

The Integrity of Job **Job 1:1-5**

For the foreseeable future on Sunday evenings, we are going to be moving through the book of Job. Dale approached me about having an evening service in order to provide another opportunity for those who are interested to hear the Word and this is appealing to me as can operate move through the book at our own pace with no concrete time table in place. Initially my thoughts are at least 10 weeks but we will see where God and the book take us.

Why Job?

I believe that it is important for us to study Job for a couple of reasons.

1. It provides us with a better understanding of who God is. If we look around it is easy to see that a vast majority of the world doesn't truly know who God is. If we are to be the light of the world – an extension of God, then it is imperative that we have as best an understanding of God as humanly possible.
2. It gives us a better understanding of who Satan is, what he believes, and what his plan is. We are in the midst of a spiritual battle. This battle is on full display in the book of Job and provides us with a better understanding of the big picture. If we are in this battle as believers, then it is in our best interest to understand it.
3. It addresses suffering. The book of Job deals greatly with the suffering of Job. A common question that is asked in the world is why do the righteous (good people) suffer? While some think the book of Job provides the answer to that question, I don't necessarily believe it does. However, it provides us with a few things. The knowledge that we will suffer, how we should and should not handle our suffering, and the affirmation of God's sovereignty. While I hope I am wrong, I tend to believe that suffering is coming. If correct, it is in our best interest to be prepared.

Groundwork for the book of Job

The book of Job is acknowledged by scholars as the oldest material/book in the Bible outside of the first 11 chapters of Genesis. It certainly takes place before the establishment of the nation of Israel as God's covenant nation. There is no mention of the Mosaic law which points to the events of the book taking place before the life of Moses and potentially Abraham. Even so, the book of Job has always been accepted as part of the canon – as Scripture.

Prior to Moses, divine laws were still given to men.

Genesis 26:5

⁵because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

We see this in the life of Job as well.

Interestingly, there is no mention of Pantheism, Polytheism, or rampant idolatry that we see elsewhere in Scripture. The thought is that these false religions came about through the

dispersion of nations after Babel. It appears that this took time and had not fully taken place at the time of Job.

The events of the book are estimated to have taken place around 2000 BC in the land of Uz. Uz is mentioned in Scripture (Lamentations 4:21) as a part of Edom – south of the Dead Sea.

What about Job?

Tonight I want us to take a deeper look at Job. What do the introductory verses (1:1-5) teach us about Job and how does it apply to our lives?

Specifically I want to look at three things: The integrity of Job, the purpose of Job, the godliness of Job.

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. ²There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³He 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. ⁴His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, “It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed^[a] God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.

I. Integrity of Job

A. A real man

Before we begin, perhaps one of the most important qualities of Job is the fact that he was a real man. From a secular standpoint, archaeologists have found artifacts that tell us the name Job was a common name in the region during the time period. More importantly, Scripture confirms to us in multiple places, both in the O.T. and the N.T., that Job was a real man.

Ezekiel 14:12-14

¹²And the word of the LORD came to me: ¹³“Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply^[b] of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, ¹⁴even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord GOD.

In this Old Testament passage, Ezekiel is speaking of destruction that will come to a land when the people in it are not faithful. He references three righteous men: Noah, Daniel, and Job. If they were present in this scenario, they would escape with their lives but the land would still face God’s judgment. This clearly implies to us that Job was a real man just as Noah and Daniel were.

James 5:7-11

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, ^[a] until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

In this New Testament passage, James calls upon fellow believers to be patient in trials. He references both the prophets and Job as examples. In other words, he equates Job with the prophets thus implying to us that they were real individuals that set an example for us.

B. A Believer in Israel's God who was Blameless and Upright

The first two verses of chapter one tell us clearly that Job was a righteous man. This is described several ways.

- He feared God (this is the same God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – Israel's God)
- We are told that he is blameless and upright. A more direct translation of this would be "complete and straight." In other words, there was no fault in his character. He didn't veer off course.
- He was a devout and moral man. Notice he is described as turning away from evil. A better way to describe this would be that he rejected evil. He didn't just disapprove of it or refuse to take part in it – He recognized evil as what it was and he acted against it. Job was not a passive man.
- Job was a man above the reproach of men. He had established a righteous reputation. He believed all of God's Word (whatever he knew of it) and lived the life of a faithful man. We read of that from his perspective and the perspective of others throughout the book.

It is important for us to realize that Job was not a sinless man as the only sinless man to ever exist was Christ himself. However, Job was a genuinely good man – as faultless as a man can be.

Job was not everyman – he was unique. God later declares that "there is none like him on all the Earth." It is clear that Job is the delight of God. We will get to the test of Job later on but it is of note that God offered Job up. He beat Satan to the punch. When God pondered the questions, who is the most righteous man I can use in this situation, Job was His choice. Every believer should desire to be thought so highly of by God!

II. The Purpose of Job

We need to make a note that the genuine righteousness of Job is essential to the book. His favor with God is also key. We know that God is sovereign over all things and in control of all. Everything you have is from him – your health, your job, your family, everything. So what about Job?

We read that Job had 7 sons and 3 daughters. In Hebrew, these numbers are ideal numbers that represent completeness and a sign of divine favor. It is as if they are telling us Job had the perfect family.

We are told that Job had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants. Scripture says he was “the greatest of the people of the east.” All of this demonstrates Job’s immense wealth. Wealth was measured in livestock. The mention of the sheep, camels, oxen, donkeys, and servants was similar to someone’s bank account or investment portfolio today. It was a statement of wealth. He was not a nomad, you don’t travel around with that large of a crew. He would have also possessed an extensive amount of land. A better understanding of “the greatest of the people of the east” would be wealthiest of the people of the east.

His children also had the best of everything. Verse 4 implies that the sons all had their own houses and that routinely they would have parties and feasts at their homes where their sisters would join them.

Again, both the righteousness of Job and his favor from God are essential to the book. The life of Job presents the cast of the innocent sufferer in its acutest form. He is the prime example that suffering happens to all individuals.

III. The godliness of Job

I have already pointed out that Job himself was a righteous man. While these verses tell us that Job’s family often held feasts and celebrations, there is no disapproval of their life from their father and there is no mention of laziness, drunkenness, or other sins on the part of his family.

This makes v.5 very interesting and places the godliness of Job on full display. It tells us that after these feasts had been completed Job would consecrate his family. He would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings for his entire family. According to his own words, “It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.”

Job doesn’t seem to be anxious or worried about his children but he was aware of the danger of slipping into sin. As a result, Job acts as a Godly parent and makes doubly sure that all is well. Prior to the Mosaic law, the head of the family was a priest with God. (In some regards this is still true today – 1 Cor. 11:3) Therefore, as the head of the family, Job offered sacrifices as an intercessor in order to restore the holiness of his children.

A few things are very interesting here.

1. The sin that Job feared that his children might fall into is the same sin that Satan later hopes Job will succumb to and the very sin that his own wife will tempt him with – denouncing God.
2. We get an early shadow of Christ here in the book of Job. Job is acting as an intercessor or mediator on behalf of his Children. Later in Job 9:33, Job addresses the idea of a mediator for himself. Job knows that he needs a Savior and this is the role that Christ would fulfill 2000 years later.

In addition to his priestly role, we must note the use of “rise early in the morning” in verse 5. This phrase is a Hebrew idiom. An idiom is a common expression that carries a meaning that you might not necessarily glean from the words used. In this case, “rise early in the morning” is best understood as “all of his days.” In other words, what Job did on behalf of his children was a lifelong habit. We are not reading about a one time or limited occurrence. This was who Job was. His godliness was a part of his character.

IV. Personal Implications

- A. This information challenges us to believe Scripture. Job was a real man. If he was a real man and this is a real account, then we must recognize the reality of both God and Satan as well. Scripture confirms itself in many ways and forces us to recognize that all of Scripture is purposeful, inerrant, and therefore we cannot pick and choose what we choose to believe or follow. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- B. Job is described as a blameless and upright man. We, as fallen creatures, cannot attain sinlessness in this life, but the example of Job proves that we can be considered righteous. No doubt Job was unique but we he should serve as an example to us in godliness and righteousness.
- C. Job was the Lord’s delight. We should not seek to be the recipient of God’s favor by way of material goods and wealth. God is the giver of all good things (James 1:17) and He will determine how he chooses to bless us as He sees fit. However, Job was chosen by God on account of his righteousness. God is moving in a multitude of ways in our midst today – We should desire to be at the top of His list for any chosen task on the account of our righteousness. God is going to move – Do you desire to be a part of it and blessed through it.
- D. While we haven’t encountered the suffering of Job yet, these first five verses have set the stage for Job to serve as the prime example of an innocent sufferer. God moves in ways that we may never understand. Often, this can include suffering on our behalf. Job is a reminder to us that we must be prepared to suffer.
- E. Job was a godly man “all of his days.” He was intentional with his actions – he was very conscious of what he was doing. It was not an accident. He admirably served as an intercessor for his family. This begs the question, how seriously do we take our role as an intercessor. How seriously do we pray on behalf of others or on behalf of our family. The answer to that question ultimately reveals what we think about God.