

Introduction

This week's study in Job examines the character and spiritual integrity of Job. Some background information may be helpful to explain why the study of Job is placed where it is in the Walk with the Word reading plan.

Although we don't know the precise location of the land of Uz, it appears to be named after someone mentioned in Scripture (Gen. 22:20-21), Abraham's nephew by his brother Nahor. In other words, there was not just a family connection to Abraham by which Israelites would identify with this figure, but like most nations in and around Israel, the land took the name of the original forbearer. (e.g., Israel, Edom, Amon, Moab, etc.) So Job has a technical ethnic relation to Israel and was an immediate contemporary of Abraham. It is still a viable geographic location in Jeremiah's day (Jer. 25:20; Lam. 4:21) which may have been subsumed by Edom, giving us an idea of being located as one of the many nations to the east of Israel in what we might call western Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq. But this book was in existence and passed down to each Hebrew generation even before the Torah was provided through Moses.

The meaning of "Job" ranges in biblical resources from "the persecuted" to "he that weeps" to "to be cruelly treated", all of which seem to be assigned based on a reading of the book of Job. Such renderings of his name are vastly different from his attitude and lifestyle both before and after the trials recorded here. But the most important fact for us is to take very seriously the very first words, which we might paraphrase, "Once upon a time there was a **man**..." The contents of these 42 chapters is not devoted to a super-human figure, but someone just like us. His spiritual character before, during and after is meant for all of us just plain common folk.

Read verses 1-3

¹There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. ²Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. ³His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Q: What are the two types of lists which are presented here?

A: Verse 1 is a list of Job's spiritual qualities and verse 2 is a list of Job's earthly possessions.

Q: Why is the list of Job's spiritual qualities provided first?

A: It shows the true reason for the material blessings he has experienced, that they have come about because of the quality of his spiritual pursuit of God.

Point: *Although not a guarantee that we will become materially rich in this life, it is interesting that those promoting a false gospel of health, wealth and prosperity never seem to visit this detail recorded in Scripture.*

Q: How is this spiritual inventory probably the most important context for all that is to come in the entire book of Job?

A: Because Job practiced God's Word and ways personally in the course of everyday life, he was especially equipped to continue practicing them in the face of extraordinary trials. He was therefore prepared beforehand.

Application: *Job did not obtain faith in the course of his trials, but exercised that which he had daily put into practice, which prepared him for such trials. He was not refined by the experience as much as it was defined by the quality of his daily spiritual walk which prepared him beforehand.*

Q: What is the biblical definition of each of Job's stated spiritual qualifications?

1. **"Blameless"** (Heb. "tam", #8535) One who is not just morally and ethically pure by the world's standards, but the even greater standards of God. This word is sometimes translated as "perfect", as in "Can find no **fault** in."
2. **"Upright"** (Heb. "yashar", #3477) Literally means to make a way straight, direct and level so as to be free from obstacles. (Prov. 3:6) It is to, "Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you." (Prov. 4:25) It means Job was righteous in regards to understanding both the law of the **land** and the law of **God**.
3. **"Fearing God"** (Heb. "yare'", #3373) "How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways." (Ps. 128:1) It is the proper response to the message of God's Word, to be **reverent** and **humble** towards God.
4. **"Turning away from evil"** (Heb. "cuwr", #5493) This is a word which is often used to describe "defection". In this case, it is to "defect" or turn aside from both the opportunity to sin and to take action on it, to neither be influenced by evil or personally produce it. Job was always doing the **right thing**.

Q How do these qualities combine to describe Job overall?

A: He was someone who practiced God's Word and ways to such a degree that it changed his relationship with God, his family, and the general public. His spiritual integrity was so pervasive that it shown through in his moral character.

Application: *Job did not turn to God only when in need or when there were problems, but was faithful even when personally prosperous and everything was going well.*

Q; How had the Lord blessed Job? What does this list of possessions mean?

A: He had seven sons to carry on his name and run the business, three daughters to run the house, sheep for food and clothing, camels and donkeys for transportation and beasts of burden, oxen for food and

plowing, and many servants for labor. He was not just personally wealthy but had established a legacy for future generations.

Q: How was his spiritual standing with God mirrored in his earthly standing with men?

A: Job *“was the greatest of all the men of the east”*.

Application: Job represents a sincere, complete believer living according to God’s Word and ways **personally**, in his **marriage** (v.2:10), and as a **parent**. (v.1:4-5). He is faithful in **ALL relationships**. Job did not merely have the **truth**, but practiced the **truth**.

Scripture

Read verses 4-5

Q: How do we know that Job and his family were not nomads?

A: His grown children each had their own *“house”*, and not merely a tent. They were part of a settled population. This is also revealed later by the fact that their oxen were *“ploughing”*. (v.14)

Q: How do we know that “each one his day” refers to their respective birthdays?

A: Because later in Job 3:1 it will be plainly stated as, *“the day of his birth”*.

Q: What role was Job fulfilling when he would “consecrate” his children, “offering burnt offerings”?

A: He was acting as the priest for his family.

Q: What were the two issues Job was most concerned with?

A: That they may *“have sinned and cursed God in their hearts”*.

Q: What does it mean to “curse” God?

A: To curse God would fall under the category of ultra-blasphemy. Such a curse was not unintentional but willful and premeditated. When curses were pronounced, it was a prescription for bad things to happen. In the Bible, a curse is more than just wishing something bad to happen to someone; it is the official pronouncement that bad things will happen. (God placed a curse on the serpent and upon Cain.) Curses carried with them a power all their own.

To curse God, therefore, would be to turn against Him to such a degree that if one could, he or she would cause bad things to happen to God. To turn against God to the degree that one curses Him would be passing a point of no return. In Job’s day, it was believed that such a curse against God would result in the immediate death of the individual at the hand of God (Job 2:9).

Who would utter such a curse? Only those who felt that God had been unfair, unjust or unworthy of one’s worship. Therefore, they would want nothing more to do with God.

Q: Why is this issue of a curse so important to the book of Job?

A: The whole story of Job is based around the question, “Will Job curse God or not?” It is really not about the individual things in this life, but the quality of our faith.

Point: *The issue is not whether Job will just get mad at God because of the circumstances which Job experiences, but whether he will completely reject God altogether.*

Q: How do these verses portray the quality of Job’s personal faith?

A: “Thus Job did continually”. Job practiced righteousness and obedience to God’s Word and ways regularly, providing him with the proper spiritual preparation in times of relative ease in order to cope with those times of hardship.

Application: *To “curse” is more than just wishing something bad will happen, but an official **pronouncement** bad things will happen. To curse God is **turning against** God to such a degree that, if possible, they could cause **bad things** to happen to God.*

Read verses 6-12

Q: What does this reveal about heaven where angelic beings are concerned?

A: All of them are still subject to God, even those who rebelled and follow Satan.

Point: *Although we know that a time comes when Satan and his followers are forcibly thrown out of heaven and down to earth (Rev. 12), this has not occurred yet and helps to explain what is truly taking place in the spiritual realm.*

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12

Q: What does this reveal about Satan personally?

1. He is not equal to God and must roam about on the earth. In other words, he is not omnipresent or possessing any of the qualities of the Godhead.
2. True to the meaning of his name as “adversary”, this is the chief role he assumes against us while in God’s presence.
3. Satan is restrained by the Godhead in that he not only needs to get permission, but cannot act outside of the constraints placed upon him.

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Luke 22:31-32

⁶Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷The LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?”

Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”

⁸The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

⁹Then Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰Have You not made a hedge about 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. ¹¹But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.”

¹²Then the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.”

So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

Q: Who initiates this discussion?

A: Make no mistake about it, God does.

Point: *Although temptation comes from Satan, the test comes from God. In Christ's own temptation in the wilderness, it was the Holy Spirit who led Christ into the wilderness to be tested, but Satan the Adversary who tempted Jesus.*

Q: It is not stated directly in the text, but why might Satan expect God's best man to fail?

A: Satan himself had fallen, a third of the angels fell with him, he effected the fall of man through Adam and Eve, so why shouldn't everyone fall?

Q: What is Satan's main point of attack?

A: Does Job serve God with pure motives, or is he in it only as long as the blessings flow?

Q: And what result does Satan predict?

A: "...he will surely curse You to Your face". (v.11)

Q: Does Job know anything about what took place in heaven?

A: There is no indication that within these 42 chapters that Job ever learned about it.

Q: Why is this most important for the spiritual themes of this book?

A: If Job had known, he might have been able to rely upon knowledge rather than faith.

Application: The **temptations** come from Satan, but the **test** comes from God.

Read verses 13-22

Q: Having obtained permission, did Satan immediately attack Job?

A: No, he waited for a strategic time when he could provide the fullest possible effect on Job. In this case, knowing Job's rituals when it came to his children celebrating their respective birthdays, Satan waits until they are all gathered at the oldest sibling's house.

Q: By what method did Satan effect the removal of Job's wealth and possessions?

A: They were accomplished by a combination of earthly and supernatural agency:

1. The Sabeans took the oxen, donkeys and associated servants.
2. The sheep and associated servants were destroyed by a fire that fell from heaven.
3. The Chaldeans took the camels and associated servants.
4. Job's children were killed at their oldest brother's house by "a great wind", what we might call a "whirlwind".

¹³Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ^{14a}a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and attacked and took them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

¹⁶While he was still speaking, another also came 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."

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¹⁷While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

¹⁸While he was still speaking, another also came and said, “Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, ¹⁹and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

²⁰Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹He said,

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
And naked I shall return there.
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away.
Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

²²Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

Q: Why are these methods important where the whole book of Job is concerned?

A: This will make Job’s friends believe that this all came about by the hand of God due to Job’s personal sin, especially because of the fire and whirlwind. They will not credit the world or the ruler of this world as the source, but automatically assume this came about exclusively from God because of the condition of Job’s heart.

We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

1 John 5:19

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

1 John 4:4

Q: When it came to whether the source of the fire from heaven was really from God as well as the whirlwind, how did Job dispute this fact?

A: He did not, but actually accepted it on its face: “*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away*”. (v.20)

Application: We must always trust that the matter is safely in God’s hands, regardless of how it looks from our earthly perspective.

Q: What is the most important aspect we can learn from Job’s response?

A: “...he fell to the ground and **worshiped**.” (v.20)

Point: Job did not simply acknowledge God, but continued to actually worship. In other words, Job’s faith remained intact.

Application: How well do we actually continue to “worship” God in the midst of our own trials and tribulations?

Q: What is especially significant about the fact that Job calls God by His biblical name, “Yahweh”?

A: Job is the only person recorded in this book who calls God by His name, (Job 12:9) which is never used by any of his friends. It’s one of the ways we understand the spiritual difference between Job and the others about to arrive on the scene.

Q: How does Job’s success in regards to not sinning nor blaming God relate to the opening of this chapter?

A: This is exactly what he desired for his children. As a proper family priest he practiced what he preached.

Application: Job passes the test not by simply refusing to **sin** or **curse** God, but in his uninterrupted **worship** of God in spite of the circumstances.

Overall Application

- Based on Job's response, what is the example for Christians to follow when everything goes bad? When **anything** goes bad?
- How does a Christian's proper response to trials, tribulations and persecution help bring an end to Satan's influence in the world, to overcome evil?
- Are we sometimes hampered by wanting the knowledge of why such things have taken place so that we don't really trust Him by faith?

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