

Survey of the Bible part 78 **Job 1:8 – 2:13**

The last time we were together we saw how satan approached God as the sons of God, the covenant community of believers on earth, presented themselves before the Lord as they sought to worship and honor God.

Obviously satan would not have been approaching God with the same agenda.

From verses 12 through 19 satan is allowed to test Job at the bidding of God Himself so as to prove the righteousness of His servant Job.

Job 1:8 ⁸ 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."

As we saw last time, the blamelessness and uprightness of Job had nothing to do with Job's inherent righteousness, but the righteousness put to his account because of Job's faith in the promises of God regarding the Messiah promised to Adam and Eve after their rebellion.

Satan's response is one of disdain.

Job 1:9-11 ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰ "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. ¹¹ "But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."

Essentially satan curses Job and the God of Job as satan accuses God of acting with favoritism toward the man of God and therefore Job only follows God because of the blessings.

God then responds to satan in this way.

Job 1:12 ¹² Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

What follows in the rest of chapter one sets the stage for everything that follows in the book of Job.

Job 1:13-19 ¹³ Now on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ 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." ¹⁷ 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." ¹⁸ 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, ¹⁹ 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."

What or whom seems to be conspicuously missing in all of this destruction?

Satan. And yet we know that none of this would have happened were it not for God allowing Satan to test Job. Satan can do nothing without permission from his Creator. And our Creator God does nothing without a purpose.

Romans 8:28-32 ²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Notice in the context of this passage that Paul demonstrates that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. But notice too that that good included not sparing His own Son in verse 32.

If God's good included crushing His own Son then none of us are exempt from God using whatever means for our good to conform us into the image of His Son, and that includes how God would work in Job's life whom the Lord loved.

It's how we respond to the trials of life that enable us to glorify our Lord and Savior, knowing that He is in the middle of our situation and will never leave us or forsake us.

Notice Job's response after hearing of all the disasters that befell him.

Job 1:20-22 ²⁰ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹ 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." ²² Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

How is this possible? How is it possible that Job could have an attitude of worship in the midst of calamity?

By the way, Job knows where this calamity came from. Somebody read verse 21.

Job 1:21 ²¹ 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."

So, if you know that God has blessed you in the past and you know that God has just taken all those blessings away in a one day, how can you not blame God?

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

Because he knows that God is sovereign and has the discretion to accomplish His will in the way that He sees fit and if that includes removing the blessing in such a dramatic way then we must still bow the knee to the One who knows best and who is working all things out for our good and His glory.

Does this mean that we simply ignore the pain and hardship and gladly accept it without also acknowledging the pain?

Ecclesiastes 3:4 ⁴ A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance.

And even in our text what do we see happening with Job in the midst of him worshipping God?

Job 1:20 ²⁰ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

Job has purposefully done two things in the midst of worshipping God. What are they according to verse 20?

He tore his robe and shaved his head.

The tearing of robes in the word of God is always in association with mourning, grieving or righteous indignation.

^{NAU} **Genesis 37:29** Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments.

^{NAU} **Genesis 37:34** So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

^{NAU} **Joshua 7:6** Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, *both* he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

The tearing of one's robes is an outward expression of what is happening to the heart of a person. The heart of the inner man is torn in two and rendered humbled.

In fact, God uses the same imagery when exhorting men to tear not just their robes but their hearts.

Joel 2:12-13 ¹² "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning; ¹³ And *rend your heart and not your garments.*" Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil.

Job reacted to the pain in the most normal way in his grief, but he demonstrates that the tearing of his robes and the shaving of his head was an act of humbling himself before the Lord in the midst of pain as he bowed and worshipped the Lord, and in this way he did not sin because he did not blame the Lord, but accepted what was given to him for his good.

There is a time to mourn and God expects us to do this, but in the midst of it all He does not want us to lose sight of the fact that He is there and is using all situations in our life to draw us closer to Himself.

And by the way, when it says that Job did not blame the Lord, it doesn't mean he didn't know where the testing came from, simply

that it was not meant as evil from the Lord, though satan would use it as evil.

As we come to the second chapter of Job we are going to see how God, to borrow a line from Emeril Lagasse, is going to kick it up a notch.

In the taking of his property and family Job did not sin but worshipped the Lord acknowledging that God can give and God can take away. It's one thing to have stuff happen around you, but when it happens to you personally things can change quickly and satan knows this.

Again, satan reports to God on a particular day and once again God charges satan with what his activities on the earth.

Job 2:1-7 ^{NAU} 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. ² 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." ³ 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." ⁴ Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. ⁵ "However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." ⁶ So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." ⁷ 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.

Now this testing is interesting in that it is somewhat different from the first testing. The first testing you'll remember used other people and nature to test Job to where satan seemed to be indirectly involved.

But what seems to be different about this testing as to who is directly involved?

One of the things that we see in this instance is that it appears that satan has been given a certain amount of authority and power to accomplish a particular task. Now, we know that all authority and

power comes from God but He has and does give certain abilities and powers to His creatures to be used by them.

It would seem in this case that satan has been given power to cause physical harm inside the body of Job. In other words, God has allowed satan to apparently work at a cellular level inside the body of Job to cause boils to erupt on the surface of his body.

Now again, what is this test from God designed to do in the life of Job?

It's designed to acknowledge that God is Job's all in all. It is not meant to destroy Job it is meant to show satan that God still has Job in the palm of His hand. Always keep in mind that this is not ultimately about Job or satan or Job's friends and family, it is about God's faithfulness and worthiness to be worshipped by all creation.

And again, how does Job react?

Job 2:8 ⁸ And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.

What is a potsherd?

It's a broken piece of pottery that is usually very sharp.

Job is still worshipping God, but it is still in the context of mourning. That is what the reference to ashes is all about. We see this all throughout scripture as well.

^{NAU} **Jeremiah 6:26** O daughter of my people, put on sackcloth
And roll in ashes; Mourn as for an only son, A lamentation most
bitter. For suddenly the destroyer Will come upon us.

And so, Job is still acknowledging that God is sovereign, but does so in the context of being humbled. But now a new wrinkle has been added to further confront Job.

Job 2:9 ⁹ Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"

Is his wife being cruel and insensitive here?

Not at all. In fact, she is probably trying to be supportive on a purely human emotional level as she can't stand seeing her

husband in such pain and agony. She, along with her husband knows where this testing is coming from. And she knows that as long as he stays faithful to worship God in the midst of this test that there will be another test that will probably be worse the next time.

Curse God and die is another way of saying, “uncle.” “ I’ve had enough you win God if you’re trying to destroy me.”

But Job knows, at least at this point, that God is not trying to destroy him.

The other thing to consider here is that up to this point Job is not the only one being tested.

Who is the other person being tested?

Job’s wife. Keep in mind that all of the possessions of Job and all of the children who belong to Job also belong to his wife. She has suffered in all of this just as Job has, and there is no indication that she has folded. But when she sees her husband being personally affected with boils she desires a merciful end to the test. Curse God and die.

And again, it’s not as though she has any desire to defame God or His character but she knows the outcome of dishonoring God and it is death.

She knows the wages of sin is death and she acknowledges this by suggesting that God will not overlook Job’s lack of integrity, but will punish it with a swift death. That’s her mindset.

And though she is suggesting this, with Job’s best interest in mind, Job knows that this is not the answer.

Job 2:10 ¹⁰ 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.

By the way, in that last line, “in all this Job did not sin with his lips”, does this suggest that he may have sinned with his heart?

I don’t think so. I think just the opposite. I don’t think Job’s life was one of just being stoic in the face of adversity to where he is just putting up a strong front, but deep down he wants to curse God.

I think that when it says that he did not sin with his lips suggests that he did not sin with his heart which naturally is demonstrated with his lips.

When describing the ceremonial law of washing hands before eating Jesus makes an interesting comment about the nature of a man.

Matthew 15:17-20 ¹⁷ "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? ¹⁸ *"But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart,* and those defile the man. ¹⁹ " For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, ¹fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. ²⁰ "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

In other words, the heart of a man is the seat from which actions arise. In the case of Job, his action was to continue to worship God with his lips in the midst of adversity.

Does this mean that we can't find ourselves going through the motions of honoring God and yet in our hearts not trusting that God knows what He's doing? Not at all. But even when we are faithless at times He remains faithful.

But I think the point that the Holy Spirit is making here in our text is that there is a man of God who is faithful and even when he is tempted to curse God and die he knows that it is God who gives and takes away and he is willing, at least at this point, to acknowledge this and remain faithful to the Lord, because it is the Lord who is upholding him with His grace in the midst of the trial.

Those who are often closest to you can desire your best and yet sometimes their own love for you can cloud the issue because of feelings and emotions rather than thinking God's thoughts after Him.

And yet those who are closest to you still desire to be part of your life in the midst of the trial precisely because of their love for you and that in and of itself is a good thing and can be an encouragement.

Job 2:11-13 ¹¹ Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ 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.

By the way, these three friends, and Job himself, were all of families that were not part of the covenant from God. They were all Edomites.

Eliphaz was of the family of Esau. In fact, the name Eliphaz was a family name passed on from the original Eliphaz who was born to Esau.

Genesis 36:9-11 ⁹ These then are *the records of* the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir. ¹⁰ These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Esau's wife Adah, Reuel the son of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹¹ The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho and Gatam and Kenaz.

One of the sons of Eliphaz was Teman, whose name was passed on, from which the Eliphaz in our text got his name, being a Temanite.

Bildad was a Shuhite from the family of Shuah. Shuah was a son of Abraham through one of his concubines by the name of Keturah.

Genesis 25:1-2 ^{NAU} Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. ² She bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah.

The family of Keturah, and for that matter all of the sons and daughters of all of Abraham's concubines were ultimately sent to the land of the east.

Genesis 25:5-6 ⁵ Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac; ⁶ but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.

The land of the east would include the lands east of Canaan which would include Edom which was in the land of Uz where Job lived.

^{NAU} **Lamentations 4:21** Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, Who dwells in the land of Uz; *But* the cup will come around to you as well, You will become drunk and make yourself naked.

The third friend was named Zophar the Naamathite. And no, this is not a relative of Joe Namath. But with this friend there is no man whose name is associated with the name Naamah which is where Zophar would derive the association of a Naamathite.

We have women associated with this name.

Genesis 4:22 ²² As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

1 Kings 14:21 ²¹ Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. And his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess.

But we do have a clue that Zophar was associated with being an Edomite, that is of the land of Edom, which would have been located in Uz, from a passage in Joshua.

Joshua 15:20-21 ²⁰ This is the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Judah according to their families. ²¹ Now the cities at the extremity of the tribe of the sons of Judah toward the border of Edom in the south were Kabzeel and Eder and Jagur,

And then after a lengthy list of other cities that border Edom in the south we have this passage.

Joshua 15:41 ⁴¹ and Gederoth, Beth-dagon and *Naamah* and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages.

And so, there was a city by the name of Naamah near the land of Edom. And so, Zophar was in all likelihood associated with someone, either a strong woman by the name of Naamah, who had a city named after her, or some unknown man by the name of Naamah.

Either way, Zophar was a Naamathite in the land of Edom, again, all three being associated with families who were not part of the covenant of God at that time.

Now, Job's three friends have gotten a lot of negative press over the years, but Job's three friends didn't come to Job because they were looking for some attention or to lecture Job. They loved their friend and heard of his calamity and simply wanted to be there for support.

In fact, look at all the counsel they give him when they arrive.

Job 2:13 ¹³ 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.

What do you say to someone who experiences, for all intents and purposes, the end of the world for them? How do you comfort someone like that? Sometimes it's enough to simply be with them and love on them.

And that's what these guys were doing. If they were there simply to tell Job to quit whining, pull yourself up by your bootstraps and get back to living they would have done that in the first seven minutes, not wait for seven days.

We're not told what they did in those seven days, only that they sat with him on the ground for seven days. I'm sure they tried to comfort him as best they could. They probably cried with him and groaned with him and prayed with him. But they didn't speak a word to him is what we're told in the text.

The word speak in the Hebrew can also mean counsel. And it may be that they did not speak a word of counsel to Job, but may certainly have communicated with him in prayer and words that demonstrated their love for him.

Imagine sitting on the ground for seven days and looking at your friend, a man of wealth and stature, as one who stood out among all men of that region, and seeing this shell of a man, not just in physical pain but a pain of having lost everything and everyone dear to him.

There really aren't sufficient words to express what was going on in their hearts and minds.

But Job still has his wife and he still has his friends and this will set the stage for what is to come.

Because as we'll see next time it will not be Job's friends who begin the conversation of dealing with the pain and reality of what it is to be a man of God under the thumb of God for a testing of his faith. And as we'll see, at the end of the seven days, the talking begins and goes on and on and on until God gets the last word.