

The Life of Job

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Introduction

For our instruction and encouragement, the Bible records many notable examples (Rom. 15:4-5), but none are more meaningful and moving than the life of the patriarch Job (Job 1:1-3).

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus (Rom. 15:4-5).

There 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. Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. His 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 (Job 1:1-3).

God is watching from above. Like any loving father, God is pleased when His children act honorably. The 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” (Job 1:8; 2:3).

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The 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. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause” (Job 2:3).

Satan, the malicious accuser of the brethren (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; cf. Zech. 3:1-7), lurking in the shadows and roaming to and fro on the earth, constantly looks for opportunities to entice us into sin, and—through our failure—bring shame upon our heavenly Father.

Then Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing? “Have 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. “But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face” (Job 1:9-11).

Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. “However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face” (Job 2:4-5).

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.” Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by. And the angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here” (Zech. 3:1-7).

What He Did Right

Job was blameless and upright—one who feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:1). The same is expected of us (Eph. 1:4).

There 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 (Job 1:1).

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love (Eph. 1:4).

He was a real spiritual leader in his home, consecrating his children, and offering sacrifice on their behalf (Job 1:4-5). Similarly, we endeavor to raise our sons and daughters in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

His 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. When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said,

“Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually (Job 1:4-5).

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Despite his trials, Job did not (initially) sin or blame God, but manifested a spirit of acceptance (Job 1:22; 2:10). The NASB marginal note for "blame" in Job 1:22 is "literally, ascribe unseemliness to." While God tests us and allows us to be tempted (Ps. 11:4-5; Prov. 17:3; 2 Tim. 4:16-18), it is unseemly (and wrong) to ascribe unto Him the malicious motives of Satan (Luke 22:31-32; 1 Pet. 5:8).

Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God (Job 1:22).

But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2:10).

The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates (Ps. 11:4-5).

The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests hearts (Prov. 17:3).

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen (2 Tim. 4:16-18).

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).

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

What He Did Wrong

Job became too invested in defending himself. There is a place for offering a defense, but with balance and restraint (Prov. 25:27; 27:2; 2 Cor. 10:12, 18; 12:11, 19).

It is not good to eat much honey, Nor is it glory to search out one's own glory (Prov. 25:27).

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips (Prov. 27:2).

For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding (2 Cor. 10:12).

For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends (2 Cor. 10:18).

I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody (2 Cor. 12:11).

All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved (2 Cor. 12:19).

Job blamed God for things that were beyond his comprehension/understanding (Job 38:1-3; 40:6-9).

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, "Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge? "Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!" (Job 38:1-3).

Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm and said, "Now gird up your loins like a man; I will ask you, and you instruct Me. "Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified? "Or do you have an arm like God, And can you thunder with a voice like His?" (Job 40:6-9).

What He Lost

Job lost his wealth (Job 1:13-17).

Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." While 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." While 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” (Job 1:13-17).

Job lost his family (Job 1:18-19).

While 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, and 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” (Job 1:18-19).

Job lost his health (Job 2:1-8).

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” The 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. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.” Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. “However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.” So the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes (Job 2:1-8).

Job lost the support of his wife, who in a foolishly mocking tone said, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9-10).

Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!” But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2:9-10).

Although Job's friends were initially supportive, coming and sitting on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, because they saw that his pain was very great (Job 2:11-13), yet, their counsel was flawed (Job 4:1-11) and offered no benefit (Job 6:14-18).

Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw

dust over their heads toward the sky. Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great (Job 2:11-13).

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, "If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient? But who can refrain from speaking? "Behold you have admonished many, And you have strengthened weak hands. "Your words have helped the tottering to stand, And you have strengthened feeble knees. "But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; It touches you, and you are dismayed. "Is not your fear of God your confidence, And the integrity of your ways your hope? "Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed? "According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it. "By the breath of God they perish, And by the blast of His anger they come to an end. "The roaring of the lion and the voice of the fierce lion, And the teeth of the young lions are broken. "The lion perishes for lack of prey, And the whelps of the lioness are scattered (Job 4:1-11).

Job: For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; So that he does not forsake the fear of the Almighty. "My brothers have acted deceitfully like a wadi, Like the torrents of wadis which vanish, Which are turbid because of ice And into which the snow melts. "When they become waterless, they are silent, When it is hot, they vanish from their place. "The paths of their course wind along, They go up into nothing and perish (Job 6:14-18).

Initially, he faced these misfortunes with a spirit of acceptance (Job 1:20-22).

Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He 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." Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God (Job 1:20-22).

However, due to the prolonged nature of his trials, and the provocation of his friends, eventually, Job lost his patience, expressing unfettered frustration with both his earthly friends and his heavenly Father (Job 3ff).

Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. And Job said, "Let the day perish on which I was to be born, And the night which said, 'A boy is conceived.' "May that day be darkness; Let not God above care for it, Nor light shine on it. "Let darkness and black gloom claim it; Let a cloud settle on it; Let the blackness of the day terrify it. "As for that night, let darkness seize it; Let it not rejoice among the days of the year; Let it not come into the number of the months. "Behold, let that night be barren; Let no joyful shout enter it. "Let those curse it who curse the day, Who are prepared to rouse Leviathan. "Let the stars of its twilight be darkened; Let it wait for light but have none, And let it not see the breaking dawn; Because it did not shut the opening of my mother's womb, Or hide trouble from my eyes. "Why did I not die at birth, Come forth from the

womb and expire? “Why did the knees receive me, And why the breasts, that I should suck? “For now I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept then, I would have been at rest, With kings and with counselors of the earth, Who rebuilt ruins for themselves; Or with princes who had gold, Who were filling their houses with silver. “Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be, As infants that never saw light. “There the wicked cease from raging, And there the weary are at rest. “The prisoners are at ease together; They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster. “The small and the great are there, And the slave is free from his master. “Why is light given to him who suffers, And life to the bitter of soul, Who long for death, but there is none, And dig for it more than for hidden treasures, Who rejoice greatly, And exult when they find the grave? “Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, And whom God has hedged in? “For my groaning comes at the sight of my food, And my cries pour out like water. “For what I fear comes upon me, And what I dread befalls me. “I am not at ease, nor am I quiet, And I am not at rest, but turmoil comes” (Job 3).

What He Gained

Job learned the necessity of reverence (Job 38:1-11).

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, “Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge? “Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me! “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? “On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy? “Or who enclosed the sea with doors When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; When I made a cloud its garment And thick darkness its swaddling band, And I placed boundaries on it And set a bolt and doors, And I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop?’” (Job 38:1-11).

He rediscovered the importance of humility and repentance (Job 42:1-6).

Then Job answered the LORD and said, “I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ “Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” ‘Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’ “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.”” (Job 42:1-6).

Coming to appreciate the value of endurance, the patriarch gained a renewed appreciation for the compassionate and merciful outcome of the Lord’s dealings (Job 42:10-17; James 5:11).

The LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold. Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him. And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold. The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had 14,000 sheep and 6,000 camels and 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 female donkeys. He had seven sons and three daughters. He named the first Jemimah, and the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers. After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. And Job died, an old man and full of days (Job 42:10-17).

We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful (James 5:11).

Conclusion

In studying experiences of Job, we have briefly considered what he did right, what he did wrong, what he lost, what he gained?

In looking at your own life, what have you done that is right? What have you done that is wrong? What have you lost? What have you gained?

Do you need the blessing of forgiveness and the promise of divine fellowship? Obey the gospel while there is time and opportunity.