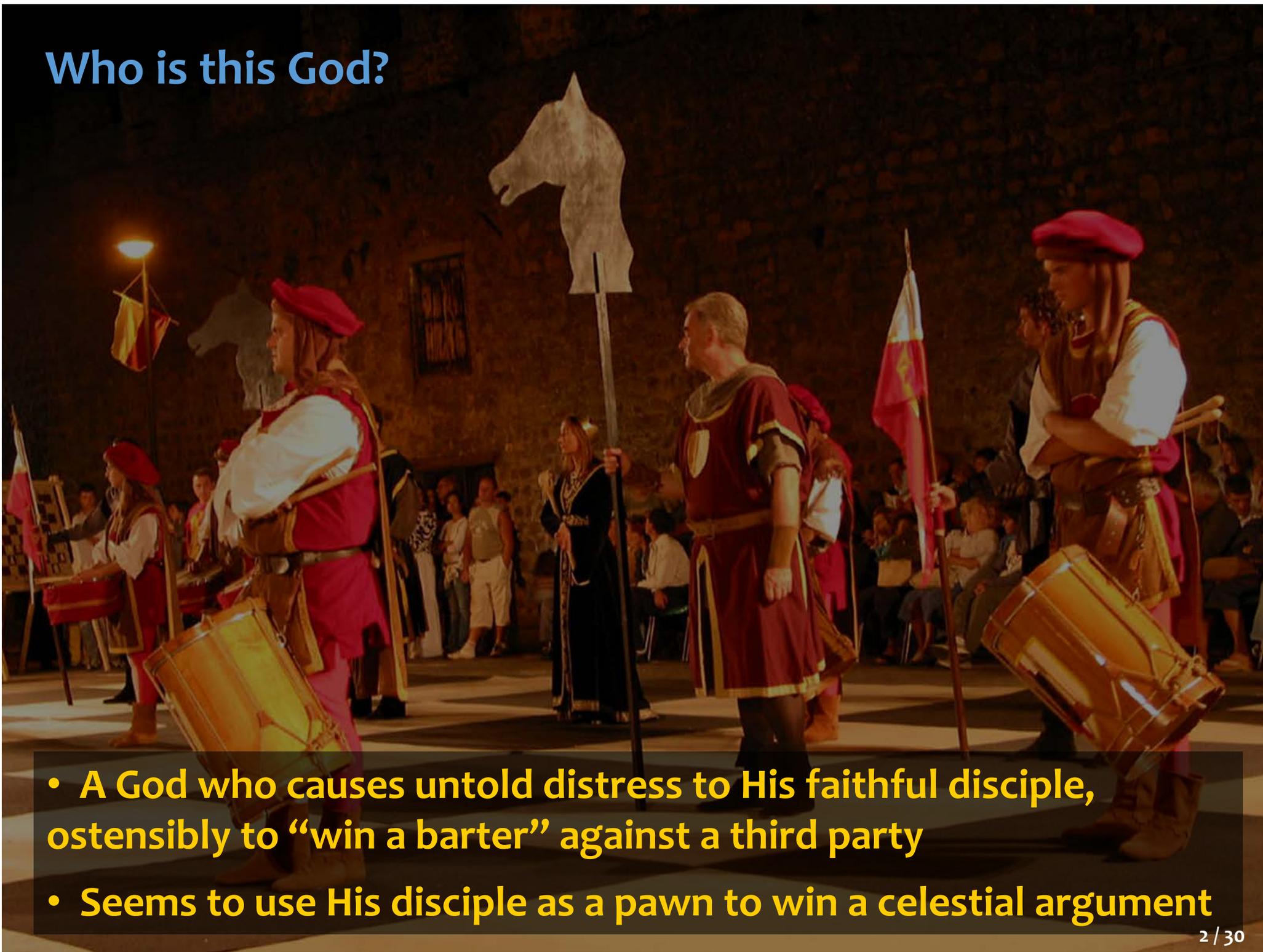


To Speak Well of GOD

“If I had not Job! It is impossible to describe what significance he has for me, and how manifold his significance is. I read this book as it were with my heart. You surely have read Job? Read him, read him over and over again, because everything about him is so human.” Soren Kierkegaard

Who is this God?

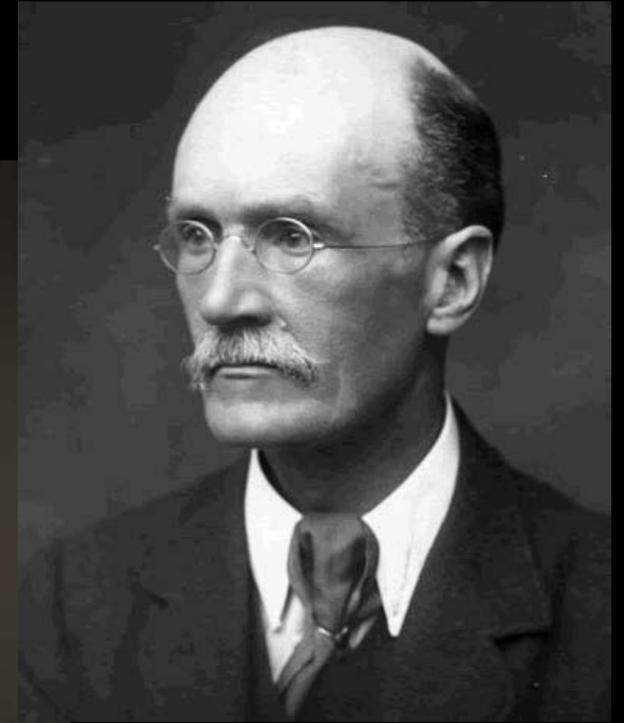


- A God who causes untold distress to His faithful disciple, ostensibly to “win a barter” against a third party
- Seems to use His disciple as a pawn to win a celestial argument

The Three Sages

Gilbert Murray

“The book begins with a mythological setting in which the story is represented as the result of a sort of bet upon the part of Satan that, though Job while prosperous is perfectly pious, he can be made to ‘curse God’ if he is sufficiently tormented and afflicted. The Almighty enters into the spirit of this atrocious proposal, and every type of torment is showered upon the innocent man. It is like torturing your faithful dog to see if you can make him bite you.”



G. Murray, “Aeschylus: The Creator of Tragedy,” 1960

The Three Sages

Paul Weiss

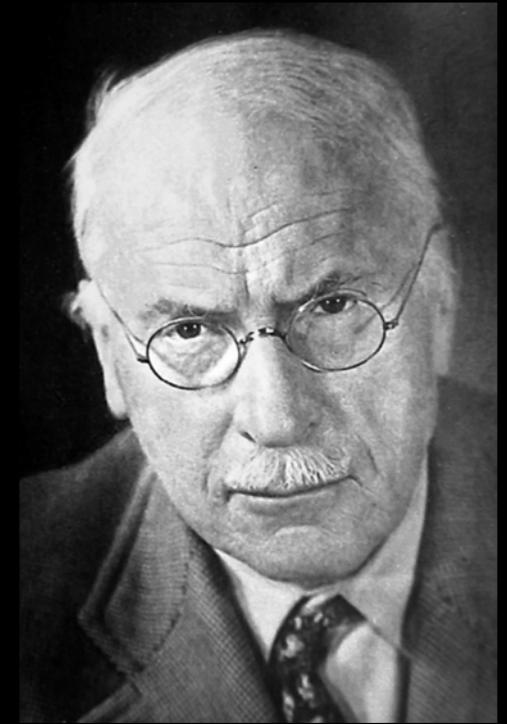
*“In outline the story is rather simple. A childishly conceived God, a childlike God in fact, boasts about Job to His angel Satan as a child might about a dog... With a callousness, with a brutality, with a violence hard to equal in any literature, secular or divine, **God, just to make a petulant point, proceeds to do almost everything the most villainous of beings could want...** The inhumanity of the author (or of his God, if one prefers) has been almost matched by the insensitivity of those commentators who accept the prologue of the book of Job and do not feel a need to underscore an abhorrence of God’s project and performance.”*



P. Weiss, “God, Job and Evil,” 1948

The Three Sages

Carl Jung



“The reason He doubts Job is because He projects His own unfaithfulness upon a scapegoat.”

C. G. Jung, “Answer to Job,” 1952

How **should** we understand God's behaviour to Job?

Most common philosophical explanation:

The God of the Bible does not care about humanity (Greek)

Most common Christian explanation:

OT God is judgmental, but NT God is loving

Most common Christadelphian explanation:

a) God is Supreme, we have no right to question Him

Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker... Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Isa 45:9

b) It all worked for "good" for Job

"It is not that God hates Job. On the contrary, God cares for all, including Job... [Is God] A Friend [to Job]? Certainly. And a friend to us too, if like the ultimate Job we confess our ignorance of His ways and rest instead in faith in His mercy."

Is this speaking well of God?

To Speak Well of GOD

"We have met the enemy and he is us."

Walt Kelly

1 Enter Satan

The Devil in Job?



The story of Job strongly argues that there is no Devil

What happens to Job is obviously supernatural & disastrous

But no-one says:
“This is the work of the Devil”!

Everyone (including God) acknowledges that God did it

=> No-one in Job’s day believes in the Devil, so why would we?

Generic Term: Satan

'Satan' is a word meaning 'opponent'

God as Satan

Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel. 1 Chr 21:1 c.f. 2 Sam 24:1

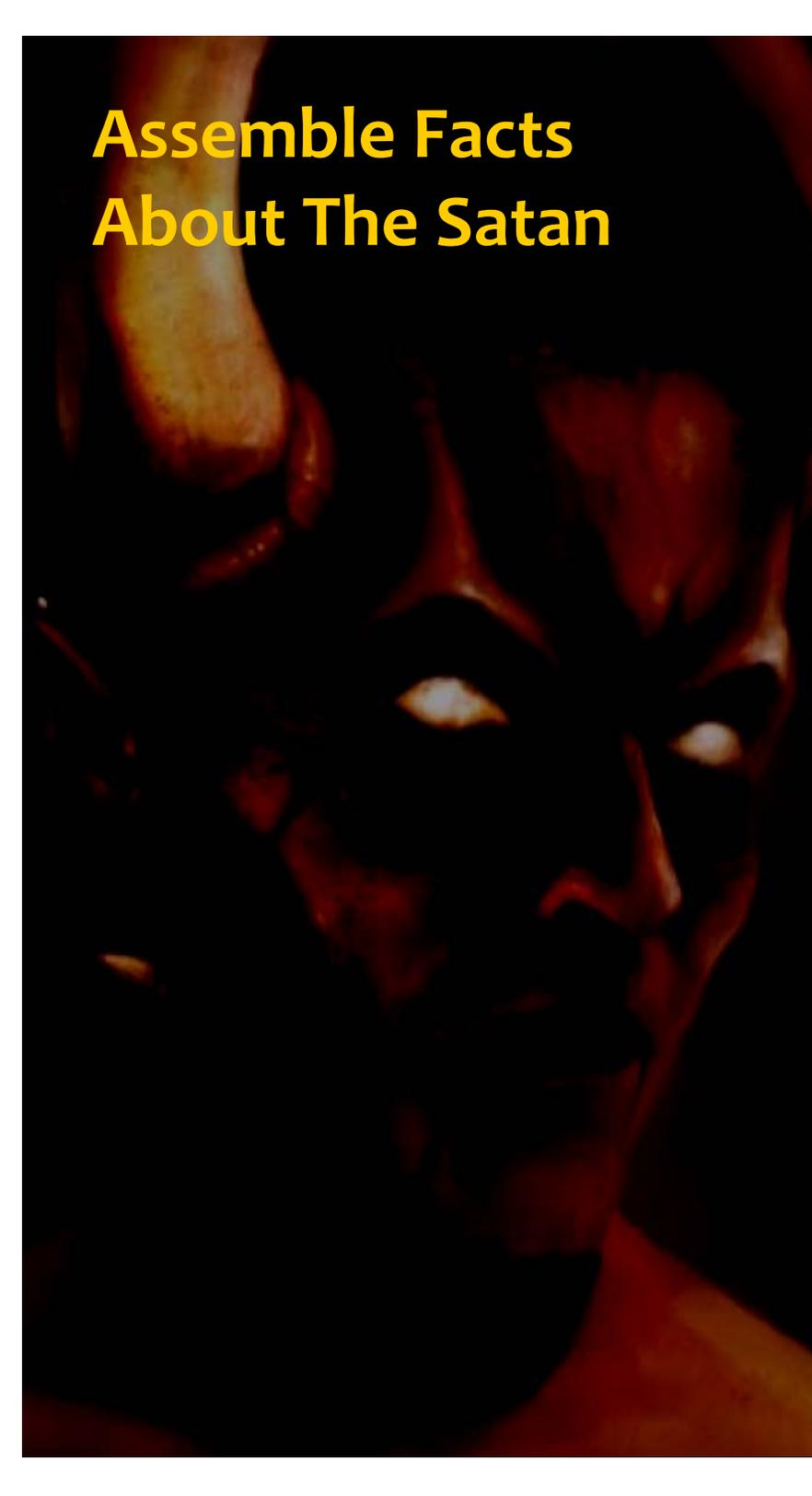
Angels as Satan

the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as [Balaam's] adversary. Num 22:22

Humans as Satan

Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! ...you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Mt 16:23





Assemble Facts About The Satan

1 It's THE Satan – definite article

2 Presents himself before the Lord

...the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. 1:6

3 Comes from 'the Earth'

The LORD said... "Where have you come from?" Satan answered... "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." 1:7

4 Knows who Job is

"[Job's] flocks and herds are spread throughout the land." 1:10

5 God grants him authority

The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands..." 1:12

‘Presented before the Lord’ – Invariably Men!

The LORD said to Moses... “Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain.”

Ex 34:1-2

The priest who pronounces him clean shall present both the one to be cleansed and his offerings before the LORD... Lev 14:11

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy... Jude 1:24



[the] angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven

Mt 18:10

Conclusion 1: The Satan was human

God Caused Job's Calamity

"Have you considered my servant Job? ...he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." 2:3

They comforted and consoled [Job] over all the trouble the LORD had brought upon him 42:11

And God frequently acts through His Angels Dan 6:22; Psa 78:49

... who also go 'to and fro' in the Earth Zech 4:10

Conclusion 2: The Satan was an Angel of God ... Resolution?

The Slanderous Satan

Angels do not slander

...angels... do not bring slanderous accusations against [righteous men] in the presence of the Lord.

2 Pet 2:11

Satan slanders Job in the Lord's presence

"But now stretch out your hand and strike everything [Job] has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

1:11

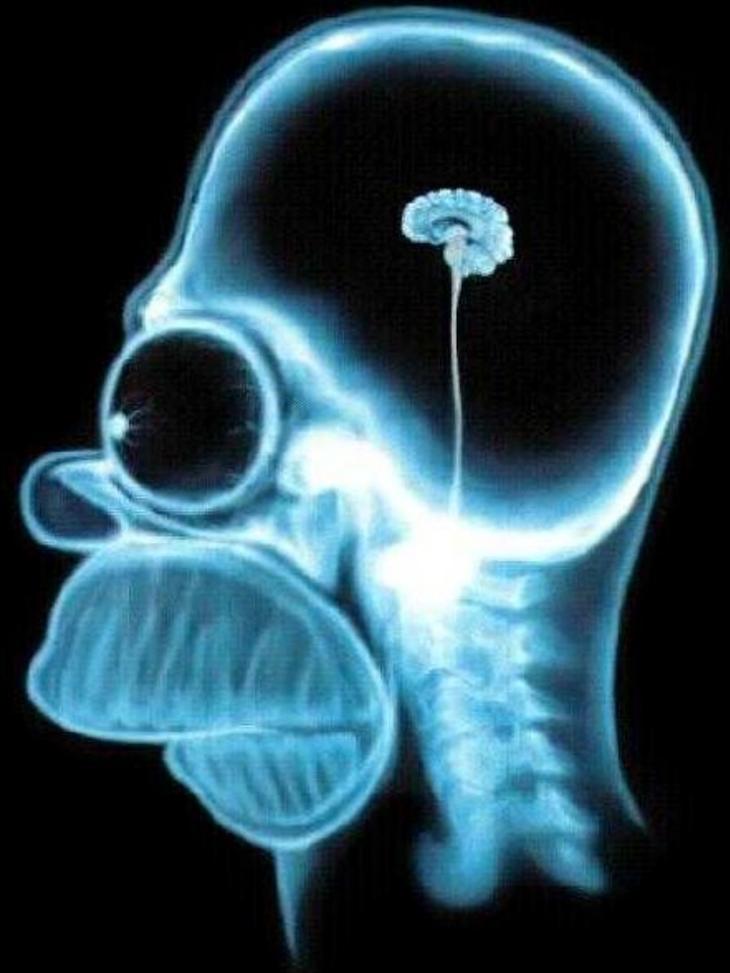
=> Satan Cannot be a Divine Angel



Strengths of Satan as a Human Trait, not Angelic Being

Satan's characteristics are typically human

- The Satan seems prompted by jealousy of Job's material wealth => 'to and fro in the Earth'
- The Satan is Stupid!
He claims to know more than God **1:8-12**
- The Satan 'shifts the goalposts' when shown to be wrong **2:4-5**
- Satan's desire is the downfall of a righteous man



The Bible Template: God & Satan

1 God pronounces a truth

2 Satan opposes (by definition) God's truth, declaring lies

2b Lie is typically an accusation against a righteous man

3 God rebukes Satan for his error



Example 1: Eden

1 *“You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”* **Gen 2:17**

2 *“You will not surely die,”* the serpent said... **Gen 3:4**

2b *that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan... the deceiver... the accuser of our brethren* **Rev 12:9-10**

3 *So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals!”* **Gen 3:14**

Example 2: Peter's Rebuke

1 *From that time on Jesus began to explain... that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. **Mt 16:21***

2
2b *Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!... this shall never happen to you!" **Mt 16:22***

3 *Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" **Mt 16:23***

Example 3: Slander of Jerusalem

1 ***Ezra 1:1-3*** **2** ***Ezra 4:1-5*** **2b** ***Ezra 4:11-12*** **3** ***Zech 3:2-3***

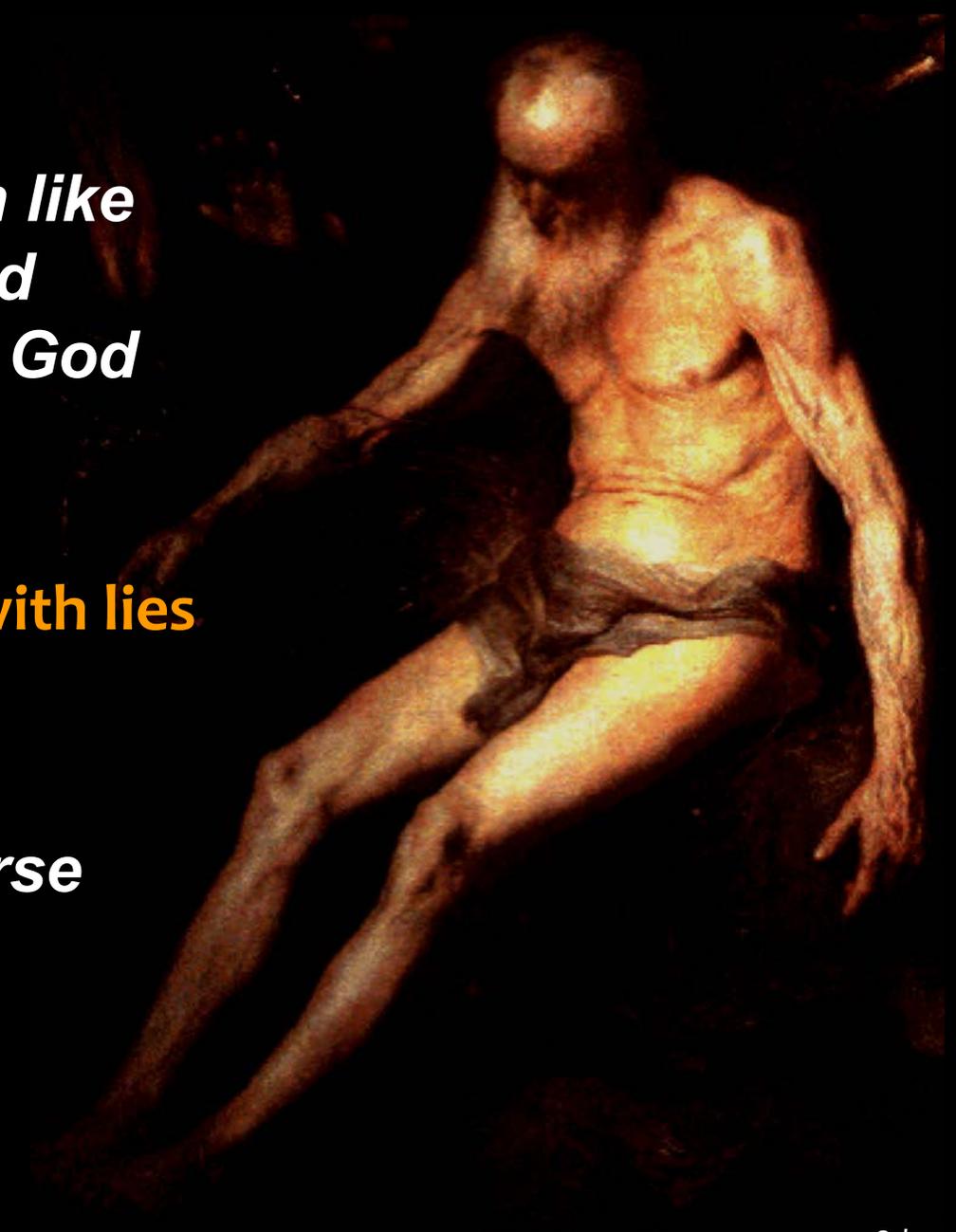
Anticipate Same Interaction in Job

1 God pronounces a truth

“There is no one on earth like [Job]; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” 1:8

2 Satan opposes God’s truth with lies

“...stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” 1:9-11



Identifying The Satan in Job

2b

Satan's opposition accuses a righteous man

Satan = PRIDE
of the 3 friends

=> anyone can
take the role

3 friends no
more wicked
than others –
Including us



Eliphaz: *“You demanded security from your brothers for no reason; you stripped men of their clothing, leaving them naked.”* 22:6

Bildad: *“The... wicked... has no offspring or descendants among his people, no survivor where once he lived.”* 18:5,19

Zophar: *“Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.”* 11:6

Identifying The Satan in Job

3 God rebukes the Satan at the end

“I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has... My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly.” 42:7-8

The rebuke is itself evidence identifying the Satan



The Satan is Human Pride: embodied in the three friends

Weaknesses of The Satan as Human Pride (in the 3 friends)

- The three friends can't know about the events of the barter, else they wouldn't be surprised at Job's destruction; so how can they be, or even host, the Satan?
- Friend's grief and sympathy, [2:12-13](#), is a contradictory attitude to that of the Satan
- Why hide the identity of the Satan, anyway?



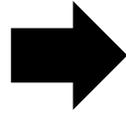
Addressing the Weaknesses of Satan as Human Pride

- The “conversation” between God & Satan is a literary device
=> **ch 1** is presented to us as a conversation
God is replying to the thoughts he sees in the friends
The three friends are blind to their own feelings (this is common) and do not hear the Word of God
- The three friends really **do** harbour contradictory emotions. First they sympathize, but soon they condemn
- We need to know **why** their hearts U-turn from condemnation, to sympathy, back to condemnation

Addressing the Weaknesses of Satan as Human Pride

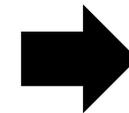
By Analogy

Boiling =
Slanderous
accusation *ch 1*



Add ice = Shock =>
Calm = Sympathy

***But that doesn't
extinguish Flame***



Back to Boiling =
Slanderous
accusation *ch 11+*



Flame = Jealous Pride

Why obscure the identity of the Satan at all?

- Beautiful way to represent that at the beginning of the drama the hosts of Satan (3 friends) aren't aware of where the Satan is (inside them)
- Equally beautiful way to teach me that at the beginning of my life (a drama) the host of the Satan (me) isn't aware where the Satan is (inside me)
- Life is a journey of (self)discovery for God's disciples



Recapitulation: The Satan in Job

The “conversation” between God & Satan is a literary device

Eliphaz, Bildad & Zophar become resentful of Job’s wealth
1:10

1

They accuse Job in their hearts whilst “in church,” (presented before the Lord) conniving Job’s faith hinges on his wealth.

2

The opposition of their thoughts and God’s is presented as a conversation. *1:6, 2:1*

God empowers their jealousy and acts on it *1:12, 2:6*
“You [Satan] incited me [God] to ruin him...”

2b

They are shocked at the disaster and start to comfort Job, *4-5*, but their underlying bitterness re-emerges: all 3 make false accusations *11-25*

3

God rebukes the Satan *42:7-8*

Strengths of Satan as the Proud Human Heart (3 friends)

Changes our understanding of who God is!

- God saves (the hosts of) the Satan!

The Ultimate Victory

- God's desire is that *none* should perish *Jn 3:16*

- Unless Satan is saved by the barter, it served no purpose : God would never have started it (N.B. God initiated the discussion)

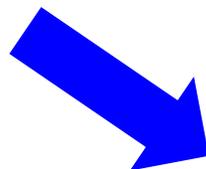
- God can no longer be seen as capricious or heartless



- God's care is selfless: many curse Him because of the drama of Job. He cares more about our salvation than His image

Job = Iconic Case of Human Suffering; Satan = Root Cause

What is the Iconic Cause of Human Suffering?



Internal
Prideful Heart of Man

External
Confused Angels / Other People



Strengths of Satan as the Proud Human Heart (3 friends)

Book of Job is now consistent with other scriptures:

- “The” opponent to righteousness is human pride

“The LORD saw... that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”

Gen 6:5; also Jer 17:9 & Mk 7:20-23

- Divine angels do not commit slander
...angels... do not bring slanderous accusations against [righteous men] in the presence of the Lord. 2 Pet 2:11
- Satan, who is to blame, is rebuked by God *42:7-8*
also Gen 2:17-3:14; Mt 16:21-23; Ezra 1,4; Zech 3



Implications for Appreciating the Drama



- Satan does NOT disappear from the text: plotline is consistent
- 28 central chapters are The Struggle: Satan vs Righteous Man
 - Core of book now relevant to my life
– the debate is now my daily experience!

*the LORD said to Satan,
“Have you considered
my servant Job?” 1:8*



- Core of book highly relevant to my life – I also host the Satan!
Have I considered God’s servant Job?