

JOB PART 1

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We have looked at this book before ... but many years ago. It's good to take a review of it again.

I think in many ways ... it's used to paint a very unfair and inaccurate picture of God?

The standard explanation is: Job is a very self-righteous man ... God intervened ... allowed him to be struck down ... his business ruined ... his children killed ... his health destroyed ... in order TO HUMBLE HIM! And bring him down from his lofty heights.

What's the lesson? Maybe God may do the same to us ... we lose our jobs ... our house burned down ... chronic sickness ... paralysed in a bad car accident ... a young child dies in the family ... it's God ... KEEPING US HUMBLE?

So ... sometimes God blesses us in ways we like ... but sometimes ... His blessings are sickness ... disease ... even destruction ... just like he did with Job.

As the scripture says, "You just never know ... what God is going to do".

If there's one verse in Job that everyone knows it's "The Lord gives and the Lord taketh away" ... and that's what the Bible says. That's a fairly common view. You just never know!

This is a very common view. But I'd like to offer an alternative view ... one where God isn't out "to get us" ... to inflict pain ... suffering or destruction.

I think this alternative view is more consistent with God's revealed nature.

The story of Job goes way back.

He was possibly the grandson of Jacob; nephew of Joseph. He lived about 240 years before the Exodus.

No one knows who the author is. It is felt to be the oldest book in the Bible.

There are a number of lessons that we can definitely learn.

1. Inspiration of Bible. All inspired? Every word of the Bible is true?
2. Danger of being presumptuous. Believing things that actually aren't true ... aren't promised.
3. Need to actively resist Satan.
4. Helps us to understand the Sovereignty of God.

We will bring these out as we go through the book.

We are not going to read the whole book chapter and verse. The main reason being time ... but also ... much of the book of Job is not "truth" ...a lot of the book is merely the opinions of very fallible men.

Question? Is the whole Bible inspired and true? Inspired ... yes!
Truth ... no! ... not all of it. The Bible records lies and opinions that were given ... as well as truth. We need to be alert to what we're reading at any moment of time.

It's usually fairly obvious ... but with Job ... people put far too much weight on the content ... and don't use much discernment.

The Bible is inspired ... it is accurate ... and it accurately records lies and opinions ... not every statement in the Bible is truth. This is important for the book of Job.

Let's lay a little groundwork.

Genesis 3:1-7 (NKJV)

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

2 And **the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;**

3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " *(she may have added a frill or two there)*

4 Then **the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.** *(Was that true? No!! A lie! The devil is a liar and the father of lies)*

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave 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 coverings.

These verses are inspired and are accurate. The first lie. Obvious here ... but an important principle. Not everything we read in the Bible is absolutely true.

Genesis 18:9-15 (NKJV)

9 Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?"

So he said, "Here, in the tent."

10 And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son."

(Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)

11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.

12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

13 And the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?'

14 Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid.

And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

Here we see Sarah lying. Were her words inspired? She was telling a lie. It is actually recorded ... but it wasn't true.

Genesis 27:15-20 (NKJV)

15 Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son.

16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.

17 Then she gave the savoury food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

18 So he went to his father and said, "My father."

And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?"

19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."

20 But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?"

And he said, "**Because the Lord your God brought it to me.**"

(Whopping lies. Fraud.)

Genesis 27:22-24 (NKJV)

22 **So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."**

23 And he did not recognise him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

24 **Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?"**

He said, "I am."

Scriptures contain the words of liars. Yet we know that they were lies ... blatant ... deliberate. It is an inspired record ... but not "truth".

Abraham lied about Sarah being his sister. Laban lied about giving Rachel to Jacob. Plenty of lying words are recorded!!

In the New Testament ... the devil lied to Jesus ... "If you fall down and worship me ... I'll give you all these kingdoms". It's true he said it. Was it true? The devil is a liar and the father of lies. Then the example of Ananias and Sapphira ... "Did you sell your property for so much? Oh yes we did. You've got all of it!". She lied. The Bible records lies.

Matthew 16:21-22 (NKJV)

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 **Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"**

Peter was sincere ... honest ...expressing what he believes to be true ... with his opinion and advice. It was accurate. But it wasn't true!! Peter gave poor advice ... that was satanic in its nature ... encouraging Jesus not to be a sacrifice. See the next verse.

Matthew 16:23 (NKJV)

23 **But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."**

Much of Ecclesiastes ... the foolish opinions ... and observations of a man who was bitter ... depressed.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3 (NKJV)

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 **"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher;**

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." (Futility! The ultimate depressive!!)

3 **What profit has a man from all his labor**

In which he toils under the sun?

Ecclesiastes 2:17-20 (NKJV)

17 Therefore **I hated life** (*terminal suicidal*) because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind. (*This is an accurate record ... but we don't want to do what Solomon did and repeat his life. These are the foolish words of a man who had left God*)

18 Then **I hated all my labor** in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.

20 **Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun.** (*Solomon was suicidal. He was full of despair.*)

Some of his observations of life are okay. But ... much of Ecclesiastes is the opinions of a desperate man ... despairing ... cut off from God ... full of chapters of HUMAN OPINION.

If we want to know what a carnal person thinks ... then read the book of Ecclesiastes. We can learn how a carnal mind works ... the opinions of a troubled man who has turned against God.

But ... much of Ecclesiastes is NOT TRUTH ... it's fallible opinion. But ... accurately recorded ... A DEPENDABLE RECORD.

It's a similar story about Job.

There are 6 participants: God and 5 humans.

Job himself ... 20 chapters of his views

Eliphaz's views ... 4 chapters

Bildad's views ... 3 chapters

Zophar's views ... 2 chapters

(Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar ... Job's 3 "friends")

Elihu's views ... 6 chapters

God's "views" ... 4 chapters at the end of the book

God's views ... WE CAN DEPEND ON THEM! What about "The rest"?

Job chapters 3 to Job chapter 31: 29 chapters of Job and his 3 friends arguing.

Each friend gives his opinion of why Job is suffering.

Job repudiates and rejects all of these views ... and claims they are categorically wrong and ignorant.

Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar all explain why Job is wrong ... though each has a different explanation.

So. Here's 29 chapters of the Bible ... are the contents ... views and teachings the inspired word of God?

If Job is right ... all the chapters of his friends opinions (9) ...must be error. The content cannot be inspired ... but will be accurately recorded.

If the friends are accurate ... and express the truth ... then much of Job's views in his 20 chapters must be wrong?

They can't all be correct! They could all be wrong!!?

So. It would be potentially foolish for us to just open anywhere in Job ... read a verse or two ... and take it as inspired truth and teach it as doctrine or practice.

Who said it? Human opinion? Is it all true?

We will see later that God severely criticises Job and his 3 friends for talking a great deal of nonsense and spreading confusion.

Elihu wasn't criticised. If we compare Elihu's views ... we come across his views as very similar to what God ultimately said. It looks like Elihu was a more dependable commentator. What did he make of Job's thoughts? Elihu gives his opinions and views of Job. If Elihu

was alive today ... would he turn to the book of Job and happily quote great chunks of it?

Job 34:34-37 (NKJV) ...Elihu speaking

34 "Men of understanding say to me,

Wise men who listen to me:

35 'Job speaks without knowledge,

His words are without wisdom.'

36 Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost,

Because his answers are like those of wicked men!

37 For he adds rebellion to his sin;

He claps his hands among us,

And multiplies his words against God." *(Not terribly wise.*

Speaking against God)

Job 34:35 (GNB)

35 that Job is speaking from ignorance
and that nothing he says makes sense.

Job 34:35 (MSG)

35 'Job is an ignoramus.

He talks utter nonsense.'

Job 35:16 (NKJV) ... Elihu speaking

16 Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain;

He multiplies words without knowledge." *(he's a big mouth and
doesn't really know what he is talking about)*

Job 35:16 (GNB)

16 It is useless for you to go on talking;

it is clear you don't know what you are saying.

Job 35:16 (MSG)

16 "Job, you talk sheer nonsense—

nonstop nonsense!"

If Job is talking nonsense ... multiplying his words in ignorance ...
HOW MUCH WEIGHT ARE YOU GOING TO PUT IN HIS VIEWS? Or
take a sentence or two and build a doctrine on it?

Elihu was quite tough on Job ... on what he believes ... his views.

Not everything Job says would be wrong but a lot of error is mixed in
and clearly Job did not understand the nature of God or how God
operates. He multiplied his words ... against God.

We've got 20 chapters of the Bible full of opinions of a man who
multiplied words without knowledge ... whom Elihu thought was
talking nonstop nonsense.

How much doctrine will we get!?

Then ... eventually God turns up. What did He make of Job's
views/sayings?

Job 38:1-3 (NKJV)

1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

2 "Who is this who darkens counsel

By words without knowledge?

3 Now prepare yourself like a man;

I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

Job 38:2 (GNB)

2 Who are you to question my wisdom
with your ignorant, empty words?

Job 38:2 (MSG)

2 "Why do you confuse the issue?

Why do you talk without knowing what you're talking about?

God is not too impressed either! Job lacked accurate knowledge. Ignoramus.

We can't unfairly criticise. Job didn't have what we've got. There was no Bible then! We have a lot of things that Job didn't have. Although he had a lot of integrity ... his opinions and views were complete nonsense now and again.

After being challenged ... what did Job say about his former thoughts and views?

Job 42:1-6 (NKJV)

1 Then Job answered the Lord and said:

2 "I know that You can do everything,

And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.

3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?'

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,

Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

4 Listen, please, and let me speak;

You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'

5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,

But now my eye sees You.

6 Therefore I abhor myself, (*repudiate or retract*)

And repent in dust and ashes."

(GNB) "So I am ashamed of all I have said ... "

(NLT) "I take back everything I said ... "

Job concedes ... much of what I've said ... as recorded between chapters 3-31 ... was just religious-sounding nonsense.

God was not being nasty here. He just asked Job a number of quite challenging questions ... to help Job realise his ignorance.

Shortly after this ... God blessed Job abundantly.

Job was an ignoramus. What about his 3 friends? Did one of them hit on the truth? Was one of them accurate in religious explanations? Are any of those 9 chapters of Job reliable as truth? No. They didn't get it right either.

Job 42:7-9 (NKJV)

7 And so it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that **the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.**

8 Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because **you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."**

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord commanded them; for **the Lord had accepted Job.**

Job had an excuse! Ignorant as he was ... his 3 friends were worse! They portrayed God in a very bad light.

So. We can't rely for "truth" on Job's chapters ... or his 3 friends. We can learn how we as humans rationalise ... explain away ... etc ... what God is up to. People spout all manner of nonsense. Looking through Job ... we can see what nonsense turns up.

One reason that we are not going through every verse is because it's a long book ... plus so much of it is just confusing opinions of fallible and ignorant men.

We'll hit the highlights. Get a feel for arguments. See how we can learn ... it has been faithfully recorded for our benefit.

Job 1:1-8 (NKJV)

1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was **Job**; and **that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.** *(Job was an upright man ... with limited knowledge ... not forgetting that he didn't have a Bible)*

2 And seven sons and three daughters were born to him.

3 Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East.

4 And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. *(Clearly adults)*

5 So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that **Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all.** **For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts."** **Thus Job did regularly.** *(Clearly there was a problem there. He was worried about the behaviour of his adult children. Curse God??!! There must have been a bit of a family problem ... what sort of children were they?)*

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

7 And **the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?"** **So Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."**

8 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

Job offering sacrifices (pre Moses) wouldn't cleanse wicked and sinful children. It shows some ignorance on Job's part ... but then again he had limited information.

The scriptures later tell us to "train up a child in the way he should go and when he's old he won't turn depart from it".

In verse 7 satan was going "to and fro on the earth". Why was the adversary going to and fro? For what purpose? It doesn't say here ... but we know. Job didn't. We know things that the Angels wanted to know ... that the prophets wanted to know ... and didn't.

1 Peter 5:6-9 (NKJV)

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

8 **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**

9 **Resist him, steadfast in the faith,** knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

What does this tell us about the adversary? He was a predator ... he has come to devour and to destroy.

What does Peter instruct? RESIST ... steadfast in the faith.

Resist = set yourself against ... oppose ... withstand

Be Vigilant = be alert ... watchful

If not ... we're in danger! Do we believe that?

A number of church people probably think: "I'm a good person ... I live right ... keep the Sabbath ... Holy Days ... go to The Feast ... I pray and study. Therefore ... nothing bad can happen. I'm a good person. I'm in God's family." That is presumptuous! Just like in Job's day ... satan is going to and fro looking for someone to devour. Stay alert! Resist him! Don't just rely on being a "good person".

Paul says in Ephesians chapter 6 ... "Put on the full armour of God". Elsewhere ... "Give no place to the devil".

We can't think that living a quiet and decent life automatically brings protection. That is being presumptuous. Job shows us that ... plus many other New Testament examples.

Is this next verse right? Is God setting up Job? Throwing His servant to the lion? Is that the nature of God? Does he get pleasure out of pain and anguish.? Will He throw us to the lions? What is the context of the Bible?

Job 1:8 (NKJV)

8 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" (Margin: "*Have you set your heart on my servant Job?*") *God is actually rebuking satan!!*)

Satan is going to and fro ... seeking whom he may devour. He has already identified Job ... his plans are underway already. He's got Job in his crosshairs.

This is satan's modus operandi. God already knows that Satan is going for Job ... just as he's going for you and me ... if we don't guard ourselves. That's why we need to have on the full armour of God.

It's always been this way with satan.

Luke 22:31-34 (NKJV)

31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, (disciples) that he may sift you as wheat. *(He's always after believers)*

32 **But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."**

33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

Satan knew that Jesus was going to his death ... he knew that much of the plan. He wanted the rest ... always looking for whom he may devour. Even Peter will "wobble".

Satan is still looking to devour ... as Peter later taught in 1 Peter 5 ... may we be remembering.

Satan is like a devouring lion. Know ... be alert. Resist.

Job probably knew very little about Satan. He didn't have the advantage of 1 Peter 5, James 4, Ephesians 6 ... the Gospels.

John 10:10 (NKJV)

10 **The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

Some call this the most pivotal verse in the Bible. Is this tragedy coming from God or the devil? If it is stealing ... killing or destroying ... it is satan.

Look at some Divine arithmetic: God adds and multiplies. The devil divides and takes away.

Back to Job.

God is not initiating a discussion ... setting up Job as a cosmic "experiment" ... drawing satan's attention to a just man ... "Bet you can't defeat my servant Job! Would you like to try?" God is not setting up His servant?

Satan had already set his heart/mind on Job's destruction. He already had a strategy ... to kill ... steal and destroy Job.

What happened to Job wasn't God's idea ... God's handiwork ... God's ways of bringing Job to repentance and humbling his so called self-righteousness. What happened was satan's attack. Nothing has changed today. He is still going to and fro on earth seeking whom he may devour.

The story today is still the same as with Job ... people still blame God ... for tragedies ... tornadoes ... car accidents ... house fires ... premature deaths. All manner of stealing, killing and destruction attributed to God.

We ... centuries later ... should know better.