, disease, and calamity, and then tempts men to think that God brings these things to pass. Thus God is blamed for the work of the

devil by millions, even by some Christians who should know better. The permission of God is never the same as the evil work of Satan after permission is granted him; withdrawing protection is not the same as the destruction itself. God’s work is that of deliverance; Satan’s is that of destruction.” (p. 102)

It’s okay to get mad at the devil, but you don’t have to be afraid of him. I heard a funny story about the devil. One Sunday morning the devil thought he’d have some fun so he decided to show up at a little Baptist church in the middle of the sermon. He ran in roaring like a lion and everyone was so afraid they jumped up from their pews and ran out the doors. They were even jumping out of the windows. The choir left, the pastor left, everyone left—except one elderly man who sat in his pew just staring at Satan. Satan roared up to him and said, “Aren’t you afraid of me? I’m the prince of Darkness, I’m Beelzebub, I’m Lucifer!” The old man just looked at him and said, “Nope, I’m not afraid of you, you don’t scare me one bit.” The devil said, “Why aren’t you afraid?” The man said, “Because I’ve been married to your sister for the last 45 years!” That may sound sexist, because there are probably some of you ladies who feel like you’ve been married to the devil’s brother, too! But the main point is we shouldn’t be afraid of the devil.

Job faced Satan’s attack and survived. Today, we have much more Biblical truth than Job had. We even have a powerful word of scripture that gives us the key to having victory over the devil. “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” (Revelation 12:10)

The Bible says we are to resist the devil and he will flee from us. (James 4:17) This verse in Revelation gives us three powerful weapons to use against Satan. You’ve been hearing a lot about WMDs, Weapons of Mass Destruction. I call these three secret weapons WSDs, Weapons of Satan’s Destruction. They are:

(1) Calvary

We are told these tribulation saints overcame Satan “by the blood of the Lamb.” By His death on the cross, Jesus built a hedge of eternal protection around us. In Exodus 12, God told the Israelites to take a male lamb without spot or blemish and to sacrifice that Lamb. Then the blood of the Lamb was to be smeared on the doorposts and lintel of their homes. Then they would go into their house and roast the lamb and eat it. God promised that when the Destroyer came, he would pass over every house where God saw the blood of the Lamb. That’s why it’s called Passover until this day.

That’s what Jesus did for you. He was the spotless Lamb of God who went to the cross to redeem us from our sin. When His blood is applied to our hearts it forms a hedge of protection against God’s judgement against sin.

(2) Confession

Next, it says that these saints overcame Satan through “the word of their testimony.” I think this

refers to two things. First, there is the written Word of testimony, the Bible. This Bible is God’s word of testimony. There is great power in quoting the Word of God. I reminded you a few weeks ago when we talked about temptation that when Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, He defeated him by quoting three verses from Deuteronomy. This Bible is the sword of the Spirit that you can use against Satan’s attack.

But this also refers to your *experienced* word of testimony. Whenever we give witness to our faith, the devil is shamed and defeated. You should give your testimony to others, to Satan, to yourself, and even to God! Every time you quote scripture and share your testimony it’s like punching the old devil in the stomach.

(3) Commitment

The third weapon of Satan’s destruction is total commitment to Jesus. It says of those over comers in Revelation 12, “they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” Another weapon against which Satan has no defense is a surrendered life. Some people think of Job as a man who lost it all, but I think of him as a man who came to see that the one thing he had was the only thing he needed. Yes, he lost his fortune, his family, his fitness, his friends, and he even lost face—but the one thing he did not lose was his faith. He was willing to trust God even if he died. In Job 13:15 he said, “Though he slay me, yet will I praise Him.”

The secret to victory over the devil is to live a life abandoned to God. Most of our worries stem from the fact that we love our lives so much we are afraid of dying. Satan uses this fear of death to intimidate us throughout our lives. But you can’t scare a dead man. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23) Sometimes when people suffer they say, “I guess it’s just a cross I have to bear.” Bearing the cross doesn’t mean dealing living with acid reflux or an ingrown toenail. Bearing a cross means death. In Bible times when you saw a man carrying a cross you knew one thing for certain—he was going to his death. Like a man walking from death row in Huntsville to the place where they’ll receive a lethal injection, he was a dead man walking. When you’re fully committed to Jesus Christ, you can have that same kind of fearlessness. You can look the devil in the eye and say, “hit me with your best shot, devil. I’m not afraid of you.”

CONCLUSION

So in review, what can learn about a hedge in Job’s life? We learn Satan is always trying to breach God’s hedge of protection. We also learn that unless God had allowed Satan to test Job, he never could have touched Job. But mostly, we learn when our faith is firm and we pass the test, God establishes the hedge even stronger than it was before.

If you know the Lord, I believe you’ll see Job in heaven, not because he was a good man, but because he was a man who put his trust in God. Keeping the law didn’t save people in the Old Testament. If that were the case, then none of them would qualify for heaven. People in the Old Testament were saved the very same way you can be saved today: by placing their faith and trust in Jesus. Job put his faith in Jesus, even though he didn’t know His name. Job was sitting on an ash heap, scraping his sores with a broken piece of pottery. His wife and his friends were making

his life even more miserable. And at the darkest moment, he allowed his tears to be like telescopes. By faith, he looked ahead and saw His loving Heavenly Father would provide a Redeemer for him. His tears became telescopes that allowed him to see Jesus. In Job 19:25 he said, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.” Job didn’t say “a redeemer” he said, “MY redeemer.” It’s one thing to say Jesus is Lord; it’s another thing to confess that Jesus is MY LORD. It’s one thing to say Jesus is the Savior of the world; it’s another thing to say that Jesus is MY SAVIOR.

King David didn’t say, “The Lord is A shepherd,” he said, “the Lord is MY shepherd.” Can you say that today? Have you turned from your sins and placed your faith in Jesus? Then and only then can you expect you experience the benefits and blessings of God’s hedge of protection.

OUTLINE

1. GOD PROVIDES A HEDGE OF PROTECTION FOR THOSE WHO HONOR HIM

(1) We need God’s hedge individually

“His faithfulness will be your shield and your rampart...If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;” *Psalm 91:4,10-11*

NOTE: You can pray for a hedge of protection around those you love. See Hosea 2:6-7

(2) We need God’s hedge nationally

“Blessed is the nation who God is the Lord.” *Psalm 33:12*

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” *Psalm 9:17*

2. SATAN’S ACCUSATION IS AN INSULT TO GOD’S CHARACTER

“Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” *Revelation 12:10*

Secret weapons against Satan (WSDs):

(1) Calvary

(2) Confession

(3) Commitment



DISCLAIMER: These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes