

Job 1:1-3 ^{NAU} 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. ² Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. ³ 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.

As we touched on last time Job was likely an Edomite of the line of Esau, the man who rejected the covenant blessing in favor of feeding his stomach with a bowl of soup as he sold it to his brother Jacob.

And so, we know that Job had to be born a couple of generations later than Esau for him to be identified with Esau or Edom. And it is certain that he lived before Moses since he was playing the role of priest in his family by sacrificing animals unto the Lord on behalf of his family.

Job may very well have lived during the time in which Israel dwelled in Egypt for some 400 plus years. But as we also saw last time Job was a man of God who was blameless, fearing God, and turning away from evil as we see in verse 1.

This is all the more amazing since Job lived in Uz which contained the land of Edom.

Why is this significant in light of the fact that Job was not living with the Jews, under Joseph and his family, as God had blessed them in Egypt for many years?

Because despite the covenant blessing bring with Jacob, whose name is now Israel, Job was still a man who could love and serve God.

How is that possible?

Because God is no respecter of persons and He will call His people out from any and all nations as that promise was given to Abraham.

^{NAU} **Genesis 17:5** "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For *I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.*

Was the nation of Edom part of the multitude of nations that God could have included?

But again we need to keep in focus that when God gave the promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations was God speaking only of physical nations?

No. He was talking about the people of God out of every nation that would be of the faith of Abraham. This is precisely what Paul was teaching the Romans.

Romans 4:13-18 ¹³ For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; ¹⁵ for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. ¹⁶ For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ¹⁸ In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

And we see the ultimate fulfillment of this when the New Jerusalem is being described in the book of Revelation where the light of Christ will illumine that city.

Revelation 21:24-27 ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; ²⁶ and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; ²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

When it says there in verse 28 that they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it, what nations are inferred here?

Peoples from every tribe, tongue and nation.

Revelation 5:9-10 ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for *You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.* ¹⁰ "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

And yet, there is really only one nation under God, it just happens to be made up of all of God's chosen people from all parts of the world. And this is why the one nation of Israel in the O.T. best depicts the true people of God upon whom God places His mercy and grace.

This is why it is sometimes hard for people to differentiate between promises to the nation of Israel and promises to the people of God who have the faith of Abraham, who are also described as Israel. Again we see a classic example of this in the book of Hosea.

Hosea 1:6-11 ⁶ Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I would ever forgive them. ⁷ "But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the LORD their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses or horsemen." ⁸ When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to a son. ⁹ And the LORD said, "*Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God.*" ¹⁰ *Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God."* ¹¹ And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, And they will appoint for themselves one leader, And they will go up from the land, For great will be the day of Jezreel.

How can God, on the one hand, say that Israel is not My people and I am not your God, and yet in the very next verse He can say, It will be said to them, You are the sons of the living God?

Because the Israel that God spoke of and the Israel depicted in the physical nation are not one and the same. And so, when God makes a promise to Israel it is not necessarily to the physical nation, but rather to the people of God from all nations. We can see this in the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 36:22-23 ²² "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, 'It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. ²³ 'I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,' declares the Lord GOD, 'when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

What group of people is God speaking to here?

To the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, now known as the nation of Israel; the same nation that collectively profaned the name of God and who suffered His judgment.

But as we continue in Ezekiel, out of this same group of people is another people established by God.

Ezekiel 36:24-27 ²⁴ "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Who is Ezekiel still speaking to here?

Israel. But it is not the Israel who has profaned the name of the Lord who live in the middle east as a physical nation, but the Israel of God whose hearts are changed by God to a people whose dead hearts are brought to life by God Himself as only He can give them new hearts.

They are still called Israel, but just like God speaking to Hosea and his illegitimate offspring through Gomer the harlot, there are two Israel's in mind. One, as God says in Hosea 1:9, You are not My people, and the other Israel whose hearts are changed by God in Hosea 1:10.

Hosea 1:10 ¹⁰ Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "*You are* the sons of the living God."

Again, notice what it says in verse 10 when it uses the phrase the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea.

This is covenant language and where do we see this language and to whom is it addressed originally?

To Abraham.

^{NAU} **Genesis 22:17** indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Again, notice who are called the sons of Israel in Hosea 1:10. It is those who are of the faith of Abraham who are now identified with the promise that numbers greater than the number of the sands of the sea.

But also notice that the larger group called Israel in verse 9 of Hosea are also identified with Israel and yet God says, I am not Your God and you are not My people.

God is not confused with who is whom. There is ultimately only one Israel and it is the Israel whose roots go back to the faith of Abraham who are called out from every nation as Abraham is the father of many nations and yet only one seed.

Galatians 3:16 ¹⁶ Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

So, was God only restricted in choosing a people for Himself out of the physical nation of Israel?

No, and so Job would have been one of those chosen who was a son of Abraham in one sense as a physical descendant, but the real connection is not to being of the physical seed of Abraham, but to the faith of Abraham, which identified him as a true son of God, thus making him a spiritual Israelite.

And this is the man that God will use throughout the book of Job to bring honor and glory to the God who chose him out of the land of Uz.

To set the stage for us God makes it clear that Job was blessed materially in a very substantial way.

Job 1:2-3 ² Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. ³ 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.

In verse 2 we are told that Job had 10 children. Later in this chapter we see that all 10 of them were probably grown to some extent as we'll see they are all eating and drinking at a party and some of them are identified as young people. And so they probably ranged from their late teens into their late 20's, 30's. More on them later.

But we're also told that Job had a lot of livestock. ³ His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys.

For anyone who grew up on a farm or a ranch they would have an idea as to how much land is needed to accommodate all of these animals, keeping in mind that they were probably pastured separate from the other animals that were not of like kind.

I went to a website that had a number of different formulas for pasturing different kinds of animals, depending on what type of grass, amount of water available, the type of cattle and a number of other factors, but they had a general rule of thumb and went like this for cows.

You may have heard a rule-of-thumb is that it takes 1.5 to 2 acres to feed a cow/calf pair for 12 months.

Let's be conservative. So, let's say for each acre of land we have two cows that can be sustained on that land for one year. Agriculture has certainly made great strides in the modern world, but for those who raised animals thousands of years ago, they would have learned many of the same principles just through experience.

So, let's say that Job was not only blessed with all of these animals but also blessed with the knowledge as to how to raise them effectively to arrive at such a large number of animals. But since we're not told that Job had cows, but instead oxen, let's substitute the one for the other and work with the same general numbers.

With 500 yoke of oxen, assuming they have similar eating habits as that of cows, how many acres would Job need to graze 500 of them if 2 oxen can graze for a year on 1 acre? We divide 2 oxen into the 500 and discover that we would need approximately 250 acres for just the oxen.

Sheep it turns out don't need quite as much land. According to another website Sheep don't require as much space as some larger livestock, like cows. A half-dozen sheep can happily live on just one acre of land, and a flock of more than 100 could be kept on 30 acres.

So, 100 sheep could be kept on 30 acres. But Job doesn't have 100 sheep he has 7,000 sheep. Using the numbers we have before us we would take the number 7,000 and divide it by 100 giving us 70 sets of 100 sheep each needing 30 acres which would amount to 2,100 acres to accommodate 7,000 sheep.

So, at this point Job needs approximately 2,600 acres of land. Now when it comes to camels I found one website where a Palestinian family near the Gaza strip pointed out "You need large areas of arable land that are filled with various grass types.

So, let's assign the same number of camels to an acre as we did with cattle, about 2 per acre. We've got 3,000 of Jobs camels, 2 per acre and so we'd need about 1,500 acres for the camels. Now we're up to about 4,100 acres.

But we're not done. Job has 500 female donkeys. It turns out that donkeys, not unlike horses, need about 2 acres to pasture just one. If this is the case and Job has 500 donkeys, he's going to need about 1,000 acres for his donkeys. And so, he's now up to about 5,100 acres of land.

By the way, there are about 8 square miles of land to 5,100 acres.

You can see that the blessings of Job were plentiful and the 8 square miles of land only accommodated the livestock. That doesn't even take into account the land needed by each family member who were probably all involved with the huge ranch as they likely grew crops as well. So you would need separate spaces for farming.

But we're still not done with the blessings that Job enjoys. We are told that he has very many servants.

Now, why would he need very many servants?

Animals are a lot of work. They have babies that need to be attended to. They need to be protected from wild animals. They need to be cared for when they get sick. They need to be moved to other pastures which by the way we didn't work into our equations, which means the original 5,100 acres probably needed to be rested every other year, meaning we need an additional 5,100 acres just to rotate the livestock periodically. Now we're up to about 16 square miles of acreage just for the livestock.

I think we can begin to get the picture that Job was a land barren with blessings in that day few would have enjoyed. This is why we read... **Job 1:3** and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

This is the setting that God paints for us as we are about to take an adventure with Job as God Himself orchestrates this adventure that neither Job or his family or his friends anticipated. It would be an adventure that was in part designed by God to showcase one of His people for the purpose of showing the accuser, Satan, that when God begins a work in a person He brings it to fulfillment no matter what happens to that person or the people around him.

Philippians 2:13 ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

And the following verses, though they are for us today, could have been written to Job many years prior to this.

Philippians 2:14-16 ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵ so that you will ¹prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

This is what Job will learn and as we go on this adventure with him, as God leads Him on this journey, may we all learn what it is that God desires for us to know about Himself so that we will not run in vain and appear as lights in the world holding fast the word of life.