

A Study Of Job

Lesson 2

Background Information:

Historical setting:

- Job was actually a historical character. (Ezekiel 14:14; James 5:11)
- Inspired.
 - Paul quotes from it on several occasions in his writings (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:19 with Job 5:13; and Romans 11:35 with Job 41:11).

Background Information:

Who was Job? Don't know. All we do know is revealed here, books of Ezekiel and James.

- A man described as "*perfect and upright; and one that feared God, and turned away from evil*" (1:1)
- Greatly blessed, "*that this man was the greatest of all the children of the east*" (1:3).
- Offered sacrifices for his children. "*... rose up early in the morning and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all*" (1:5).
- His goodness was habitual, "*thus did Job continually*" (1:5).
- "*There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and turneth away from evil*" (1:8).

The Issue:

"Doth Job Fear God For Nought?" Job 1:9

- First, Jehovah said to Satan, "*Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of Jehovah.*" (Job 1:12)
- Secondly, Jehovah said to Satan, "*Behold, he is in thy hand: only spare his life.*" (verse 6)

The Issue:

"Doth Job Fear God For Nought?" Job 1:9

- Satan allowed to act within certain limitations. Job 1:12; Job 42:10-11
- Instrumentality of men. Job 1:13-17
- Force of nature. Job 1:18-19
- Limited to Job's person. Job 2:6
- Job's body was struck with boils. Job 2:7-8
- Job's Wife. Job 2:9; 2:11ff
- Job's friends
 - Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad.
- Society rejected him. Job 17:6; 19:13-22
- Evil of disbelief and disloyalty. Job 2:11-13

The Issue:

"Doth Job Fear God For Nought?" Job 1:9

Questions:

- Why do the righteous suffer?
- Can God trust man to serve Him simply for the love of God?
- Can man trust God, when his suffering is inexpressible in its intensity, and unexplainable as to its cause?

Philosophy of Job's Friends

Eliphaz

- First speech (Job 4).
- Second speech (Job 15).
- Third speech (Job 22). Accusations

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Philosophy of Job's Friends

Bildad –

- First speech (Job 8:1-4).
- Second speech (Job 18).
- Third speech (Job 25).

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Philosophy of Job's Friends

Zophar – is the most direct, harsh, and blunt of all the friends. (Job 11)

- *"Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth"* (11:6b).
- His concession. (Job 20)
"the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless but for a moment" (20:5)

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The Contention and Perplexity of Job

Why should his suffering be so intense?

1. He blames God with being unmerciful to him, of being unduly and unjustly hard on him (chapter 6).
2. He then charges that there is no moral standard in the universe, that God makes no distinction between right and wrong (9:22-24).
3. All power belongs to God, but it appears as if God uses it to further the cause of the bad as well as the good (chapter 12). In this Job accuses God unjustly, and without knowing some of the things he later came to realize he did not know.

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Job's attitude toward God begins to change – Job 13-19

- Job affirms *"that a godless man shall not come before him"* (13:16).
- *"How many (what) are mine iniquities and sins?"* (13:23)
- *"Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?"* (verse 24)
- *"Wilt thou harass a driven leaf? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?"* (verse 25)
- Job appeals to God to witness for him (16:18-17:2), while continuing to lament his condition.
- Job is confident that God will vindicate him (19:23-29).

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Job's attitude toward God begins to change – Job 13-19

The contention of Job may now be stated as follows:

1. I am righteous.
2. God is all-mighty, powerful, wise.
3. Therefore there must be some other solution than that of the friends; they are unquestionably wrong.
Suffering is not punitive.

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The Debate Ends

The two questions have been answered:

1. Man will and does serve God for the pure joy of that service, for righteousness sake; therefore God can trust man so to do.
2. Man can trust God, for God does not afflict simply to hurt man.

NOTE: More must be said, for Job has affirmed some hard things about God which need to be corrected.
cf. Job 9:20ff; 14:1-2, 14

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Elihu Speaks – Job 32-37

Who was Elihu?

- Young man whose wrath is kindled. 32:1-3
 - Toward Job's friends.
 - Toward Job.
- Somewhat arrogant. Perhaps because of his youth. cf. 1 Timothy 4:12

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Elihu Speaks – Job 32-37

- He would vindicate God, rebuke the friends, and upbraid Job for his ideas of God, which have not been correct.
- He then points out a new suggestion on suffering. It may be disciplinary or corrective.
- The speeches of Elihu pave the way for Jehovah to speak and bring the debate to an end.

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Elihu Speaks – Job 32-37

Three important contributions of Elihu.

- Points out the sins of Job. (33:8-12; 34:5ff; 34:34)
 - Note: Elihu doesn't identify sin of Job **BEFORE** these calamities came.
 - Note: Elihu doesn't know **WHY?** (God hasn't answered that.)
 - Note: Elihu, Job, nor Job's friends know the issues of chapters 1-2.
- God's answer. (How did God speak?) 35:3
 - Dreams. 33:13-15
 - Chastening / correction. 33:19-22; cf. James 1:2; 1 Peter 4:12; cf. Hebrews 12
 - "Angel" – Messenger. 33:23ff; cf. 33:6 Elihu considered himself a messenger, not a celestial messenger.
- Introduces Jehovah. (chapter 37)

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Elihu Speaks – Job 32-37

Elihu assumes the same position as Job's friends.

- 9:33 Perhaps he sees himself as umpire.
- 34:11, 21 Elihu's position is exactly the position of Job's friends and Job himself. (Suffering is always the result of sin.)
- **WRONG**
 - Woman whom Satan had bound. Luke 13:16.
 - Paul's thorn in the flesh was a messenger from Satan. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9
 - Elihu still doesn't address the condition of Job prior to Job's condition.
 - Note: Suffering in this life is consequential not punishment. Punishment is eternal.

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Elihu Speaks – Job 32-37

Elihu assumes the same position as Job's friends.

36:8-11, 16 Elihu makes the same argument Job's friends make. God rewards obedience through material possessions.

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Elihu Speaks – Job 32-37

Elihu introduces Jehovah. 36:24ff; 19ff

- God's greatness is presented. 37:21

'Til The Storm Passes By

"In the dark of the midnight have I oft hid my face
While the storm howls above me, and there's no hiding place
'Mid the crash of the thunder, Precious Lord, hear my cry
Keep me safe till the storm passes by
Till the storm passes over, till the thunder sounds no more
Till the clouds roll forever from the sky
Hold me fast, let me stand in the hollow of Thy hand
Keep me safe till the storm passes by
Many times Satan whispered, "There is no need to try
For there's no end of sorrow, there's no hope by and by
But I know Thou art with me, and tomorrow I'll rise
Where the storms never darken the skies
Till the storm passes over, till the thunder sounds no more
Till the clouds roll forever from the sky
Hold me fast, let me stand in the hollow of Thy hand
Keep me safe til the storm passes by"

Gaither Vocal Band

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The Final Word:

Jehovah speaks – Job 38-41

In the book these problems seem to be solved:

1. The traditional position is refuted: **all suffering is not punitive**; it cannot be traced to the sin of the individual sufferer.
2. **God can trust man** to serve Him for righteousness' sake, and not simply for the pay that might be involved.
3. **Man can trust God when he cannot see**. For though he cannot know why he suffers, he may know that God cares, and that He rules in the universe, and that in all His ways there is purpose. God does not arbitrarily inflict suffering, nor is God disinterested in the suffering of the righteous.

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Conclusion:

- No matter how often we may be told a thing, some things can be learned only in the school of affliction.
- After his experience in the crucible of suffering, and after God had spoken to him, Job could say, "*I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*" (42:1-6)

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