

Job

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Date: 29 June 2008

[0:00] Job, one of the oldest books in the world. It tells of Job's life and suffering. A just man who lost just about everything.! Who was Job? Job chapter 1 verse 1. It says, there was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. And that man was perfect and upright and one that feared God and assumed or shunned evil.

He was perfect and he shunned evil. He was a God-fearing man. A wise man with integrity and character. He kept clear of evil. He was a good father and husband. A generous man. And verse 8 of chapter 1 it says that there is none like him in the earth. He was one of a kind and he was the greatest man of his day. Very wealthy. It goes on in chapter 1. It talks about the various property that he had. Wealth wasn't measured in money so much but livestock. He had 7,000 sheep. They were helpful for wool and meat.

3,000 camels were great for carrying loads and for travel for milk. 500 oxen. That was the work power of the day. For meat and milk also.

And 500 donkeys for personal transportation. He had it all. And many servants. Verse 3 of chapter 1 tells us he was really the richest person of his day.

[1:32] And really he was one of the greatest, strongest believers of his day too. As being a God-fearing man. As we see in chapter 1 verse 1. And he was blessed, it tells us, with a family. A large family.

Seven sons and three daughters. He was to face a great trial. A great test. He was going to face a trial on every front.

A time of great loss. A great tragedy. Satan came to God. And Satan, it means accuser. Satan comes, he enters the scene in the first chapter here.

And addresses God. And he said to God that Job only feared God because of all the good things he had. Because of all that he could gain from God's blessings.

Satan challenges the Lord that if God were to stop blessing Job, Job would curse him. God said, you can touch him but you can't kill him.

[2:34] And in a very short while, while Job faces all kinds of suffering, within just a few days, he gets disaster after disaster. He loses all his wealth.

Everything. He's reduced to poverty. He loses his social standing. He's abandoned by almost everyone who knows him. He suffers the loss of all his children in one tragic event.

And he himself is struck with a terrible, painful disease. From the top of his head to the very soles of his feet. And it continues for months. What a trial.

What a trial. How does Job react to all of this? What's his response? He mourns. In verse 20 of chapter 1. But then he worships.

He's got that human reaction. He was human. But he still worships. In his grief, he still praises God. He blesses the name of the Lord. Chapter 1 verse 21.

[3:35] He cries out, A trial.

But then a testimony. Job had a testimony. Through it all, that trial, that testing time, he came through as gold.

Truly, it was a storm experience that he went through. A terrible storm. A terrible affliction. And during his trying experience, Job talks over his questions of life through the book with his friends.

As he endures there, the agony, sitting on the ash heap. His friends are of little comfort to him. Even Job's wife, who should have been a strong hold for him, tells him to curse God and die.

In chapter 2 verse 9. But Job replied, Shall we indeed accept good from God? And shall we not accept adversity? Job continued to trust in the Lord.

[4:42] And refused to blame God for his problems. Through all of this, we see the testimony of Job. We see his great devotion to God. Now there were times when there was questions and he was questioning and he was grief stricken.

He reacted just like any of us can. But he still had his faith and his faithfulness to the Lord. Even while he's punished without cause, he still holds fast to his integrity.

And God allowed Job to suffer to prove to Satan what kind of man he really was. The test shows that there are people with a true devotion to God.

Job shone through that time of trial. He was devoted to God for who he is. Not for what he could get out of his love for God. And through the book of Job, we see a number of things that Job looked ahead to the coming of the Messiah.

We see that in chapter 9 verse 33. Where Job longs for a mediator between him and God. Chapter 9 verse 33 it says, Job cried out, Neither is there any daysman.

[5:52] Which means a mediator. There's no mediator between us that might lay his hand upon us both. He was looking for a mediator. You can see here in picture how man in the lost state is sinful, is in death, is in sin, is in rebellion, is in separation.

Christ is the mediator between God and man. A mediator that helps us bridge that gap, that chasm, a great gulf between us and God. And then through Christ, the mediator through the cross, we can have God's peace and assurance and forgiveness and everlasting life.

And we need a mediator. You need a mediator. Job cried out for a mediator. John Wesley, in referring to this passage, he says, Our Lord Jesus is now the daysman, the blessed daysman, the mediator, who was mediated between heaven and earth, who has laid his hand upon us both.

To him the Father hath committed all judgment. We have a mediator today. For it says in 1 Timothy 2 verse 5, For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus.

He's the mediator. And Job confessed later in the book, in chapter 19, 25, his faith in a redeemer who would come. Job 19, 25, he says, For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

[7:23] And Christ is for you, for me, for us, a great redeemer, the only redeemer, the one who can redeem us, rescue us, save us. It says in Ephesians 1 verse 7, In whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Job teaches us to trust in God, to trust in God no matter what the circumstances. He had a great trust, a great faith. And in Job we see that hero that he was, of unwavering faith.

Sure, he had his moments of trial and testing, and of crying out, of not really knowing and understanding, but he held on in that steadfastness, of that perseverance that he was commended for in the book of James, that patience, that perseverance, that long-suffering.

And from chapter 34, Elihu tells Job, he needs to humble himself, and submit to God's use of trials, to purify his life. Job then questions God himself.

He learns valuable lessons, about the sovereignty of God. How great God is, and how insignificant we are. It's such a contrast, isn't it? God is over all, and above and beyond what we can think.

[8:39] And his need was shown, how he needed to totally trust in the Lord. And in Job 38, it says from verses 1 and 2, that the Lord appeared to Job.

In Job 38 verse 1, it says, Then the Lord answered Job, out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darken of counsel, by words without knowledge?

What the Lord was basically saying here, to Job, was, Who do you think you are? It's a lesson on the sovereignty of God, of trusting him no matter what. We cannot question, or understand God's motives, and Job is reprimanded, for doubting God's justice.

Let me read a short story here. During the Great Depression, there was a good man who lost his job, he exhausted all his savings, he forfeited his home, his grief was multiplied, by the sudden death of his precious wife.

The only thing that he had left, was his faith, and it was weakening. One day, he was combing the neighbourhood, looking for a job, and he stopped to watch some men, who were doing the stone work, on a church building.

[9:44] And one of these men, was chiselling away, a triangular piece of rock, and not seeing a spot, where it would fit. He asked, where are you going to put that? And the man pointed, towards the very top, of the building, and said, see that little opening, way up there, near the spire, that is where it goes.

I am shaping it down here, so it will fit, in, up there. I'm shaping it down here, so it will fit in, up there. Some of you are going through, terrible, troublesome times.

You may be experiencing, some heartbreaking sorrow, or perhaps, some painful physical illness, or it may be something else, maybe, even too excruciating, to talk to anyone about.

The blows of the hammer, and the chisel hurt, but hold on to your faith. These difficulties, will not get you down, they are only temporary. Glory is coming, It is the harsh blows, to the outward man, that often bring, the greatest strength, to the inner man.

Keep praying, keep believing, the master has to do, some shaping of us, down here, so we will fit in, up there. He's doing a work. Sometimes we don't understand, as Job really, couldn't understand, the full extent of it.

[11:03] When Job heard God speak, he realised, he had no right, to question God. He repented, of having questioned, the Lord in that way. God then told, the friends of Job, who had been, really not much help to him, but just, by criticising, and blaming Job, God told, the friends of Job, that he was angry, with them.

He told them, to ask Job, to pray for them. And the Lord, then blessed Job again. He gave him twice as much, as he had, at the start. And he gave Job, another family, of seven sons, and three daughters.

And Job lived, 140 years, after this. So, it was, really in the middle, of his life, that he had that, period of great trouble. And when we suffer, let's take a page, from Job's book, to learn from Job. Let's respond, with faith, and trust, in our almighty, sovereign Lord, who knows all, and who sees the beginning, and the end, of everything. I know, I can't speak much, for myself, for having endured, but I know, there's different ones, enduring, enduring, and having endured.

I know, there's one, in the back row here, he's had a season, of great affliction, great affliction. And I'm sure, you could, relate to this, account of Job.

[12:19] I know, I had a bit of back trouble, there's a time, where I could, scarcely walk, just the last few, few days in fact, which is quite, unusual for me. But you know, you wonder, when something hits you, and you just wonder, what's the reason for that?

What, what is happening? And yet, sometimes, we just need to, rest in God's sovereignty, in his control, above us. There's a story here, some years ago, this preacher, tells this story.

He says, I was introduced, to a woman, who had just lost her husband, and her son, in a car accident. Her heart was broken, she was devastated, by this double loss, her husband, and her son, in the one accident.

And when I went to see her, she was weeping, torn up, hardly even able to speak, because she was so overcome, by her grief. Somebody had asked me, to try to comfort her, but I wondered, what to say to her.

Looking to God, in prayer, I laid my hand, on her shoulder, and said, you have been given, a high, and holy honour. Glancing up, through her tears, she said to me, what do you mean?

[13:28] I sat down with her, and went through, some of the scriptures, pointing out to her, that we are given, the privilege, of suffering for Christ. Paul puts it that way, in Philippians, it has been given, on behalf of Christ, not only to believe, on him, but also to suffer, for his namesake.

That's Philippians 1, verse 29. I pointed out to her, that God had given her, the privilege, of bearing difficulty, and trial, given her, an opportunity, to demonstrate, that his strength, and his love, and grace, will continue, despite all the, outward circumstances, even the very worst, of things, that life can throw at us.

And as we talked together, a new look, came on her face, and she said to me, I see what you mean. We prayed together, and I left her, later I heard, that her life, was such a radiant testimony,

throughout all that time, a struggle, that hundreds of people, were touched, and saw their own sufferings, in a different light, as a result.

In Job 42, Job confesses, his unworthiness, his lack of understanding, and his weakness, he confesses, his full confidence, and trust, in God, and affirms, his faith in God, and the issues, of his suffering, and sin, melt away, in the power, of the simple presence, of God.

In Job 42, verses 5 there, I have heard, of thee, by the hearing, of the ear, but now my eye, hath seen thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent, in dust and ashes.

[15:01] He came to a place, of repentance, he came to a place, of trusting, of yielding, of submitting to God, and in the end, Job is rewarded, for his refusal, to curse God.

God restores to Job, his health, his happiness, his prosperity, in fact, twice as much, as before. And the book, defends the absolute glory, and perfection of God.

It sets the, theme, echoed in, Psalm 18, verse 3, I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy, to be praised. God is deserving, of our praise, no matter what, on the basis, of who he is, of who he is. It's not, on what he gives us, it's not dependent, on what he gives us. It's because of who he is, that we love him, that we praise him, that we follow him, on the basis of who he is, apart from the blessings, that he bestows.

Satan denied, this is what he said, in chapter 1, verses 9 to 11, he was saying, oh, he's only, he's only following you, because he's getting, a good life. He's only following you, because of your blessings, on him.

[16:07] Test him. But he's still, held strong. In James 5, it says that, Job endured suffering, with great patience, at one of the hallmarks of Job.

And Job teaches you, it teaches me, about faith, about trust, about obeying God, whether or not we understand, what God is doing, in our lives. There's a, a lady who, said this, she said, how can a God of love, who has everything, in his control, that such a thing, happen to me?

Here she was, this young woman, she was a cripple, she'd been injured, through a fall from a horse, crippled for life, the doctor said. The pastor was silent, for a moment. Did you suffer much pain, when they put you in the cast?

The pain was terrible, she replied. Where was your father then? He stood right by me, she replied.

Did your father, allow the doctor, to hurt you, that way? Yes, but that was necessary.

Did your father, allow the doctor, to hurt you, even though he loved you? Or because he loved you?

You mean to suggest, that because God loves me, he also allowed me, to be hurt?

[17:16] The pastor answered, with a nod, this thing is from me. Let these five words, comfort you. They will furnish, a silver lining, to the cloud. Yours is not, a case of hard luck.

This trial, was planned by God. If you are his child, he is preparing you, for better service.

Shakespeare said, in sickness, let me not so much say, am I getting better, of my pain, but am I getting better, for it?

Let us not then say, when will I be getting, out of this? But, what will I be getting, out of this? He will draw you, closer to him, through this trial.

This thing, is from me. We can trust the Lord, in that time of trial. Some of the lessons, that we can learn, from Job. There's many helpful, lessons, that we can learn, from the book of Job.

First, we can learn, that God is the creator, of all things. His wisdom, is far above, anything we can ever, understand. Because he's creator, God has no obligation, to explain his actions, to man.

[18:21] Also, we can learn, that if we truly, have faith, we can remain, faithful to God, no matter what happens. And, it says that, all things work together, for good. To them, we love the Lord.

We can learn, from the book of Job, that innocent people, can suffer, in this life. Natural disasters, affect everybody. Accidents, can happen, to anyone. Sickness, comes to the rich, and poor, the young and old, the evil, and the good.

And finally, death will come, to everyone. These things, are a part of life. They do not mean, that a person, is good or bad, but simply, that he is human. And we can learn, that Satan, does not have, unlimited power, over us.

God is stronger. Satan had to, ask permission, each time. He had to ask God, first. God is stronger. God will not, allow Satan, to take away our power, to choose between, right and wrong.

It tells us how, there is no temptation, overtaking us, but such, as is common to man. God will give you, the strength, to endure. And Satan, may use people, too, to discourage you.

[19:25] In Job's case, Satan used his wife, and his three friends. We must, always put God first, even before our closest, friends and relatives. And we also see, the patience that Job had, we can learn, from his example, of endurance, through life.

There was a boy, and his father, up in the mountains, and they took shelter, there was a storm, and they took shelter, between some, boulders, and as they looked up, they saw the storm, coming, and they saw this, huge mountain pine, a pine tree, that towered, above the ridge.

And it was a sentinel, that could escape, no danger. It was there, standing strong. The wind tore it, shook it violently, and held through, the branches. And to the boy, the tree, strong though it seemed, was about to be, torn to pieces.

And the boy, cried out to his dad, look father, what the wind, is doing to that pine. The full fury, of the blast, was making the pine, shudder and sway. And heaved desperately, against the black sky. The father said, storms are like, an old story to that tree. A tree like this, lives in a struggle, from the time it is high enough, to catch the first breath of air.

[20:37] Tennyson says, a tree is storm strengthened, on a windy side. The strongest trees, are always those, who have weathered, the greatest number of gales. Besides the question, is not what is happening, to the tree, but what is happening, in the tree.

The tree is made, stronger. It's what is happening, in the tree. The boy said, the tree doesn't, seem to mind, fighting the storm, does it? And the dad answered, no, because it is able, to withstand, the strongest wind.

And it's the same, with us. It really does not matter, what happens to us, but it matters a great deal, what happens in us. The book of Job, helps us understand, that Satan, has got to get, God's permission.

And God has power, over what Satan, can't, and cannot do. It's beyond, our human ability, sometimes, to understand the wise, behind all the suffering, in the world. Suffering may sometimes, be allowed in our lives, to purify us, to test us, to strengthen, the soul.

God remains enough. God is enough. He, is there. And he deserves, our love, our praise, through all the circumstances, of life. Job 38, God appears, he confronts Job, and he says, that he alone, is sovereign, and worthy, of worship, regardless of what, he chooses to do.

[21:58] And Job, responds, in trust, in the goodness, and power of God, and he humbly repents, of his pride, and his self-righteousness. And Job teaches, that God, is the sovereign Lord, who is all seeing, all knowing, incomprehensible, to finite man.

Job teaches us, that suffering, is not always, the direct result, of sin, but God may, sovereignly choose, to use it, to test and teach. There's a, a lady who, had a favourite, verse of scripture, it's really, you know, taking it out of context, I think, but, but she used it, in time of testing, and trouble. And she told, someone, this is my favourite, verse of scripture. And it came to pass. And it came to pass. That, that the time of trial, it will pass.

It will pass. God, in his mercy, never gives us more, than we can bear. Amen. And just, one final, little story, to end with.

It's a poem. A poem, that's got much truth, and I pray, it's an encouragement to you, that teaches us, how to answer, when the question of trouble comes, and when we want to ask, why?

[23:09] Why? It's called, The Lord Knows Why. I may not know the reason why, dark clouds so often veil the sky, but though my sea be smooth or rough, the Lord knows why, and that's enough.

I may not know why I am led, so often in the paths I dread, but trusting him, I'll press my way, the Lord knows why, I will obey.

I may not know why death should come, to take my loved ones from my home, but though my eyes with tears be dim, the Lord knows why, I'll trust in him.

So though I may not understand, the leaning of my father's hand, I know to all he has the key, he understands each mystery, oh yes he knows, the Lord knows why, these things are ordered from on high, though dark clouds may hide the sun, the Lord knows why, his will be done.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your grace and help, we know there's different ones, at times every one of us face trials and trouble, as the sparks fly upward Lord, we know it's part of life at times, and yet we know it's so hard sometimes, when we're afflicted with trouble, and when we're sick and suffering, and our families and loved ones, and friends we care about, go through trouble, Lord we pray help us to lean on your strength, as in the end Job learnt to lean, Lord to find that you're working on us, here below for the hereafter, Lord you're strengthening us, as the tree and the wind, you're helping us through the storms, to know that it will pass, and Lord we'll be stronger for it, help us Lord to have faithfulness, and patience like Job, to persevere, to press on, Lord when it's hard, help us to lean on your strength, and for our loved ones, and people we care about here today, we pray for everyone, as many that have these troubles Lord, strengthen their hearts, lift them up Lord, encourage their hearts, help us Lord to find that strength, that you give to us above our own, and we trust you Lord for that, we pray Lord for each family, and home, for each heart here today,

[25:29] Lord that they might know, what it is to know a redeemer, to know a mediator, to know a saviour Lord, that can help us, and guide our lives, to give us meaning, and future, and eternal home, Lord if there's any, who know you not, that they'll seek out, that eternal life, while it can be found, they'll seek your face, while you are near Lord, they'll call upon you, and trust you, praise you Lord in Jesus name, Amen.

Amen.