

JOB

(Iyov = "Hated" or "Persecuted One")

A Man from the East

JOB LIVED IN the land of Uz. It was a land in the East (1:2). Uz was probably the land of Edom, SE of the Dead Sea (Jer. 25:20-21). It is today the area of southwestern Jordan and southern Israel. Lamentations 4:21 reads: *"Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, you who dwell in the land of Uz."*

A Man of Remarkable Character

Twice we are told there *was none like him on the earth* (1:8, 2:3). Thrice we are told that *he was blameless and upright; a man who feared God and shunned evil* (1:1, 8; 2:3). He is described by God as a man of integrity (2:3), on whose lips there was found no accusation (1:22; 2:10).

A Man of Many Blessings

Job was a man with a family of seven sons and three daughters. He had some 7000 sheep, 3000 camel, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys and a large number of servants (1:2-3). He was the greatest man of all the people of the East.

A Man of Habitual Worship

In Chapter 1:5, we see how Job fearing that his children may have sinned in their hearts, sought to sanctify them and offer burnt sacrifices on their behalf. It is apparent that Job was a devout and humble worshipper, who blesses the name of the Lord at all times.

A Man of Severe Trials

One day Satan appears before God, and is asked by God, *"Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on earth. He is a blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil"* (1:8). *"Does Job fear God for nothing? Stop blessing Job, and he will curse you to your face"*, is Satan's reply (1:11).

Satan in his cynicism was saying that Job had selfish, ulterior motives for his worshipping and serving God. God is going to prove on the other hand, that Job loved Him not for what he received from His hand, but for Who He was— the Sovereign Lord.

God proceeds by removing the “thick protective hedge” around Job, allowing him to be severely tried by Satan. In his first series of misfortunes (1:13-22), Job losses in one single day: oxen, donkeys, and servants to Sabeen raiders; sheep and more servants to *“fire that fell from heaven”*; camels and more servants to Chaldean raiders; and his sons and daughters are killed in a tornado.

Job was brought to the dust. However, Job's reaction to these losses is incredible. He mourns, of course, rips his robe, shaves his head and falls to the ground in despair. But then, what do we see him doing? He worships! He worships!

In his grief and misery, he still praises God. Even though he considers God as the One who is responsible for all these calamities. Job has no idea whatsoever that Satan is the direct cause of his pain. On his knees, from the depths of a broken heart, he blesses the name of the Lord and accepts His sovereign will. And he is found saying:

*“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
And naked shall I return there.
The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the LORD” (1v21).*

He does not charge God with wrong-doing (1:22).

A Man of Enormous Patience

During his second series of misfortunes (2:7-10), Satan is permitted to afflict Job with a terrible disease, without any chance that he can take his life.

Job’s illness is characterized by boils (2:7), severe itching (2:8), drastic change of appearance (2:12), insomnia (7; 4), running sores and scabs (7:5), bad breath (19:17), corroding bones and gnawing pain (30:17), blackened skin and fever (30:30), diarrhea (30; 27) and he had become only skin and bones (19; 20).

Despite being stripped of everything and being punished without a cause, *“He still holds fast to his integrity”* (2:3). He does not curse God, as Satan imagined.

However, in his deep trouble and anguish, he lamented having been born. In his suffering and sorrow, he curses the day of his birth. He wants to die. He wrestles with God and he challenges God. He wants answers. What unnerved Job the most is not his losses or pain, but the fact that he can’t understand what God could possibly intend by permitting him to endure such pain.

A Man with Critical Friends

Job's friends wanted to analyze the suffering and look for causes and solutions. Using all their theology and insight into the situation, they searched hard for answers, but only came up with useless and wrong ideas, and mounting accusations, for which God rebuked them in the end.

A Man of Unwavering Faith

Job's wife lost what faith she might have had, and told him to curse God and die. He said unto her, *"You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?"*

Job refuses to sin with his lip (2: 9-10). Job would instead confess, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him"* (Job 13:15).

Job never got an answer from God as to why he was allowed to greatly suffer. When there are no rational or even theological explanations for disaster and pain, the message is: Trust in God. This is the real answer to suffering.

When God is done with all the actors in the drama, we see Job wasn't blamed. Out of the suffering Job got to know God better, and he himself was made better. He was graciously refined. This is one of the underlying purposes for affliction in our lives.

We see Job's friends, put in their place by God for wrongly representing Him and falsely accusing Job. It was Job's intercession that averted judgment from falling on them.

Finally, we see that wicked accuser, Satan, as a humiliated instrument, and the fool he really is in trying to barter with God.

God vindicated Job's faith. In the latter part of his life, God flooded Job with more blessings than he had ever known. Restoring his fortunes and giving him twice as much as he had before (42:10).

Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity and merciful (James 5:11).

Deo Soli Gloria