

Job 2-3

As the book of Job opens up, if there's one thing that's made emphatically clear to us it's that Job was a godly man. He was blameless, upright, one who feared God and shunned evil, a man of integrity, a man who was blessed of God incredibly, a man of whom God said Himself personally that there was none like him on the face of the earth. God was able to brag on Job.

And one day in the happenings of Heaven the angels of God were presenting themselves before God and we find that Satan came among them, and God began to require an account of him. He says, "Where've you been, what've you been up to?" Obviously God already knew but He was giving Satan the opportunity to give an account, even as God knows *everything* about *everyone* of us but yet we'll still be called upon to give an account, where we've been, what we've been up to, what we've done with the person of Jesus Christ Now for the believer the account that we'll give has nothing to do with our salvation, your sin has been dealt with upon the cross of Jesus Christ Your account will be before the Lord determining what rewards you're to receive *from* the Lord. But to those who've never accepted Jesus Christ but have rather rejected Jesus Christ God will require an account. We read in Rev Ch 20, "*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*" Rev 20:11-12 God holds His creation accountable for their choices, what we do and why we do it, and here in the book of Job we see God requiring an account of Satan. Satan tells Him that he's been cruising back and forth on the face of the earth. And God says, "You've been gathering some Intel on My servant Job haven't you? You've noticed that there's none like him on the face of the earth, upright, blameless, fears God, shuns evil." Satan says, "Does Job serve God for nothing, You've hedged him about on every side, blessed him in immeasurable ways, it pays to serve You, and he wouldn't worship You apart from being paid to do it, let me take all that away and he'll curse you to your face."

God says, "Fine, all that he has is in your hands but spare his life." And what happened? Satan went out, destroyed Job financially, he destroyed all of Job's family in the course of a single day, via "natural" or should I say, "supernatural" disasters, fire and tornadic type activity, and raiders from the north and south literally destroying everything he had. And before the news had finished about one thing, the news from another came in, just boom, boom, boom; Job tore his robe, shaved his head, fell to the ground and he worshipped. Look at Vs 21-22 of Ch 1

And of the many things that we can learn from the book of Job, one of them is that bad things don't just happen to bad people, or people with radical sin in their lives. That every negative or horribly atrocious happening in a person's life isn't God's punishment, or a reaping of their ways. Some times bad things happen to *godly* people, and that's exactly *why* they happen, because they're godly, and Satan is after you, seeking to coerce you into cursing God to His face.

Why do I worship God, why do you serve the Lord, because there's potential for a big pay off? God might bless you, and cause you to prosper on this side of Heaven? What if all that were taken away, what if to the extreme other side you weren't prospered for serving God, but you were penalized? Would you continue to serve God then? Well, round 1 is over, Satan has been silenced for now and God has been glorified, Ch 2 begins.

Vs1-2

Remember what we learned last time? Satan roams the earth like a roaring lion seeking whom he may *devour*. God's eyes search to and fro on the face of the earth looking for whom He may *empower*.

God *loves* you, Satan *loathes* you, God will *deliver* you, Satan will *destroy* you. Jesus said, "*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*" John 10:10 But again we do well to remember that God and Satan aren't equal opposite forces representing good and evil, there's only one God, one Creator, and everything else is apart of that creation, including Satan. The bible says, "*Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.*" Deut 4:39. And again, "*Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.*" Deut 32:39 I'll give you one more, "*Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*" Isa 46:9-10 So never be duped into buying the lie that somehow God and Satan are equal opposites, that's what Satan would love for you to believe. That he's like God, that's what got him evicted from Heaven in the 1st place, because he wanted to be like God, worshipped as God. We read in Isa 14:12-17 "*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. "Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?"* Satan is in no way, shape, or form an equal opposite of God and one day every eye will see that and feel incredibly ripped off (those who bought the lie) that they rejected Jesus having bought the lie of the likes of him.

Now having said that, don't be misled, he's incredibly powerful, don't go out there thinking that you can somehow take him on, as we seen in Ch 1 and we'll see more in Ch 2, it's nothing for him to devastate and destroy all that we are in the course of a single moment. But as believers we're able to praise God knowing that, "*He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*" 1 John 4:4 Well, we read in Vs 3

Vs3

So Satan comes into the presence of God offering up no information about how his little escapade went with Job. So God brings it up. “You’ve been scouting out My servant Job haven’t you, and you’ve discovered that he’s exactly as I said, blameless, and upright, one who fears God and shuns evil. And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him with out cause.” Now don’t be confused about this phrase of God being incited against Job by the devil as though God was duped into doing something against His will. The bible is clear, “*Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*” James 1:13 So Satan didn’t pull one over on the Lord, the point here is that God is showing Satan that He (the Lord) was correct and Satan was wrong, there was no cause for Satan to instigate (the word “incited” could’ve been translated instigated) what took place, Job wasn’t a mercenary, serving God for what was in it for him, he served God for who God is, period. Remember in Vs 9 of Ch 1 Satan said, “Does Job fear God for nothing” those words, “for nothing” is the same exact word used here translated, “With out a cause” God is in essence using his own words against him. The answer is “Yes” Job fears God for nothing, or for no personal gain, he doesn’t serve God for what he gets out of it. When it all came down it was discovered to be exactly like God said it was, he was a man of integrity, upright and blameless, simply walking in the fear of God out of his love for God, and that was it. Job realized that God is worthy of our worship, dedication, and devotion simple because He’s God, not just because it makes for my good in this life.

Vs4-6

Again notice who’s ascribing limitations, God is; God is the One in control, Satan doesn’t have the free reign to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, the way he wants to with God’s children. He’s limited to the parameters that God ascribes to him.

But notice the accuser of the brethren, living up to his name, God’s saying Job is blameless, he’s for him, Satan is finding fault, always coming against him. Satan is the paramount fault finder, there are people that are always finding fault, and I think that at times we’ve all fallen into that category, but some people seem to live there, and we need to see where those roots lie. They’re not godly roots, God’s not the One constantly seeking to find fault, but Satan is. And He immediately issues another challenge. He’s all, “Skin for skin, all that a man has will he give for *his* life.” Which is saying, “Hey, all that devastation, all that destruction to Job’s finances, to Job’s family, was a worthy sacrifice in his eyes to save his own skin, so what if he lost his property, so what if he lost his prosperity, and even his *posterity*, that’s all negotiable in his eyes as long as he doesn’t get touched *personally*. All his wealth is gone, but he still has his health, so as far as he’s concerned that trade was fair enough. Let me get all up a personal with him, and he’ll curse You to Your face.” In other words, “There’s still profit in this thing for Job, his possessions are peripheral, his person is all he’s concerned with.” So in order to silence Satan once again, God allows him to afflict Job’s person, but not unto death.

All these trials and turbulent times in the life of Job had nothing to do with Job, outside of the fact that he was a godly person; he wasn't on God's "whipping post." J. Vernon McGee points out how often times we think when trouble breaks loose in someone's life that we think God must be whipping them when in reality it may be a test for them in a way that He couldn't test you or me because quite frankly He couldn't trust us with that much trouble. And to be honest with you I don't think any of us would want to be entrusted with this much trouble, but before we jump to conclusions regarding suffering in the life of a saint, or difficult days in the life of a brother or sister, remember that they might be going through the ringer *not* because of *ungodliness* but because in fact they're *more* godly than you and me both!

Vs7-8

Now with what exactly Satan struck Job doctors debate, but suffice it to say it was atrocious to say the least, here we read of boils, and symptoms of severe itch. But as the book unfolds we see that not only did he have these inflamed, open ulcerous sores (Job 2:7), and itching (v. 8), but degenerative changes in facial skin (vv. 7, 12), loss of appetite (3:24), depression (3:24-25), loss of strength (6:11), worms in the boils (7:5), running sores (7:5), difficulty in breathing (9:18), darkness under the eyes (16:16), foul breath (19:17), loss of weight (19:20; 33:21), continual pain (30:17), restlessness (30:27), his skin would turn black (30:30), and peel off (30:30), he had fever (30:30), not only was it difficult for him to sleep, but when he did he suffered from nightmares, (7:14) I mean, he was just miserable beyond description.

Vs9

Why do you think it is that in all of Satan's destruction, and all of the devastation that he dealt out upon Job's life that he didn't destroy his wife? God gave him free reign to do whatever he wanted and he took everything from Job except his wife. And what do you know, here she is adding insult to injury, this just put the cherry right on top because if there was one person that Job needed by his side it was his wife, and here she comes encouraging him to do the very thing that Satan was wanting to hear from him all along. "Curse God and die!" Is it because he was convinced that he could manipulate her emotions as the weaker vessel?

And I don't want to be too harsh on her, she lost everything just as he did, all her kids, her livelihood, it's all gone just the same. But gals (and guys for that matter) be careful regarding the way that you address your spouse, we seem to be able to be the harshest with those who are the closest to us, we'll be polite to total strangers and turn around and snap at our friend, or our family, and it ought not be.

This sorta reminds of the scene in the garden, Adam being tempted by Satan through his wife to do his bidding. But as to where Adam succumbed to the temptation, Job succeeded, overcoming the temptation.

Vs10

So Satan is silenced once again as Job continues to trust God, and cast himself upon the mercies of God come what may. And he wasn't insulting his wife's intelligence, he's saying you're not speaking in a manner that's befitting to a godly woman, but a foolish, or ungodly woman. "We'll serve God as long as things are going good, but when troubled times come we'll say 'See ya later Lord?' That's not the way it works, we either trust God or we don't."

And once again we're made aware of the fact that Satan is not all knowing and cannot always accurately assess the future, if he could Job would've just cursed God. But he didn't, remember the scripture I shared with you earlier, that it's God who declares the end from the beginning, there's no one else who can do that, Satan didn't know how Job would respond. Oh I'd say after all these thousands of years he's had to study humanity, he's pretty certain with respect to a typical response and how things play out, but that's not peering into the future, that's just wise deductive reasoning. But as we see here, he's not always right, Job didn't sin with his lips.

Vs11-13

Really they were mourning for him as though mourning for the dead, they didn't even recognize him he was so hideously disfigured through this disease, all swollen, and discolored skin, oozing and open worm infested sores, there was a stench about him and unparalleled misery in him. Only One who would ever suffer more than him and that would be our Lord, Jesus Christ beaten beyond recognition, bloodied, battered, and bruised, flesh ripped from His back, nailed to a splintered up cross, crown of thorns beat down *on* Him, beard ripped *from* Him, and taking the sin of the world *upon* Him, the Father as it were turning His back on Him as He became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. No matter what you've been through we have a High Priest who can identify with your suffering, and minister grace, help to you in time of need. Now, we're going to come to say all kinds of harsh things about these "friends" of Job because it would seem that with friends like these who needs enemies? But before we do let's at least recognize the fact that they came to him upon hearing of his devastation, and they didn't feel like they had to explain it all (at least initially), but they just sat there *with* him, being available *to* him.

And sometimes that's the best help we can be for somebody, just being there for them. It's often times a temptation to want to bring understanding into the equation, or offer a comforting word, (which is all good when led by the Lord) but sometimes people don't need to have everything explained *to* them, they just simply need someone to be there *for* them, to just sit there *with* them. And in due time, when they're ready, they'll open up and begin to share with you what they're ready to.

Job has been reduced from the greatest man in all the east, to having lost everything sitting on a bed of ashes in the city dump, infected with what he no doubt believes to be a terminal disease of some kind, suffering horrendously, not even recognizable personally. He's just rotting away there, waiting to die (he didn't have the insights of Ch's 1 and 2, he's just facing a seemingly hopeless situation, writhing in incessant pain and itching.

Ch 3

Vs1-10

We spoke last time about Hebrew poetry, how it builds in either sharp contrast or in parallel thought patterns, here we're beginning to see that. As he speaks about his birth we note the repetition of phrases like, "May that day be darkness, no light shine upon it, darkness and the shadow of death claim it, a cloud settle on it, may darkness seize it," and he's just painting a picture for us of how he's come to loath the fact that he was ever conceived or has ever been born.

And we notice that he cursed the day of his birth, but he never curses God, and most all of us have probably been miserable enough at some point or another to wish we'd just never even been born, and it didn't take near this to get us there. You might also note that at no time did Job speak of suicide, he may've wanted to die, but he never took the initiative into his own hands, the bible teaches us that God is the giver and the taker of life and we're to trust in the Lord with all of our heart and lean not on our own understanding. We're not always going to get explanations as to why certain things happen the way they do, but we're to trust the Lord in the midst of it.

One more thing, notice how when speaking of conception Job speaks of a "male child" he didn't say, "A mass of protoplasm" or "A cluster of cells" but a "male child" David spoke of sin being present upon his conception, God told Jeremiah that before he was formed in the womb He knew him, conception constitutes humanity, that's the biblical position.

Vs11-19

He makes a 2nd resolve, "If I had to be conceived, why couldn't I've least been still born, or left to die at birth," and again he's not the only hurting child of God to ever have wished he'd have never been born, or that God would've taken his life. Moses asked God to kill him when all the people were complaining and coming against him. Remember Elijah, after the whole "Prophets of Baal" incident fled a days journey and asked the Lord to take his life, Jonah asked the Lord to take his life, Jeremiah said, "*Woe is me, my mother, That you have borne me, A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!*" Jer 15:10 So the feeling of desperation and despondency is not a foreign thing to the child of God, but what we do with that feeling is critical, because we're to walk by faith, trusting in the Lord even when we're down, or perhaps depressed, don't understand "why?" and all the rest.

Now there's something else that needs to be established here real quick and then we're all but done. There are those who take this portion of Job, when he's down, depressed, dejected, desperate to understand, irrational in his reasoning, and seek to establish doctrine from it. You can't do that, there are people (J.W.'s 7th Day Adventists and others) who say, "See, when you die your soul sleeps in the grave, kings counselors, wicked and weary alike find rest in the grave, Job says so right here."

The problem with that is that #1 The OT is unclear about the specifics regarding what happens to an individual when they die, for whatever reason God didn't really address that until the NT. Jesus spoke about it, Paul touches on it, and John speaks clearly as well in the book Revelation. Jesus spoke about the righteous (on the preside of the cross) being in Paradise, Abraham's bosom while the wicked descended into hell where there was weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Paul said in 2nd Cor 5:8 that to be absent from the body (as a believer) was to be present with the Lord. He told the Philippians that in departing from this life he'd be with Christ. Of course Revelation contains vivid images of both heaven *and* the lake of fire. None of those things had been revealed to Job, so for him to have an accurate assessment of life after death at this point would've been impossible.

But what puts the final nail in the coffin regarding not being able to base doctrine solidly upon this portion of Job alone (where Job and his friends are dialoguing, debating, and disputing) is because God Himself says that they were wrong in that they were saying and seeking to assess. Job states all of this, these guys debate and dispute back and forth for quite awhile, then God finally breaks in, in Ch 38 and says, "*Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge?*" Job 38:2 Which is a pointed way of saying, "You guys don't have a clue what you're talking about!" And He rebukes both Job and his friends, and He says, "*Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?*" Job 38:17 You know, "You're all talking about what takes place at death, have you seen it? Been to the gates of death, or seen the doors of the shadow of death lately? You guys are talking about things that you have no idea about as though you understand what's going on, on the other side of the grave." And God rebukes them, so be careful about taking in the rationale of a hurt, depressed, dejected, and desperate individual, because often times they're not reasoning rightly, seeing things through the lens of confusion. God affirms that Job didn't know what he was talking about regarding what the wicked (or for that matter anyone else) was doing beyond the grave.

Vs20-26

Interesting how Satan saw the hedge of God working for Job, but now Job sees it like he's hemmed in by God as though that hedge is working against him. And again don't think that this teaches that negative confession, or fearing something brings it upon you. As though we serve a God who says, "Well I was going to preserve you but since you feared it, I'm bringing it on you." In reality these things came to pass not because of Job's fears but because of his godliness, God wasn't punishing Job, if anything He was proud of Job and allowed Job to be used as the instrument to silence Satan regarding the heart of a man in love with God.

But what do you say to someone who's suffering? How would you encourage them? We'll see how his friends handle it next time, and believe me it's a lesson in how exactly *not* to comfort anyone.

Prayer Points

Lord, give us compassion for the down trodden, help us to be a true comfort to the hurting, not automatically assuming that there must be sin, or some reaping going on, but that we would bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. And may we not wound with our words, but bring healing instead, may we love You simply for who You are, because You're worthy of all that we are, and so much more.