

Job 1

Let's turn in our bibles to what's believed to be the *oldest* book of the bible. And if in your mind you're thinking, "Why are we turning to Genesis?" than you're in for a surprise because Genesis isn't the oldest book in the bible. You say, "Well it starts out, 'In the beginning,'" and that's true, but it wasn't *written* in the beginning, it was written by Moses around the 1400's B.C. But there's another book of the bible that's thought by many to have been written hundreds of years before Moses' time, the book of Job. (Job 1) Job is thought to have lived somewhere between 1700-2100 B.C. Placing him somewhere in the ages of Ab, Isaac, and Jacob, and there's a few reasons people believe that, and we may point them out here and there as we go through the book, but suffice it to say for now that that's the general consensus.

Job also introduces a new section of the OT to us, so far we've studied the books of the law, or the Pentateuch which are the 1st 5 books of the bible, the books of Moses, Genesis-Deuteronomy. Then comes the books of history, which is represented in Joshua-Esther, now we come to what's considered to be the books of *poetry* which consist of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations, then of course comes the books of prophecy.

Job is the 1st of the books of poetry, now Hebrew poetry isn't like English/American poetry, it's not metered by rhythmic or rhyming patterns, rather it builds in parallelism or contrast, often times it's incredibly picturesque. So you find David talking about, "*Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD! Let them flow away as waters which run continually;*" Ps 58:6-7 It paints a vivid picture in your mind, so it might build in parallelism, "*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;*" Ps 1:1 the pattern builds on itself in a parallel way. Or it may contrast sharply, "*Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked. The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.*" Prov 10:6-7 So you have a contrast happening there (righteousness/wickedness) and the end thereof. So though we speak of these books as poetry, don't look for "Roses are red" in there anywhere, it's a completely different literary approach than what we're accustomed to when we think of poetry. But to Scholars and those who are, "in the know" with regard to various types of poetry, its practically universally acknowledged that Job is the pinnacle of all poetry, it's heralded as the poetic masterpiece of all time hands down.

Now having said all of that I don't want there to be any miss conception, it may be a book of poetry, but don't be deceived it was very much reality, it may be written in a poetic form, but there's nothing fictitious about it.

This is the ancient account of a real man, in a real place dealing with real life issues, and because of that the book of Job is often times difficult for us to approach and absorb because it brings us face to face with that difficult dilemma that we as humanity don't like to deal with. C.S. Lewis called it, "The problem of pain." As human beings we struggle with suffering, we have trouble with torment, there's a mystery about misery, it brings out the age old question, "Why?" "Why me, what have I done to deserve this, why would God allow this to happen in my life, why do bad things happen to good people?" And let me just state the fact that we don't always know why, God doesn't explain everything to us, nor does He have to, not only that but because His ways aren't our ways, His thoughts not our thoughts we couldn't understand all of His reasons behind His doing what He does, or allowing the things He allows anyway. But what it all comes down to is that He never asked us to understand Him fully, but He did ask us to *trust* Him fully, to believe in Him completely, to know that He has our eternal good and His eternal glory in mind at all times.

Even in this book that deals so decisively with the dilemma of human devastation we're not given all the answers. There'll be somethings we come to understand no doubt. But yet at the same time we realize that the true question shouldn't really be, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Because the fact is that there are really no *good* people, we've all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, none are righteous no not one, the true question should be, "Why do good things happen to bad people?" "Why is God merciful and gracious to us at all?" We've done nothing to deserve it.

One might be tempted to think that life in Christ would finally exempt one from seemingly unexplainable suffering, but rather than being an *exemption*, more than not it's an open *invitation*, because now we're special targets of spiritual enemies. We're attacked in ways that root themselves in the spiritual realm, powers and principalities, spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places simply because we're *trying* to lead godly lives. So our susceptibility to suffering seems to amplify in Christ. But the bible promises us that, "*God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*" 1 Cor 10:13 God won't allow you to be overcome by more than you can stand, that's a promise. We also do well to remember, "*...that the sufferings of this present time (no matter how bad they may be) are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" Rom 8:18 No matter how bad you're suffering may get, the glory God will reveal in you will be greater on that day, Job must be like a heavenly halogen, just shining with an imaginable glory. Let's look into it shall we?

Vs1

Now as for exactly Uz was, we don't know, however archaeologist have discovered an ancient yellow brick road that they believe will lead them to Uz if they follow it, and they hope to find the wizard of Uz, becuз becuз becuз becuз becuз!

But it's believed to have been in or near the land of Edom; it was east of the Jordan. But right out of the shoot we're immediately drawn to the facts that Job was #1 Blameless, #2 Upright, #3 He feared God, and #4 He shunned evil. In other words we're very clearly, and quite candidly being prepared to understand that what's about to happen in Job's life isn't some sort of punishment, it's not a repercussion of sin in his life, that bad things don't only happen to "bad" (according to the moral code) people, or people with grave sin in their lives. But that it's not unheard of or uncommon at all that bad things happen to good, in fact godly people, horrific things, things that they've done nothing (again with regards to our understanding of morality) to deserve. People that are blameless, that are upright, who fear God and shun evil, Job was a godly man.

We read here that he was "Blameless" now that word obviously doesn't mean "sinless." But it does mean that he was morally pure, that he was ethically innocent; there was nothing of which he could be rightly accused when it came to unrighteousness. Now that doesn't mean he might not ever *be* accused, but that he wouldn't be *rightly* accused, people will accuse you, accuse me of all kinds of things. The main thing that we need to make sure of is that those accusations are false, we're to be blameless. The bible tells you, tells me to, "*Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*" Phil 2:14-15 Peter, in regards to looking forward to the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness will reign said, "...*be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;*" 2 Peter 3:14 We're to be found with out fault in this crooked and perverse generation, remember when Paul said to the Corinthians that He knew that God would judge and that he wasn't justified by the fact but that he knew *nothing against himself*.

He'd done nothing wrong of which anyone could rightly accuse him, that was Job, blameless. And he was, "upright," a man of honesty, and integrity, there was no hypocrisy or duplicity with in him. He wasn't a double minded man; he was upright, not one way in one situation, but another way in another situation. How many people seem to be the person in a given situation that the situation seems to call for, but when they're somewhere else they'll put on another face, play the part of a different person? Job was upright, honest, a man of purity and integrity. He, "Feared God" that is, he revered God, respected God's person, which is another purifying agent in our lives, the fear of God. The scriptures tell us, "*The fear of the LORD is to hate evil;*" Prov 8:13 That "*The fear of the LORD prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.*" Prov 10:27. And again, "*The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death.*" Prov 14:27 If you fear God you'll steer clear of those things that are contrary to Him, or are an offense to Him, or as it says here, he "Shunned evil." That is he put evil away from him, he went the opposite direction of it, what an example we have in Job of what it means to lead a godly life. And this was before the scriptures were even recorded, he didn't have the law, he didn't have the proverbs, didn't have the psalms, the gospel hadn't been given, Paul hadn't written 2/3 of the NT yet he had a heart *for* God and lived his life set apart *to* God.

How much more should you and I (having the scriptures, the will and ways and Word of God recorded for us, that we can read, study, taken in, be convicted, challenged, and changed by) be leading lives that are godly? Set apart, holy and righteous, walking in the fear of the Lord? Oswald Chambers said, “The remarkable thing about fearing God, is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.”

Vs2-3

Not only was Job rich spiritually, but he prospered materially as well, 11,000 animals and enough hired hands and land to keep up the farm, we read that he was the greatest of all the people of the east, he was Bill Gates, Donald Trump, rolled up into one as far as wealth goes. And with Job his wealth didn't puff him up, didn't feed his pride, if anything it seemed to humble him all the more, we'll find later on that he wasn't a selfish, stingy kinda person that was all about amassing to himself to the ripping off and neglecting of others. He was generous, took care and blessed the lives of others. When there was a need that he was aware of, if it was in his power to meet it he did just that. Paul told Timothy, “*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*” 1 Tim 6:17-19 That's the type of profile that Job had, rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, God had blessed him and in turn he blessed the lives of others.

Vs4-5

Or to understand that another way, he acted as the priest of his home, with regularity he rose up early and offered intercession sacrificially for his kids. Now some take Vs 4 to mean that his kids were partiers and when you cross reference that with Vs 13 it may be. But most take the perspective (and I tend to agree with them) that the day that is referenced here is their birthday. That was the appointed day that each of them had a feast, and perhaps Job was worried that things got a little lax at their parties. Though it doesn't tell us that he had any concerns for them as far as the way they led their lives outwardly, it wasn't as though he saw them falling down drunk, it doesn't say that. It says that he was worried for what might be taking place in them internally, he wanted them to be right with God in their heart. Perhaps even that was because of the fact that he knew that prosperity has a tendency to tempt us to not rely on God, that we're doing fine with out God and he didn't want his kids to succumb to that frame of heart and mind. Remember those Vs there in Prov Ch 30? “*Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches --Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.*” Prov 30:8-9 Perhaps Job was simply worried for his kids that being full, having a feast and their leisurely desire whenever they felt the need, that they might deny the Lord, or as it were “curse” the Lord in their heart.

But moms/dads what we need to see is that with regularity he was interceding for them, carving out time to get before the Lord for them. And for him it would've been a real discipline, it was no small chore to sacrifice 10 burnt offerings, 1 for each of them. But that's what he did, because he loved them, so he stood in the gap on *behalf* of them. Let me just encourage you that if you don't already spend time with regularity in prayer for your kids, that you begin to make that a habit. (As we come to Vs 6 we make the transition into a "meanwhile" scene in Heaven.)

Vs6-12

Now there's obviously a lot in there that we could spend some time on. I guess the 1st thing we need to extract from this portion is the obvious that there *is* a spiritual realm and that the spiritual realm has a very real and tangible impact on/in the physical/material realm. There are angels, both faithful and fallen, and among the fallen is Lucifer, a real, literal devil, otherwise known as Satan, the adversary, and the accuser of the brethren.

And verse 6 sorta peels back the curtain into the spiritual realm and shows us a certain behind the scenes happening with what led up to this course of events in Job's life. The sons of God, or the angelic hosts were coming to stand *before* the Lord, I'm not sure but perhaps it would appear to give an account *to* the Lord and Satan also came among them.

Now right here people say, "Wait, I thought Satan was cast out of Heaven?" And that's true, he was, and in the sense of his being judged it's over, but in the sense of his being permanently banned the bible teaches us that that won't be the case until the last 3 ½ yrs of the tribulation period (Rev 12). As for now the bible teaches us that Satan (the accuser of the brethren) accuses the believers before God day and night. "Well, why would God allow him into His presence?" I don't know, the bible doesn't say, but he accuses you nonetheless.

And in verse 7 he's called to give an account. The Lord said, "Where have you been, from where do you come?" (Not that He didn't know, but it gave him an opportunity to give an account of himself). Satan says, "From going to and fro on the earth, from walking back and forth on it," interesting. The bible says of God that His eyes do that, they search to and fro on the face of the earth. 2 Chron 16:9 "*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.*" God is looking for those in whom He can invest and entrust His power, but of Satan the bible says, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*" 1 Peter 5:8 Quite a fundamental difference isn't there? God looking to bless man; invest and entrust His *power*, Satan looking to destroy man, looking for those whom he can *devour*.

And keep in mind what you're seeing here, this isn't the conversation of 2 equal opposite beings, light side, and dark side, good and evil, yin and yang, no this is the Creator God, with a created being, being brought into account, having to stand before God and give his report (as it were).

Vs 8 being the pivotal point (had Job seen this he'd have probably thought, 'thanks a lot') God says, "Have you considered My servant Job?" And He begins to brag on Job, "None like him on the earth, blameless, upright, fears God, shuns evil" That's God's description of Job, I read this and thought, "I wonder what God would say of me? What would His description be of me?" How do you think God would describe you, could He brag on you? Or is it more like, "All kinds of men like him, easily upset, short span of patience, never satisfied, and always thinking he got the short end of the stick." What would God say of me?

But the word we're interested in here is the word, "Considered" it means to lay one's heart upon. It could even be used in the military context of collecting intelligence. "Have you been probing around on Job? Seeking to gather intelligence on him, seeking some way to launch an attack on him, have you laid your heart on him?" "You've found that there's none like him haven't you, he's blameless, upright, fears Me and shuns evil."

So Satan says, "Does Job fear God for nothing? You've hedged him about on every side, I couldn't get at him if I tried, You've blessed everything he puts his hands to, take that away from him and he'll curse You to Your face." Few things to notice, 2 things that Satan implies, what I want you to see is that again Satan isn't able to do what he wants whenever he wants. He has to acquiesce, or concede to God's control. He says, "I can't get to him even if I wanted to, You've hedged him all around." Underline that in your bible, God has a protective hedge around your life, and nothing is going to get to you, or in any way harm you apart from God's allowing it. The bible says, "*He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."*" Ps 91:1-2. And later on down in that same Ps, "*For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.*" Ps 91:11-12 Ps 5 tells us, "*For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield.*" Ps 5:12. And again in Ch 34, "*The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.*" Ps 34:7 God hedges His children about, now that doesn't mean He extracts your free will, it's not a license to jump off a building or step in front of on coming traffic thinking there's a magic barrier around you. But He keeps a watch on our lives, and doesn't permit Satan to tamper with our lives beyond His approval. Why would God approve of that? Well, there may be several reasons, some of which we may never know on this side of eternity, but ultimately we trust His Word that it'll work out for our eternal good and His eternal glory.

But 2 things here, Satan accuses Job of being a mercenary, a worshipper for hire, serving God for what he gets out of the deal. "Who wouldn't serve You, Job realizes that it pays big dividends, insert the coin of worship, pull the lever of prayer and out comes the jackpot of wealth beyond your wildest dreams!" So he questions Job's motives, says that he wouldn't worship God for no return, only in it for himself. So there's an attack on the motives of man's worship, are the reasons for worship in us (big personal pay out) or in Him, because He's simply worthy of all worship and praise period?

But in the same breath Satan attacks God's *worthiness* of worship, because in a back door, underhanded kinda way he's saying that the only way God can get people to worship Him is to pay them off. "Stop *blessing* them, stop *bribing* them and they'll cease worshipping You, they won't find You worthy of worship simply for who You are, but because of the personal prosperity a man might gain, he assumes it's worth his time to worship You."

So Vs 12, God says, "Fine, do whatever you want with everything he has, but don't touch his person." Again who's in control? God, something else we might note is the fact God didn't do this to prove something to Himself, He knew Job's heart, understood the end from the beginning, but rather to silence Satan. What's that tell you, would Satan have initiated this if he knew it would've wound up in his dismal failure and utter humiliation? No, Satan isn't all knowing, he's limited in knowledge/insight and understanding, God isn't.

Now I have no doubt that Job wouldn't have enlisted for this type of trial, but really we need to see that this didn't happen so much for Job's sake (though he'll learn and grow from it).

But God's integrity was at stake, the audience of the heavenly realm is peering in on this. Why do things go south in your life, in my life? Different reasons at different times no doubt, but who's to say that God hasn't staked His integrity upon you, and that the audience of the heavenly realm isn't peering in on your life, watching, waiting to see how you'll respond, will you give God glory? Or will you curse Him to His face, wrongly accuse Him, or charge Him with wrong?

Vs13-19

Notice all these things happened in such a way, and in such "coincidental" timing as to leave an impression of Divine intervention, he hears the news about one thing, and before he's over the shock and still reeling about it, the news comes of another. The stock market crashed, he lost all his animals, one commentator pointed out that it came from every direction alternating between human and natural disasters. The Sabeans from the south taking all the oxen and donkeys, killing the servants tending to them, the fire of God (most likely lightning perhaps starting a massive fire) sweeping in from the Mediterranean from the west, the Chaldeans raiding from the north, taking the camels killing the servants tending to them, and the winds (be they straight winds or tornadic) coming from the desert in the east. And what do you think of Vs 16, the lightning storm (or whatever it was) being called "the fire of God." Did God cause that fire? No, Satan is the prince of the power of the air, but so often God gets the blame for the work that Satan does, God didn't destroy those sheep, or kill those servants, that was the work of Satan.

But this is the real happening in the life of a real man, with in minutes the news came to him that he'd lost everything, all 11,000 animals (financially destroyed), the servants he was responsible for, and then the most devastating news of all, all 10 children dead in an instant. I can't even imagine what that was like and God help us that none of us ever have to find out, what would you do, what *could* you do, what did Job do?

Vs20-22

All we can really say is, “Wow” what an amazing man of God, was he devastated? Absolutely, was he grieving immensely? Undoubtedly, but what an amazing thing, he fell on his face and he worshipped. And he says, “Everything I have is because God’s given it to me, if He sees fit that it be taken from me, so be it, either way blessed be the name of the Lord.” He didn’t sin, or charge God with wrong. No, “Why me God, how could You let this happen to me?” But rather, “God You’ve been so good to me, all that I’ve ever had You’ve given me, now have Your way *in* me, bless Your name.”

He wasn’t God’s “Fair weather” friend, through thick or thin, though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Satan likes to turn our worship from God, he wants it for himself, and if he can’t have it directly, he’ll take it inadvertently. As long as you’re not worshipping God, he’ll consider that a personal victory, why do you worship God? Because of what He can *do for* you, or simply because of who He *is to* You, worthy in and of Himself of all honor, all praise, all power, all glory, all submission and subservience? We may not understand everything that takes place, that transpires in our lives in the form of suffering, the mystery of misery, but may we trust in the Lord through it, and be found as a worshiper of the Lord in the midst *of* it.

Prayer Points:

Lord what a radical reality check, we just want to rest in the fact that You are in control, that You have our eternal best interest, and your eternal glory at heart, that the suffering that takes place now, doesn’t compare the glory to be revealed in us, and we thank You that You’ll never allow anything to come into our lives that’s beyond our ability to bear. I pray for anyone here who may be going through the fire, being refined in such a way, uphold them, strengthen them, Lord minister to them, that they might find themselves on their face before You in exaltation and worship *of* You, simply for who You are, God we love You, we trust You, In Jesus name.