

“There Was a Man . . . Whose Name Was Job”

Job 1:1-5

The book of Job is probably the oldest book of the Bible (that is, the first one physically written). Some say it is the oldest book in the world, pre-dating anything that is known to exist. Although that detail isn't vitally important, what it does show us is how God dealt with man from the very start. As can be seen from this book, as well as comparing it with the rest of the Bible, we can see that God still deals the same today with His children as He did with Job some 6,000 ago.

What others have said about the book of Job:

Victor Hugo: "The book of Job is perhaps the greatest masterpiece of the human mind."

Thomas Carlyle: "Call this book... one of the grandest things ever written. There is nothing written, I think, of equal literary merit."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: "The greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature."

There are at least seven major puzzles for which Job sought a solution (from the book entitled "The Puzzles of Job" by Ord L. Morrow): Why do the righteous suffer (3:20-24; 7:3-5)? What is man (7:17; 15:14)? How shall a man be just with God (9:2)? If a man die, will he live again (14:14)? Why do the wicked prosper (21:7)? Where is wisdom to be found (28:12)? What shall I do when God rises up (31:14)?

However, before we address these topics in detail, we must look at the man Job, and see why the Devil wanted to destroy him, and why God let him go through what he did. Oddly enough, the name "Job" means hated, as in persecuted – aptly named, it would appear.

I. THE PERSON OF JOB – VS. 1

Speaks of his character

A. "Perfect"

1. An adjective meaning integrity (morally pious), completeness
2. This is a rare, almost exclusively poetic term often translated "perfect" but not carrying the sense of totally free from fault, for it was used of quite flawed people.
3. It describes the mild manner of Jacob in contrast to his brother Esau, who was characterized by shedding blood (Gen. 25:27; see also Pro. 29:10).

[Genesis 25:27](#)

²⁷ And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a **plain** man, dwelling in tents.

[Proverbs 29:10](#)

¹⁰ The bloodthirsty hate the **upright**: but the just seek his soul.

4. The term often carries a rather strong moral component in certain contexts (Job 1:1; Job 9:20-22; Psa. 37:37; Psa. 64:4 [5]).

Job 9:20–22

²⁰ If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

²¹ Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.

²² This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

Psalm 37:37

³⁷ Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

Psalm 64:4

⁴ That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

5. This word appears among a list of glowing terms describing the admirable qualities of the Shulamite lover (Song 5:2; Song 6:9) (from Zodhiates' Word Study)

Song of Solomon 5:2

² I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my **undefiled**: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

Song of Solomon 6:9

⁹ My dove, my **undefiled** is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

B. "Upright"

1. An adjective meaning straight, just, right

2. This word can refer to something physical, such as a path (Psa. 107:7; Is. 26:7), but it more often means right in an ethical or an emotional sense, as agreeable or pleasing.

Psalm 107:7

⁷ And he led them forth by the **right way**, that they might go to a city of habitation.

Isaiah 26:7

⁷ The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most **upright**, dost weigh the path of the just.

3. Examples of this include what is right in God's eyes (Ex. 15:26; 1 Kings 11:33, 38; 2 Kings 10:30); or in the eyes of people (Pro. 12:15; Jer. 40:5).

Exodus 15:26

²⁶ And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is **right** in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

4. It also means upright, such as God (Psa. 25:8); and His ways (Hosea 14:9 [10]).

Psalm 25:8

⁸ Good and **upright** is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

Hosea 14:9

⁹ Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are **right**, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors

shall fall therein.

5. Some people were considered upright, such as David (1 Sam. 29:6)

1 Samuel 29:6

⁶ Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been **upright**, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.

6. An ancient history book was called the book of Jashar or the book of the Upright (Joshua 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18)

Joshua 10:13

¹³ And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of **Jasher**? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

2 Samuel 1:18

¹⁸ (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of **Jasher**.)

C. "Feared God"

1. An adjective meaning fearing, afraid
2. The Hebrew word is used when the author of Genesis speaks of Abraham fearing God because he did not hold back his only son (Gen. 22:12).

Genesis 22:12

¹² And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

3. Jacob asked God to save him from Esau, because he was afraid that Esau would attack him (Gen. 32:11 [12]).

Genesis 32:11

¹¹ Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

4. Jethro told Moses to select as judges men who feared God (Exo. 18:21).

Exodus 18:21

²¹ Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

5. Proverbs says that a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised (Pro. 31:30).

Proverbs 31:30

³⁰ Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

6. Jeremiah told the Israelite army that God said not to fear the king of Babylon (Jer. 42:11).

Jeremiah 42:11

¹¹ Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of

whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.

D. "Eschewed evil"

1. Two words – the word "eschewed" is "a verb meaning to turn away, to go away, to desert, to quit, to keep far away, to stop, to take away, to remove, to be removed, to make depart" (Zodhiates)
2. "Evil" - An adjective meaning bad, evil

Proverbs 8:13

¹³ The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Proverbs 16:6

⁶ By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.

1 Peter 3:10-11

¹⁰ For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

¹¹ Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

(In the New Testament the word "eschew" means virtually the same as the Hebrew word in the Old Testament.)

II. THE PROSPERITY OF JOB – VS. 2-4

The Devil hated the fact that God had blessed Job and, as he still does today, he just wanted to make life miserable for Job.

A. His family – vs. 2, 4

1. 7 sons, 3 daughters – vs. 2
2. Vs. 4 demonstrates the closeness of the family – the relationship they had with each other – something we could learn (again) in our fast-paced culture today.
 - a) “Sons went and feasted in their houses” – Job’s wealth is seen in his livestock rather than his property because of the type of life he lived (as a nomad).
 - b) “Every one his day” – many Hebrew scholars, and theologians, consider this their birthday (cf. w/ Job 3:1 – demonstrates this)
 - c) They would get together as a family on a regular basis – again, most likely on their birthday – and have a family reunion.

B. His substance – vs. 3

1. 7,000 sheep – used for clothing, food, etc.
2. 3,000 camels – to provide travel ability
3. 500 yoke of oxen – to cultivate the ground
4. 500 she-asses – they are early mentioned as having been in common use to ride on (Barnes). They were also valuable to travelers for the milk they could provide on the journey.
5. “Very great household” – or servants – most likely refers to those that cared for his vast livestock holdings

6. "Greatest of all the men of the east" – "was possessed of the most wealth, and was held in the highest honor" (Barnes)

III. THE PIETY OF JOB – VS. 5

A. *Job's testimony, as well as his piety (quality of being religious), is also found in his relation to others of great faith in the Bible. Ezekiel 14 mentions him twice in relation to the fact that Jerusalem would not be spared, no matter who was found there.*

Ezekiel 14:14

¹⁴ Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 14:20

²⁰ Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

B. *Job is here seen interceding on the behalf of his children. This is not intercession for salvation – that is something only they could do. This is intercession for a child, just like we would do today, asking for mercy for our children.*

C. *"Job sent and sanctified them"*

1. He either sent for them to come to him; or, he sent word to them to not forget about their spiritual needs. Nothing wrong with family gatherings, and merriment,

but if that is done and the spiritual regard is not then there will be a problem. That is what Job was doing for his children on a regular basis.

2. "And sanctified them" – the notes in the Geneva Bible say this: "That is, commanded them to be sanctified: meaning, that they should consider the faults that they had committed, and reconcile themselves for the same."

D. He called his children together, as he did regularly (continually), to offer the sacrifice with them. This is pointing forward to the work of Christ as the final Sacrifice. Just as the High Priest would do on the Day of Atonement, Job did here. And just as the person for whom the offering was made in the Tabernacle worship had to provide the sacrifice himself, so Job's children had to account for themselves before God. This is not showing that Job had any part in their soul salvation – just in their holiness after the fact, so to speak.

Geneva Bible note: "That is, he offered for each of his children an offering of reconciliation, which declared his religion toward God, and the care that he had for his children."

E. "For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts"

1. The word for "cursed" is the same Hebrew word used for "blessed," and the word for

“God” is “Elohim,” a word used not only for the God of heaven, but for false deities as well. What is in view is not so much that they may have used language unfit for a child of God, but Job was concerned that they may have been worshipping false gods, and blessing them – which, in effect, would be the equivalent to cursing the God of heaven, and denying His existence.

2. The word “sinned” is pointing to the issue of cursing – not just that of being a sinner

Genesis 35:2-3

² Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

³ And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

F. Today, in the age of Grace, we look back on the finished work of Christ with no more animal sacrifice necessary, and just as we can't offer sacrifice for someone else's sins, nor did Job for his children in the eternal standing with God. It was a type to show what the final work would be, encapsulated in what is called the "priesthood of every believer" – we can go directly to the Lord without a mediator.

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who

hath called you out of darkness into his
marvellous light:

Conclusion: We will see, as we continue to study through the first portion of the book of Job that Job was chosen as an example – not just for how to deal with suffering, but much more. By his example, he shows us what a father is to do for, and through, his children; how to live a godly life in a wicked world; how to demonstrate piety and holiness; etc.