

Job- the Man, the Book Lesson 1

July 27 & August 3, 2014

Well, our goal in these two lessons will be to help you grow to not only tolerate Job but grow to love the book. I think after a week or two, you feel like you and Job are close friends. In fact, when you run into him in heaven, I hope you'll feel like running up to him and giving him a big hug.

A. Age of the Book

- 1- Time of Abraham or thereabouts
- 2- Paleo-Hebrew
- 3- Moses wrote Genesis 430 years later
- 4- First book written in the Bible
- 5- Perhaps oldest book in the world of which we have copies

Luther- "Magnificent and sublime"

Carlyle- "There is nothing, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit"

Victor Hugo- concluded that Job is perhaps the greatest masterpiece of the human mind

B Wealth of Job

1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. 2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3 He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. (Job 1:1-3 ESV)

- 1- 7000 sheep- wool, food
- 2- 3000 camels- clothing, meat, caravans, shipping, rentals
- 3- 1000 oxen- work fields for food, for all the other animals and for people
- 4- 500 female donkeys- Milk, donkey milk baths, cosmetics, medicinal, milk for newborn human infants
- 5- very many servants- as many as he required at the time to manage this huge enterprise/empire
- 6- necessity of accurate record keeping
- 7- Easy to comprehend the word for word accounting of these ensuing debates

C Overview of the Book- (chart)

D Satan and Catastrophic Losses

- 1- Intro
- 2- Divine debates with Satan
- 3- Catastrophic losses and illness
- 4- Speeches- three cycles with Eliphaz, Job, Bildad, Job, Zophar and Job
except that in last cycle Zophar gives up.
- 5- Elihu- Very long-winded speech
- 6- God interrupts
- 7- Job
- 8- God speaks

9- Job

10- God sets Job and friends straight and restores Job double

Most of you know the story. We're given a glimpse of the activity going on in heaven:

1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." 8 And the Lord said to Satan, "**Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?**" 9 Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." 12 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

13 Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 14 and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans fell upon them and **took them** and struck down the servants 3 with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 16 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and **burned up the sheep** and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." 17 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and **took them** and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

18 While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, "***Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.***" 22 ***In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.***

Side Note:

- 1- by the skin of my teeth Job 19-20
- 2- Behemoth- Job 40:15-24
- 3- Ends of the earth Job 28:24
- 4- I alone have escaped to tell you
- 5- innumerable phrases and idioms - remember oldest book!
- 6- Psalms quotes

God was really proud of Job and bragged some more about him!

2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." 3 And the Lord said to Satan, "Have

you considered **my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity,** although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.” 4 Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.” 6 And the Lord said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.”

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with ***loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.*** 8 And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes.

9 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.”

10 But he said to her, “You speak ***as one of the foolish women*** would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” ***In all this Job did not sin with his lips.***

Job did not deserve this. In a quick and brutal sweep of back-to-back calamities, Job was reduced to a twisted, diseased, mass of brokenness and grief standing over ten fresh graves of his children. But still, Job trusted in God. God knew Job. God knew Job’s heart.

Let’s not be too hard on his wife. She’s just lost 10 kids, any hope of a loving caress from her husband covered in oozing boils, and her entire livelihood. Even Job didn’t really call her foolish, but rather “you speak **as one** of the foolish women”, i.e. you are not one of them, that’s **not really you!** (we all make mistakes, don’t we?)

Job, shined as never before, now broken physically.

In 2 Corinthians 12: 9-10, “My grace is sufficient for you. . .when I am weak, then I am strong”. Job’s testimony had never been stronger.

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. 12 And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. 13 And they ***sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him,*** for they saw that his suffering was very great.

Oh, that we could thank his friends for their great show of love. What an amazing display of compassion, 7 days and nights they sat with him, silent, such love, such compassion. These three were a wonderful blessing--- **until they opened their mouths.**

Flip over to Chapter 42. We’ll gain some insight into all these discussions that are about to take place. God said this to the three friends **after** all these lengthy discussions:

42:7 the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for **you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.**

And just to be sure we and his three friends understood that He really meant it, God said again, (42:8) **”For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.”**

We need to *carefully* interpret anything we read from here on out in Job. While not every statement they make is absolutely wrong, God is not pleased and they are not representing God and His ways accurately when they speak. Use this as a cheat sheet, an answer key. When Job and his friends disagree, remember what God said. They **did not speak what is right** about God, but Job had.

Now, as I mentioned, his three friends had just proven what wonderful friends they were, by traveling all the way to comfort him and sat there silently for 7 days and 7 nights. But, first rattle out of the box, Eliphaz throws out a statement that sounds good, but is so wrong!

4:6 Is not your fear of God your confidence,
and the integrity of your ways your hope?

I have a large, capital “NO!!” written by this in my Bible. We do not rely on our actions, our integrity, even our “fear of God”. We rely on God. Not our own actions. Faith, not works!

Let’s proceed:

- 7 “Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off?
- 8 As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.
- 9 By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

In other words, Job you are getting what you deserve!

He continues, after all, Eliphaz and gang have all the answers, we’ll see, so easy! They’ll tell us how they really do know it all!

5:8 *As for me*, I would seek God, and to God would I commit my cause,

As if Job hasn’t been praying and imploring God continuously for days and days.

Job answers and in the midst of his long reply he says,

(6:14) For the despairing man *there should be kindness from his friend*, lest he forsake the fear of the Almighty.

But Job is just beginning to see the first of their inconsiderate cruelty.

Bildad throws in his two shekels worth, when he dances on the graves of Job’s kids,

8:3,4 Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right?

4 If your children have sinned against him, he has delivered them into the hand of their transgression.

Bildad hisses on:

5 If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy,

6 if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation.

It's all your fault Job, just turn to God and He'll jump right up and save you!

We're having to skip over a lot of amazing text, I hope you'll fill in the blanks later, but here's a few lines from Job we don't want to miss, that ring through the ages as some of the most insightful statements ever made, here in this oldest of old books:

13:4 As for you, you whitewash with lies; worthless physicians are you all.

5 Oh that you would keep silent, and it would be your wisdom!

6 Hear now my argument and listen to the pleadings of my lips.

7 Will you speak falsely for God and speak deceitfully for him?

8 Will you show partiality toward him? Will you plead the case for God?

9 Will it be well with you when he searches you out? Or can you deceive him, as one deceives a man?

10 He will surely rebuke you if in secret you show partiality.

11 Will not his majesty terrify you, and the dread of him fall upon you?

12 Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay.

13 "Let me have silence, and I will speak, and let come on me what may.

14 Why should I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand?

15 Though he slay me, I will Trust in him;

There, Job said it, one of the most amazing statements of true faith in the entire Bible.
Though He slay me, Yet I will trust in Him!

Job is struggling to maintain his faith in God as these barrages continue to be hurled at him,

(16:2) Sorry comforters are you all!

After a blast of hot, searing air from the furnace of Bildad's mouth, Job asks:

(19:2) How long will you torment me and crush me with words?

and continues to point to the faithful God:

19: 25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.[b]

26 And *after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet without my flesh I shall see God,*

Job was lying at the feet of God, his only hope. How easy it would have been for Job, if all he had to do was repent of sin and all would be well.

Satan, the accuser of the brethren, as he's called in the New Testament, must have stood back in amazement at the eloquent accusations crafted and skillfully thrust by these three. They were truly doing his work for him. No need for Satan to step in here, they were doing just fine.

Charles Swindoll remembers a time of trouble:

I was sitting, torn by grief. Someone came and talked to me of God's dealing, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly, he said things I knew were true.

I was unmoved, except I wished he'd go away. He finally did.

Another came and sat beside me. He didn't talk. He didn't ask leading questions. He just sat beside me for an hour and more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply, left.

I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go.

Now, since we're going home for a week, I don't want to leave on such a depressed note. As you know, God restores Job's family and fortunes in the end and what's almost more amazing, Job and his three friends forgive and are buddies again.

I don't want all of us to leave here glancing suspiciously at our friends as we exit, fearing they'll spew accusations at us. God gave us great examples of how not to act.

Questions for discussion:

1- Have you ever received "comfort" like Job was given from his friends?

How did you feel? How did you respond?

2- Have you ever caught yourself acting like Job's three friends when seeking to comfort a person who was having problems? Did you catch yourself before, during or later upon reconsideration?

3- Although most of us won't consider our problems as severe as Job's were, have you ever been able to relate to Job and his situation?

4- Have you ever heard "good" theology used as a weapon or inappropriately?

5- Have you ever noticed someone trying to "defend God" using lies or misstatements?

6- When you are in trials and under stress do you ever wonder if it's punishment for something you've done?

a- Does it comfort you to know that when you have hard times it doesn't mean you have done something wrong?

b- Why do we tend to blame ourselves for causing our problems?

7- Name some other examples, besides Job, who were godly, yet still had problems.