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A Biographical Study of Job

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Job

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. His terrible trials
 - A. The nature of these trials
 1. First trial—His oxen and donkeys were stolen and his farm hands were killed by a Sabean raid (1:14-15).
 2. Second trial—His sheep and herdsmen were burned up by fire (1:16).
 3. Third trial—His camels were stolen and his servants killed by a Chaldean raid (1:17).
 4. Fourth trial—Job himself was stuck with a terrible case of boils (1:18).
 5. Fifth trial—Job himself was struck with a terrible case of boils (2:7).
 - B. The reason for these trials—A conversation took place in the heavenlies between God and Satan concerning Job. The devil sneeringly charged that Job only worshiped God because of two selfish benefits.
 1. Because God had given his servant much wealth—“Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land?” (1:10).
 2. Because God had given his servant good health—Satan argued that if he could but remove two elements, Job would curse God to his face. Thus, to shut the devil’s mouth, God gave him permission to remove both Job’s wealth and health. Notice that Satan cannot tempt a believer apart from God’s specific permission.
 - C. The faith shown through these trials—“Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly” (1:20-22).
- II. His whimpering wife—“Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips” (2:9-10).
- III. His fickle friends
 - A. Four friends (including Elihu mentioned later) of Job came to comfort Job when they heard of the calamity that had befallen him. Their initial reaction was one of sympathy (2:11-13).
 - B. Their true feelings, however, emerged in a series of speeches (Job 3—37).
 1. The speeches of Eliphaz (chapters 4-5, 15, 22; see Gen. 36:10).
 - a. He claimed Job was suffering for his sins (4:7-8).
 - b. He based his conclusions on personal experience (4:8, 12-16).
 - c. He urged Job to repent and turn back to God (22:23).
 2. The speeches of Bildad (chapters 8, 18, 25)

- a. He claimed Job was suffering for his sins (8:20).
 - b. He based his conclusions on tradition (8:8).
 - c. He urged Job to repent and turn back to God (8:5-6).
 - 3. The speeches of Zophar (chapters 11, 20)
 - a. He claimed Job was suffering for his sins (20:4-5).
 - b. He based his conclusions on sheer dogmatism (11:6; 20:4).
 - c. He urged Job to repent and turn back to God (11:13-15).
 - 4. The speeches of Elihu (chapters 32–37)
- IV. His defenses and dialogues
 - A. The suffering patriarch responded to his accusers in nine separate speeches:
 - 1. Job 3
 - 2. Job 6-7
 - 3. Job 9-10
 - 4. Job 12-14
 - 5. Job 16-17
 - 6. Job 19
 - 7. Job 21
 - 8. Job 23-24
 - 9. Job 26-31
 - B. During these nine speeches, Job discussed 14 topics.
 - 1. I am righteous, and therefore not suffering for my sin (27:6; 31:1-40)—“My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live” (27:6).
 - 2. “In the past I have performed many good works” (29:12-17; 30:25).
 - a. He had helped the poor and fatherless (29:12).
 - b. He had aided the blind and lame (29:15).
 - c. He had wept with the sorrowing (30:25).
 - 3. “Oh, for those good old days when I enjoyed health, wealth, and respect” (29:1-11, 20-25).
 - 4. “But now I am being unfairly punished by God” (9:16-17, 30-33; 10:2, 7-8; 13:26-27; 19:6-11; 30:20-21).
 - 5. “My three so-called friends are miserable comforters” (12:2; 13:4; 16:2; 19:3).
 - 6. “If they were in my place, I would help them and not unjustly accuse them” (16:4-5).
 - 7. “Even my neighbors, associates, and servants have turned against me” (19:13-22; 30:1, 9-10).
 - 8. “I wish I could find the answers for all this” (28:12-28).
 - 9. “I wish I could find God” (23:8-9).
 - 10. “My flesh is clothed with worms” (7:5, 13-14; 30:17-18, 30).
 - 11. “I wish I had never been born” (3:3-11, 16; 10:18).
 - 12. “I wish I were dead” (6:8-9; 7:15-16).

13. "I have no hope" (10:20-22).
 14. "In spite of it all, I'll trust God" (13:15; 16:19; 23:10). "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him" (13:15). "My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high" (16:19). "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (23:10).
- V. His glorious God—"Suddenly out of a whirlwind came the mighty voice of God. The sullen Job was then subjected to a 60-question quiz (Job 38-41). Here are some of the questions:
- A. God's first series of questions (Job 38-39)
 1. Job 38:4: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding."
 2. Job 38:18—"Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Declare if thou knowest it all."
 3. Job 38:19—"Where is the way where light dwelleth? And as for darkness, where is the place thereof?"
 4. Job 38:24—"By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?"
 5. Job 38:28—Hath the rain a father? Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?"
 6. Job 40:2—"Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it."
 - B. Job's reply—"Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further" (40:4-5).
 - C. God's second series of questions (Job 40:6—41:33)
 1. Job 40:15: "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox."
 2. Job 41:1: "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? Or his tongue with a cord which thou letteth down?" Note: These two creatures may very well refer to a land dinosaur and a sea dinosaur.
 - D. Job's reply—"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have 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" (42:2-6).
- VI. His bountiful blessings—Job had been subjected to five fiery trials and had participated in five painful debates, but now he received at the hand of God a 10-fold blessing (Job 42:7-17).
- A. He was allowed to see the glory of God.
 - B. He saw himself as God saw him. (This is always a blessing.)
 - C. He was vindicated by God before the eyes of his three critical friends.

- D. He discovered the joy of praying for these three friends.
- E. His former health was fully restored.
- F. He was comforted by his brothers and sisters.
- G. He was given money, showered with gifts, and ended up with double his former wealth.
- H. He was given seven more sons and three more daughters.
- I. He lived to enjoy his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
- J. He was given an additional 140 years—twice the number normally accorded a man (see Psa. 90:10).

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. Job lived in the land of Uz (thought to be the land of Edom) in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or perhaps even before their time (1:1).
- II. We are told four facts about Job.
 - A. He was a godly man—He feared the Lord and avoided evil (Job 1:1).
 - B. He was a family man—Job had (at the beginning of the account) seven sons and three daughters (Job 1:2).
 - C. He was a wealthy man (Job 1:3).
 - (1) He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, and 500 female donkeys.
 - (2) He employed many servants.
 - D. He was (apparently) a healthy man.
- III. God allowed Satan to tempt Job in the following areas of his life:
 - A. His fortune (Job 1:14-17).
 - 1. His animals were stolen.
 - 2. His servants were slaughtered.
 - B. His family (Job 1:18-19; 2:9)
 - 1. The destruction of his children—In one day Satan killed all 10.
 - 2. The derision of his wife: “Then his wife said unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die” (Job 2:9).
 - C. His flesh—“So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown” (Job 2:7).
 - D. His friends (Job 2—37)
 - 1. Their assumptions were wrong—they assumed he was being divinely punished for some terrible secret sin.
 - 2. Their advice was wrong—They attempted to force him to confess for wrongdoings he had not done.
- IV. After Job had suffered, God blessed the four areas of his life that Satan had afflicted.
 - A. His fortune—The number of his herds previously owned was doubled (42:12).
 - B. His family—God gave him 10 additional children, seven sons and three daughters (42:13-15).

- C. His flesh—Job’s former health returned, allowing him to live an additional 140 years (Job 42:16).
 - D. His friends—They admitted the error of their ways and asked his forgiveness (Job 42:7-9).
- V. The book of Job may be the oldest in the Bible. This is indicated by the following:
- A. The many ancient historical allusions, such as the pyramids (3:14), the cities of the plains (15:28), and the great flood (22:16).
 - B. The omission of Israel’s history—There is no reference to the Law, the Exodus of Israel, the Red Sea crossing, or any of the kings of Israel.
 - C. The usage of the ancient patriarchal name for God, El Shaddai—It is used 31 times in Job (see 5:17; 6:4).
- VI. The theme of his book is not Job’s suffering (although this is certainly involved), but rather God’s sovereignty. This is one of the two Old Testament books giving a brief glimpse of the confrontation activities going on in heaven.
- A. Job 1-2
 - B. Zechariah 3
- VII. The book deals with a great misconception, namely, that suffering is always caused by personal sin.
- VIII. Actually, Job was allowed to suffer to accomplish several things:
- A. That Satan might be silenced (1:9-11; 2:4-5)
 - B. That Job might see God (42:5)
 - C. That Job might see himself (40:4; 42:6)
 - D. That Job might learn to pray for, rather than to lash out against, his critics (42:10).
 - E. To show that God remains in full control at all times (38:4)
- IX. Job was later mentioned by both Ezekiel and James.
- A. Ezekiel referred to his righteousness (Ezek. 14:14, 20).
 - B. James referred to his patience (James 5:11).
- X. His disease may have been leprosy complicated by elephantiasis, one of the most loathsome and painful diseases known in the world of his time.
- XI. In the midst of terrible suffering, Job uttered one of the truly great testimonies found in the entire Old Testament: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25-26).
- XII. Job revealed a very precious truth, namely, that Satan cannot tempt or afflict a believer without the express permission of God himself (Job 1:12; 2:6). Furthermore, in the New Testament we are told God knows just how much we can bear, and will not let Satan go beyond that point (1 Cor. 10:13).
- XIII. Finally, Job may be considered as a commentary on Jesus’ words in Luke 22:31-32: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31-32).

STATISTICS

Spouse: Unnamed and unhelpful wife (Job 2:9)

Sons: 14 sons (Job 1:2; 42:13)

Daughters: Six daughters, three are named: Jemima, Kezia, and Kerenhappuch (Job 1:2; 42:13-14)

First mention: Job 1:1

Final mention: James 5:11

Meaning of his name: "Where is the Father?"

Frequency of his name: Referred to 56 times

Biblical books mentioning him: Three books (Job, Ezekiel, James)

Occupation: Wealthy rancher (Job 1:3)

Place of birth: Land of Uz (probably Edom) (Job 1:1)

Important fact about his life: He was accused by Satan before God and allowed to suffer, but was eventually totally restored (Job 1:9-12; 2:2-6; 42:10)