

The Book of Job

I. THE SUFFERING OF JOB.

- A. Job's terrible trials (Job 1-2).
1. The nature of these trials.
 - a. First trial: His oxen and donkeys are stolen and his farm hands are killed by a Sabean raid (1:14-15).
 - b. Second trial: His sheep and herdsmen are burned up by fire (1:16).
 - c. Third trial: His camels are stolen and his servants killed by a Chaldean raid (1:17).
 - d. Fourth trial: His sons and daughters perish in a mighty wind (1:18-19).
 - e. Fifth trial: Job himself is struck with a terrible case of boils (2:7-8).
 2. The reason for these trials. A conversation takes place in the heavenlies between God and Satan concerning Job. The devil sneeringly charges that Job only worships God because of two selfish benefits:
 - a. Because God has given his servant much wealth (1:9-11).
 - b. Because God has given his servant good health (2:4-5). Satan argues that if he could but remove these two elements, that Job would curse God to his face. Thus, to shut the devil's mouth, God gives him permission to remove both Job's wealth and health. It should be noted here that Satan cannot tempt a believer apart from God's specific permission (2:6).
 3. The faith shown through these trials (1:20-22; 2:10).
- B. His whimpering wife (2:9-10).
- C. His fickle friends (4-37). It has been pointed out that his friends came to sympathize, but stayed on to sermonize. At any rate, Job's three "friends" delivered eight full-blown messages, all with three points and a poem, to the long-suffering patriarch. Eliphaz preached three of these (Job 4-5; 15; 22); Bildad, three (8; 18; 25); and Zophar, being less-winded, came up with two (11; 20). No sooner, however, had this tiresome trio finished than the filibuster began again by a young "preacher boy" named Elihu who drones on for six chapters (32-37). Perhaps at no other Bible conference in history have so many preachers preached to so few in attendance where the congregation enjoyed it less!
1. The speeches of Eliphaz (ch. 4; 5; 15; 22). (See Genesis 36:10.)
 - a. He claimed Job was suffering for his sins (4:7-8; 15:6).
He then accuses Job of the following:
 - (1) That he had cheated the poor (22:6).
 - (2) That he had withheld bread from the hungry (22:7).
 - (3) That he had mistreated widows and orphans (22:9).
 - (4) That he was a windbag (15:2).
 - b. He bases his conclusions on personal experience (4:8, 12-16; 5:3, 27; 15:17).
 - c. He relates his night vision "ghost story" (4:12-17).
 - d. He urges Job to repent and turn back to God (22:21-28).
 2. The speeches of Bildad (ch. 8; 18; 25).
 - a. He claimed Job was suffering for his sins (8:20).
 - b. He bases his conclusions on tradition (8:8-10).
 - c. He urges Job to repent and turn back to God (8:5-6).
 3. The speeches of Zophar (11:4-5).
 - a. He claimed Job was suffering for his sins (11:4-6; 20:4-5).
 - b. He bases his conclusions on sheer dogmatism (11:6; 20:4-5).
 - c. He urges Job to repent and turn back to God (11:13-15).
 4. The speech of Elihu (32-37).
 - a. He waits awhile before speaking because of his youth (32:4-7).
 - b. However, once begun, he feels as confident and qualified to straighten out Job as the former three did. In fact, he actually suggests that he is the one whom Job seeks! "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay" (33:6).
 - c. Elihu is angry at all four, at Job because of his self-righteousness (32:2), and at the three friends because they had "found no answers, and yet had condemned Job" (32:3).
 - d. He accuses Job of both foolish speaking (34:35-37) and false righteousness (35:2).
 - e. He exhorts Job to consider God's glory and his greatness (37:14-24).
- D. The defenses and dialogues of Job. The suffering patriarch responds to his accusers in nine separate speeches.

First: chapter 3; Second: 6-7; Third: 9-10; Fourth: 12-14; Fifth: 16-17; Sixth: 19; Seventh: 21; Eighth: 23-24; Ninth: 26-31

During these nine speeches Job discusses fourteen topics. These are:

1. I am righteous, and therefore not suffering for my sin (27:6; 31:1-30).
2. In the past I have performed many good works (29:12-17; 30:25).
3. Oh, for those good old days when I enjoyed health, wealth, and respect (29:1-11, 20-25).

4. But now I am being unfairly punished by God (9:16-17, 30-33; 13:26-27; 10:2, 7-8; 19:6-11; 30:20-21).
5. My three so-called friends are miserable comforters (12:2; 13:4; 16:2; 19:3).
6. If they were in my place I would help them and not unjustly accuse them (16:4-5).
7. Even my neighbors, associates, and servants have turned against me (19:13-22; 30:1, 9-10).
8. I wish I could find the answers for all this (28:12-28).
9. I wish I could find God (23:8-9).
10. My flesh is clothed with worms (7:5; 30:17-18, 30).
11. I wish I had never been born (3:3-11, 16; 10:18).
12. I wish I were dead (6:8-9; 7:15-16).
13. I have no hope (10:20-22).
14. In spite of all, I'll trust God (13:15; 16:19; 23:10).

E. His glorious God (38-41). Suddenly from out of a whirlwind comes the mighty voice of God. The sullen Job is then subjected to a sixty-question quiz.

God's first series of questions.

1. Job 38:4: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding."
2. Job 38:18: "Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Declare if thou knowest it all."
3. Job 38:19: "Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof?"
4. Job 38:24: "By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?"
5. Job 38:28: "Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?"
6. Job 40:2: "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it."

Job's reply (40:4-5).

God's second series of questions (40:6--41:34).

7. Job 40:15-24: "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox."
8. Job 41:1, 10, 14-34: "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? Or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?" Note: These two creatures may very well refer to a land dinosaur and a sea dinosaur.

Job's reply (42:1-5).

II. HIS BOUNTIFUL BLESSINGS (42:7-17).

Job has been subjected to five fiery trials and has participated in five painful debates, but now he receives at the hand of God a tenfold blessing.

- A. He is allowed to see the glory of God (42:5).
- B. He sees himself as God sees him (This is always a blessing.) (42:6; 40:4).
- C. He is vindicated by God before the eyes of his three critical friends (42:7).
- D. He discovers the joy of praying for these three friends (42:8).
- E. His former health is fully restored (42:9-10).
- F. He is comforted by his brothers and sisters (42:11).
- G. He is given double his former wealth (42:12; 1:3).
- H. He is given seven more sons and three more daughters (42:13).
- I. He lives to enjoy his grandchildren and great-grandchildren (42:16).
- J. He is given an additional 140 years--twice the number normally accorded a man (42:16). (See Ps. 90:10.)

III. CLASSIC STATEMENTS IN JOB

- A. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness..." (5:13). Quoted by Paul in 1 Cor. 3:19.
- B. "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" (5:17). Quoted in Heb. 12:5-6.
- C. "Neither is there any daysman between us that might lay his hand upon us both" (9:32-33). The word daysman refers to a mediator. In the New Testament of course, all this would change. See 1 Tim. 2:5.
- D. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (14:1-2).
- E. "They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me. God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked" (16:10-11). These words are repeated (in paraphrase fashion) in Psa. 22:12-13; 35:21, in reference to the sufferings of Christ on the cross.
- F. "Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high" (16:19).
- G. "But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tested me, I shall come forth as gold" (23:10).
- H. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (26:7).
- I. "Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!" (23:3). This problem was solved through the incarnation of Christ. See Jn. 1:18, 45.

- J. "How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (25:4). Problem solved through the death of Christ. See Rom. 4:24-25; 5:1.
- K. "If a man die, shall he live again?" (14:14). Problem solved through the resurrection of Christ. (See 1 Cor. 15:12-13.)
- L. "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (19:25-26).

IV. SOME REASONS FOR JOB'S SUFFERINGS

- A. That Satan might be silenced (1:9-11; 2:4-5).
- B. That Job might see God (42:5).
- C. That Job might see himself (40:4; 42:6).
- D. That Job's friends might learn not to judge (42:7).
- E. That Job might learn to pray for, rather than to lash out against his critics (42:10).
- F. To demonstrate that all God's plans for his own eventually have happy endings (42:10).