

The last time we were with Job and his friends we left them engaged in a debate over why Job was experiencing his troubles. His friends are convinced that he has sinned against the Lord in some particular way as to deserve his plight, while Job is secure in the fact that he has not.

And, as in most cases, when neither side is willing to listen to each other the discussion has a tendency to break down to simply making accusations against each other and one of Job's friends sums that up in the beginning of chapter 18.

Job 18:1-3 ^{NAU} Then Bildad the Shuhite responded, ² "How long will you hunt for words? Show understanding and then we can talk. ³ "Why are we regarded as beasts, As stupid in your eyes?"

And then in chapter 19 we get Job's perspective one more time.

Job 19:1-3 ^{NAU} Then Job responded, ² "How long will you torment ¹me And crush me with words? ³ "These ten times you have insulted me; You are not ashamed to wrong me.

Does this sound like any productive conversation will follow at this point?

Apparently not.

And for the next 20 or so chapters this back and forth will continue until Job finally makes his final defense in chapters 29-31 where he essentially says, though I have not done anything overtly that deserves what I have received I am willing to concede that I am still a sinner who does not hide that fact, but who is confused over the matter.

Job 31:33-40 ³³ "Have I covered my transgressions like Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom, ³⁴ Because I feared the great multitude, And the contempt of families terrified me, And kept silent and did not go out of doors? ³⁵ "Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, ³⁶ Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. ³⁷ "I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him. ³⁸ "If my land cries out against me, And its furrows weep together; ³⁹ If I have eaten its fruit without money, Or have caused its owners to lose their lives, ⁴⁰ Let briars

grow instead of wheat, And stinkweed instead of barley." The words of Job are ended.

And so, Job rests his case. And it finally seems to dawn on his 3 friends that there is no sense in continuing the discussion since both sides will not budge from their positions.

Job 32:1 ^{NAU} Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

But again, the question needs to be asked, was Job really righteous in his own eyes?

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."

Job was not righteous in his own eyes. He was righteous because God made him righteous as Job trusted in the promised redeemer who was promised to Adam and Eve way back in the garden after they sinned.

And this does raise another question. Where would Job have learned about Adam and his story of sinning against a holy God as he tried to hide his sin from God?

Job 31:33 ³³ "Have I covered my transgressions like Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom,

Remember, Job is not part of God's covenant community; that is Israel, who had the law and the prophets. He is an Edomite in the land of Uz, not the land of Israel. And it is very likely that the nation of Israel does not even exist at this point in history.

Many historians place Job as living during the time of Abraham. Abraham was living from around the mid 1900's BC to around the late 1700's BC. Moses doesn't come on to the scene until around the early 1500's BC. And Israel doesn't enter into the Promised Land until around 1410 BC. So, it is certainly conceivable that Job lived some 400 to 500 years before Moses and the nation of Israel existed.

So, where would Job have gotten his information about Adam?

It certainly would have been passed down verbally and quite possibly in some written form through toledoths that marked the genealogies of families that came from Adam. And that being the

case, every corner of the world would have likely known of this most important part of human history relating to Adam.

Let's think about this for a moment. Most biblical timelines will put Adam as being created around 3900 BC, about 2,000 years separated from Abraham. If we do the math that puts the age of the earth around 6,000 years old, though some have calculated that out to around 10,000 years old. Still a very young earth compared to secular teachings on the age of the earth.

In 2,000 years the story of anything or anyone can certainly change from the original story. And yet, if we presume that Job is living some 2,000 years after the time of Adam we see that his understanding of Adam is still quite accurate, despite the fact that his information about Adam was not obtained from the Torah, which in all likelihood will not be penned by Moses for another 400 plus years.

But why would it be essential in Job's theology that he have a proper understanding about Adam and his sin?

Because only as he understood the importance of sin against a holy and righteous God would his understanding of salvation have any significance.

When you understand the implications of sinning against a holy and just God, then and only then will you understand and appreciate God's punishment for that sin. And so, Job understood that Adam sinned against his creator, God, and according to Job 31:33 Adam tried to hide that sin from God.

Let's stop there for a second and take a look into Job's understanding of all of this.

What must be assumed that Job knows about this encounter between Adam and God, and Adam hiding his sin? In other words, where did this encounter take place?

In the Garden of Eden.

So, what must be assumed that Job understood about the garden before and after sin?

He must have known that the garden was where God placed Adam and Eve as being a perfect environment where no sin existed at one time. But now Job acknowledges that Adam is hiding his sin from God.

What encounter was that?

Genesis 3:6-8 ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. ⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

What must Job have understood about the ramifications of Adam sinning and then hiding his sin from God?

He had to know that the wages of sin is death. In other words, he had to know that God had spoken to Adam prior to his sin and gave these words.

Genesis 2:16-17 ¹⁶ The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

So, what does Job apparently know about Adam? He knows that Adam had to be created by God since he is accountable to a holy God. He knows that Adam was at one time without sin, that is perfect in his original state. He knows that God had to instruct Adam regarding the violation of a specific command and the result of that violation.

He knows that Adam did in fact violate that command and then hid himself from the only One who could and would judge him for that action.

But if Job understood all of this regarding the sin of Adam he would also have understood the implications of Adam's sin on the rest of humanity and the universe as well.

Let's start with Job's understanding of Adam hiding himself from God.

Again, where did that encounter take place?

In the garden. Well, Job certainly knows about that encounter.

But what took place right after that confrontation of Adam's sin in the garden?

The gospel.

Genesis 3:8-15 ⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." ¹¹ And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Do you think Job would not have understood the implications of this encounter and the promise of the seed of the woman to redeem mankind?

And so, Job would certainly have understood that Adam and Eve had to believe God at His word that He would send a seed from humanity that would reverse what Adam had done. When Adam and Eve believed God it was reckoned to them as righteousness.

Through their faith in God and His promise they were assured that they would one day be restored to paradise. They also would have known that for this to be accomplished the curse had to be reversed from every corner of the universe.

In other words, the cursing of the physical ground that was promised to Adam had to be reversed for paradise to be restored to Adam and Eve.

Job would have understood this. In fact, it was the father of Noah, Lamech, who also understood this and certainly passed this information along to his descendants.

Genesis 5:28-32 ²⁸ Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. ²⁹ Now he called his name Noah, saying, "***This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed.***" ³⁰ Then Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had *other* sons and daughters. ³¹ So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died. ³² Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

When Lamech named his son Noah he was naming him with a specific purpose in mind. It is certainly likely that the Holy Spirit was prompting Lamech to name his son so as to be a sign post for the world that someone will be coming to give rest from the curse.

Now, Job would certainly be a lot closer to the flood than he was to Adam, so if he had a thorough knowledge of Adam's history he certainly would have had a knowledge of Noah and his role in the redemptive history of mankind.

So, what was Lamech's hope in the seed of his son?

That the curse would be reversed.

Well what must happen to sin if the curse is to be reversed?

It must be dealt with legally and it must be eliminated.

Well, who must deal with it legally?

Only God can do this. And how was God going to do this according to what He told Adam and Eve in the garden?

Through the seed of the woman that God would bring into the world.

And so, what we see of Job's understanding of God's justice and mercy is all wrapped up in his understanding of the sin of Adam and the subsequent promise from God to Adam that the curse of sin would one day be reversed through the seed of the woman.

Well, what seed are we talking about?

Galatians 3:16-19 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. ¹⁷ What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance is

based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. ¹⁹ Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

According to Paul this promised seed was made to Abraham and this promised seed was in fact Christ.

Well, is this seed that was promised to Abraham different than the seed that was promised to Adam and Eve?

No, it's the same seed. Now, again keep in mind that Abraham was given this promise long before Moses recorded the words of Abraham and this promise. In like fashion God is dealing with Job long before Moses would record the written words of this promise.

And yet, Job has already heard and believed the promises of the coming Messiah. And in believing God and His promises it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

This brings up a whole other issue of how the word of God was disseminated in the old world before Moses and the prophets of Israel who were instructed to write these words down.

What this tells us is that God was still active in making sure that His truth of salvation would continue through families as they passed these truths down to the next generation at least verbally and likely in some written form so that people like Cain and Abel would hear and understand.

People like Seth and his line would all hear and understand. But the godly line of Seth would not be the only one's to hear. Remember, before the flood there was one language and people lived in closer proximity and therefore what was given as a promise to Adam and Eve would still be common knowledge and passed on to all peoples of the world prior to the flood.

And how many people came out of the flood?

Eight people.

How many of those eight people knew these same promises from God?

Despite how many generations came out of those eight people, the promises would still be passed along to all of those generations. And yes, the message would be twisted and misunderstood by the

unbelieving, but it did not mean that God didn't preserve the message of hope through all generations even before the written word given to us by Moses and the prophets.

And Job is a testament to that. But there's one more thing I want to point out about Job's understanding of God's message of hope to a dying world, and it's actually found in the hope that was given to Lamech, the father of Noah.

For Lamech to believe that the curse of the ground would be taken out of the way, what would that necessarily mean about the structure of the ground?

It had to be made new. It could not be the old ground that was cursed but a new ground that was refashioned by God. In other words, there had to be a new earth.

Well, if the curse had to be lifted from the ground and a new earth had to take its place, what does this tell us about the curse being taken from man to be able to live on this new earth?

He had to be given a new body without the curse to live in a new world without the curse.

And what does that presume?

Resurrection.

And guess what, Job also understood this aspect of his salvation.

Job 19:25-27 ²⁵ "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. ²⁶ "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; ²⁷ Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

As I've said before Job's theology about God's redemption is actually quite complex and these are truths that he would have shared with his family and friends just as someone in his family must have shared with him.

And these are truths and promises that we must share with our families and friends and anyone else who will listen.

But this is why Job is so insistent with his friends that he is guiltless before a holy God, not because he didn't know he was a sinner, but precisely because he knew he was a sinner. But he was

a sinner saved by grace through faith, who was delivered from the wrath of God.

Job's friends were presuming that God's wrath was being visited upon Job. But Job knew that God's wrath was delivered from him the day he believed in the promises of God and began to walk with God all his days.

I thought I was going to get to God answering Job and his friends this week but I guess not. Next week.