

Ask Away – January 5

1) What does it mean when it says, “His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day (yōmō)”? (Job 1:4).

While some have suggested that Job’s children were wasting their father’s money with extravagant parties, it seems better to understand this verse as referring to the celebration of the sons’ birthdays (cf. Job 3:1 where the same word, “his day,” refers to Job’s birthday).¹ If this is correct, it adds a special bitterness to the death of Job’s children, for they were all feasting in “their oldest brother’s house” when they were killed. Thus Satan chose the birthday of Job’s firstborn son as the day to kill them all.

2) Does Satan have to present himself to God all the time? (Job 1:6; 2:1).

We don’t know for sure how often Satan is required to present himself before God. That being said, we should take great comfort in the fact that Satan is firmly under God’s control. He may be “greater in might and power” (2 Pet 2:11) than us, but he is not free to do whatever he wants. Satan answers directly to God, and he can only do what God permits him to do. While this can sometimes be terrible (Job 1:13–19), we can rest in the knowledge that God watches over us and will enable us to endure any attacks by Satan which He allows.

¹ The phrase “his day” occurs five times in Job (Job 1:4; 3:1; 14:6; 15:32; 18:20), and only Job 3:1 clearly refers to a birthday. Thus the verse could simply be saying that each of Job’s sons held a feast in their house on their “designated day” (the day which was their turn). That being said, a birthday fits the context well, and I think it makes the most sense.