

# Rise Up And Build

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*"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18*

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## **“Have You Considered My Servant Job?”**

In all likelihood, the book of Job is one of the oldest books of the Bible. F. Legard Smith, in **The Narrated Bible in Chronological Order**, published the Scriptures which give the genealogy from Shem to Abram (Gen.11:20-32), and then stated “there is compelling evidence to believe that an important historical figure named Job should be included here among the ancients” (p. 22). Suffice it to say, virtually all Bible scholars agree that Job, the man, lived a long time ago.

But that which is of significance is not how long ago Job lived; rather it is **how** he lived. He is described as “*blameless and upright, and one that feared God and shunned evil*” (Job 1:1). In keeping with the time period when he lived, and his own dedication to God, Job also “*regularly offered burnt offerings according to the number*” of his children, being painfully aware that his sons may have “*sinned and cursed God in their hearts*” (Job 1:5).

Job was also a man whom God had highly blessed. He had seven sons and three daughters and vast possessions. It was with reference to his wealth that he was called “*the greatest of all the people of the east*” (Job 1:2-3).

Amazingly, on one occasion when the sons of God presented “*themselves before the Lord*” Satan came among them, and a conversation ensued between the Lord and Satan. The Lord asked Satan “*from where do you come?*” Satan replied “*from going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it*” (Job 1:6,7). Satan, the arch enemy of mankind, our “*adversary*” (I Pet. 5:8), often appears where he would be least expected. On this occasion the “*sons of God*” had come to “*present themselves before the Lord.*” The expression, “*the sons of God,*” doubtlessly refers to angels in Job 38:7

(please read). And it would appear that it refers to angels in Job 1:6-7. In fact, Moffatt's translation renders it "*angels.*" At any rate, this meeting when the sons of God "*presented themselves before the Lord*" was in some region other than the earth, for Satan (who "*also came among them*") had come "**from the earth**" (Job 1:7).

We can not know for certain just where this solemn assembly was held. Nor why. But we do know from whence Stan had come ("*from the earth*"), and we do know what the Lord asked him ("*Have you considered my servant Job?*," Job 1:7,8). And we are impressed with the Lord's assessment of Job — "*there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and shuns evil.*"

It is interesting that Satan did not deny the Lord's assessment of Job. However, in keeping with his diabolical nature (signified by the name "*devil*," from *diabolos* (Gk) meaning "an accuser, a slanderer"), Satan cast reflection upon the motive behind Job's righteous conduct. He charged God with having "*made a hedge around*" Job, and he further told God that Job would "*curse*" Him to His face if only this hedge of protection and earthly blessings were removed. It was at this point that God, amazingly, allowed Satan to afflict Job (Job 1:10-12). This background forms the basis for what follows in the book of Job, and for the intense sufferings which God allowed Satan to bring upon the person of Job. It should be remembered that Job did not know of this conversation between God and Satan, nor did he know the why or the source of the great sorrow and sufferings which (for a time) would make his life absolutely miserable. Nor did he know that the story of his suffering would become a source of comfort and strength to great multitudes of fellow-sufferers in the centuries to follow. However, through faithful endurance, Job ultimately learned by experience that great truth later revealed, namely, "*that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose*" (Rom. 8:28).

Our purpose in this article is not to further describe the sufferings of Job, nor the most intriguing conversations which thereafter took place between Job and his friends who came to comfort him — suffice it to say, they gave Job ample reason to call them "*miserable comforters*" (Job 16:2)! Instead, our purpose is to focus upon God's question to Satan, "*have you considered My servant Job,*" and to make personal applications of this question.

Suppose such a meeting were to take place today. That is, suppose that in some region far removed from the earth "*the sons of God*" (angels?) were to present themselves before the Lord. And suppose that Satan were to come among them. Would God ask Satan, "*have you considered my servant*" (insert **your** name), and then cite **you** as an example of blamelessness and uprightness?

In a world of crass materialism, do you (and I) stand out as examples of people possessing "*godliness with contentment*" (I Tim. 6:6)? In a world filled with "*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*" (2 Tim. 1:4), do you (and I) stand out as prime examples of those who "*love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind*" (Matt. 22:37)? In a society rife with the "dog eat dog"

philosophy, and “do it to others before they do it to you” mentality, do you (and I) stand out as real examples of those who love their neighbors as themselves (Matt. 22:39)? In an age when multitudes are clamoring for their “rights,” do you (and I) stand out as shining examples of those who honor their **responsibilities** (Gal. 6:10; Matt. 25:14-30)? Amid a society saturated with multitudes who have so lost their sense of shame that they can no longer blush (Jer. 8:12), do you (and I) stand out as examples of modesty in **dress** (I Tim. 2:9), wholesomeness of **speech** (Eph. 4:29), and purity of **heart** (Matt. 5:8)? At a time when people in general with “itching ears, heap” up for themselves teachers (2 Tim. 4:3), who will accommodate their sins and errors, do you (and I) stand out as excellent examples of those who have a burning desire to “know the truth” (John 8:32)? Among a people who have embraced the spirit of compromise, do you (and I) stand out as brave soldiers who are ready to “fight the good fight of faith” (I Tim. 6:12), regardless of how great the cost? Amid a people who have been conditioned to be lax, soft, and indifferent, do you (and I) stand out as the very epitome of zeal, devotion, and fervency of spirit (Titus 2:14; Rom. 12:11)?

Yes, for good reason, God asked Satan, “have you considered My servant Job?” Among earthlings Job stood out as one who was “blameless and upright,” as “one that feared God and shunned evil,” as one who faithfully served God regardless of the cost.” And **God** had taken notice! God knew Job by name. As well as his manner of life. Amazing! Even while keeping the entire universe operative, God takes notice of **one** person! As it was in the case of Job, so it is with you and me! God **hears** all! God **sees** all! God **knows** all!

The fact that God called Job “My servant,” and described his manner of life is evidence that He (**God**) had, indeed, “considered” His servant Job. He considered him **before** his affliction, **during** his affliction, and **after** his deliverance from his affliction. This should be a source of encouragement and comfort to His servants now who may be in the throes of affliction. God is not unmindful of, nor unconcerned about His servants. He **sees**! He **hears**! He **understands**! He **cares**!

But the question which should be of utmost concern to us is not “what was God’s assessment of **Job**?” Rather, it is “what is His assessment of **you**?” And **Me**? Indeed, how would He describe you? How would He describe me? Job did not show out as an example of righteousness. He **stood** out! As he did, you and I (with God’s help, cf. Phil. 4:13) **can** also do. As he did, you (and I) **must** do. And God **will** take notice!

\*\*\* —B. Witherington