

JOB: Man Of God
April 24, 2005
Message 1

INTRO: Welcome to the book of Job. I remind us of that which we well know, that the book of Job is an OT book. I view the OT, as arranged in our English Bibles, as falling into three large sections; the historical section which takes us from Genesis to the book of Job. The book of Job begins what I call the practical section, and this section has 5 books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Following this is the prophetic section. If that division is correct, the book of Job then is a book that deals with practical, day to day life. It is instructive in our every day lives.

Job is one of those books of which we do not know the author. There are various suggestions such as Job himself or Moses or Solomon. In the end, we must say we simply do not know. We also do not know when the events described in this book took place. Three basic views are held. 1 These events took place in the patriarchal time, possibly during the days of Abraham. That would be about 2000 years before Christ, or 2000 years after creation. Others say these events happened during the time of Solomon, about 1000 years before Christ. A third and final view is that these events happened during the Babylonian captivity.

I tend to lean rather heavily to the view that the events of this book happened somewhere during the time of Abraham, if not earlier. Turn to Job 42:16. We find here some interesting years mentioned: "After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations." Now there are various difficulties with this text. But as it reads in our versions, Job lived 140 years after all these things happened to him. If that is correct, and I do not doubt it, then I would determine that he probably lived around the time of Abraham.

I suppose if I were to pick a theme verse, it would be 23:10 which says, "When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold."

I must say, it is somewhat in a certain fear and in certain trepidation that I approach this book. I know my studies are not that which many others may have done. And yet, I

believe my time has come to speak on this book. May the Lord bless this book to us, and where I may not have captured the mind of God, may He graciously keep me from great error.

As I wondered how to approach these messages, I wondered, should I reveal what I believe the purpose of the book of Job is right here at the outset, or should I wait until later? And after preparing the first message, I decided to wait. Maybe you want to read this book and study it and see if you can discover what you think God's purpose is in putting this book in the Bible.

I. THE TRIALS OF JOB (1:1-42:6)

I have found this book difficult to outline but I will deal with it under two points; the trials and the triumph of Job. I see the trials of Job as revealed in his circumstances in life (1:1-2:13); by his fellow man (3:1-37:24); and by Almighty God Himself (38:1-42:6).

Furthermore, it seems to me that it takes all three of these to bring about God's desired results in Job.

We are ready then, to begin by looking at Job's circumstances in life.

A. By Circumstances In Life (1:1-2:13)

1. Scene One (1:1-12)

a. In the scene (1:1-5)

(Read 1:1-5) We note at the very first that this book is about a man in the land of Uz. It is not altogether clear exactly where Uz was, but likely South, or south east of the Dead Sea. We are given the name of this man. His name was Job, as the book indicates. It is not certain what the name Job means. So debated is the meaning of this name that we must remember that these are speculations only. Job may mean repentance or one who turns back to God or it may mean the persecuted one.

We do know something about his character. He was blameless and upright. The word blameless is *tawm*, meaning morally upright or pure. He was a man of integrity. He would not treat anyone unfairly. Furthermore, he is described as upright. This comes from a word meaning straight. He was upright or not crooked. He was a man to be counted on in character. Job was a good man.

Furthermore, he was a man who feared God. We have spoken about the fear of God some time ago. Our text says Job feared God and shunned evil. Proverbs 16:6 says, "...by the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil." When I am not afraid to do wrong, it is a clear revelation that I do not fear God. The greater one's fear for God, the greater one's fear to sin.

We learn that Job was a family man, and that he was a wealthy man. We further learn that his concern for the spiritual well-being of his family was great (4-5). I think in these verses we have further evidence that the events of this book took place in the time of the patriarchs, for they were priests of their own homes as well.

And so, here we have a picture of a particular man in a particular land. Here is the earthly scene, as described by the writer. What is very captivating by this simple scene is that the Bible is going to open a window to something that is happening behind the scenes, something that Job has no idea about.

I propose to us that there is not a Christian here, about whom we might not describe their earthly life in a simple way, like is done of Job here. I also propose, that if we had a window into the spiritual realm, there would be opened a window that would reveal the strategies of the evil one in the lives of every believer here. And we would see how the devil and his demons are about, seeking to destroy each believer here. (Not ignorant of his devices.) So, let us take a look at the

spiritual world, this amazing window that is opened for us in this old book.

b. Behind the scene (1:6-12)

(Read 1:6-12) Now notice in verse 6, that Satan, like the rest of the angelic beings, has access to God in heaven. We note that the Bible does not say, "And the devil came also among them." He is called Satan here. The word Satan comes from the Hebrew word Sawtawn. The meaning is "adversary", one who withstands. The one we know as the devil or Satan is the arch enemy of God. He withstands and opposes Him at every point possible. As a matter of fact, he would like to take over God's position, and given one little chance would do so.

Let me remind us of a few things this morning. Satan is not omniscient, omnipresent or omnipotent. He does not know everything. Nor is he everywhere present at once. When he is in heaven, he is not on earth, though through his demons he is in many places. Nor is he all powerful. The Scripture comforts us like this: *Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.* Yet he is a mighty adversary, and a moment of sleeping can cost us dearly.

I wonder this morning, what is your battle? Stop for a moment and look back. No doubt, back of it all, somewhere, you will find this enemy, this adversary of all that is good.

Furthermore, I remind us that he is already a defeated foe. The Bible clearly tells us when he will no longer have access to heaven (Rev. 12:7-10). Are you fighting under some attack of the devil right now? Take heart. He is not all powerful and greater is the One with you than the devil.

And so let us read verse 7 (read). And so God asked Satan, "From where do you come?" And Satan, the adversary answers like this: From going to and fro on the earth, and from

walking back and forth on it." Now here is a great revelation. Think of the whole universe. Billions upon billions of stars, and billions upon billions of miles of space. And where does he hang out? On one tiny little planet, way out in a galaxy called the milky way. And what is he doing? Well, he is the adversary. He does not fully answer God what he is doing. But he tells God where he has been busy. It is on earth, walking back and forth and going to and fro. The NT clearly identifies what this business of his is for it says this, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour..." (1 Pet. 5:8). There is his name, Satan, and he walks about, seeking whom he may devour.

Recently, when my wife and I were in Leamington, Lou Sutera told us of a church in Vancouver. It was a good church. They had a lot of people and were winning many. And then internal fighting began and now the pastor was being asked to leave. And they called the Sutera Twins and they said, "Well, isn't that interesting. We are just on the way there for a crusade." And so Ralph said Lou should take this on and Lou said Ralph should because he did all the teaching on this kind of thing.

Well, Lou ended up going. And he had a very difficult time finding the mind of the Lord until it finally dawned on him what was happening in that church. And so Lou preached from Ephesians 6:10-20, a passage that deals with spiritual warfare; a passage that carefully instructs the Christian how to stand against the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And so Lou pointed out to this church how they had been fighting each other in the church, but this passage says, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood but against the devil and his hosts of demons." Slowly it was revealed to one and then another that they had been fighting each other and the devil was about to

destroy the church. They had a large debt and did not have the people left to pay for it.

When Lou Sutera opened this window into the spiritual world for them and they began to see what they were doing, one by one they recognized that they, unawares, had become tools in the hands of the devil.

And so we go on. In Job 1:8 it says, "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?'" Now let me ask you a question: Why does God not leave well enough alone? Why point this out to the devil? What do you think, is God very smart? Should He not know better than to bring up something that the devil might then attack and destroy? Does He not know that He might lose ground by pointing this sore spot out to the devil?

Well, we know God is smart enough not to make mistakes. And I propose to you that God was so far ahead of the devil, that the devil never even knew what God's question was all about. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 2 for an interesting insight into this matter (read 1 Cor. 2:6-8). I trust we will see the wisdom of God in this matter before we are done with this book.

(Read Job 1:9-11). So God has asked Satan if he has considered Job. The devil could have burst out in vicious anger, "Have I considered him! That is an understatement! That's all I can think about. I have done everything I can to destroy him." What makes me think the devil had put all his forces to work to destroy Job? Because in these verses he indicates that he believes God has hedged Job about and blessed the work of his hands. In other words, "God, if you would take your hands off his life, I could have had him by now."

Notice that the devil knows the secret to Job's success against his wiles to get him. He

says, "Does Job fear God for nothing." If Job would only not fear God, then Satan would be able to get him. But his fear of God holds Satan away.

Now think through the Devil's reasoning. "God, you have blessed Job. You have put a hedge about him on every side and I can't get at him. And because You have done that, he fears You." I don't follow Satan's rational here. It seems to me that usually when you give someone all they want, they forget God. To me, the fact that Job feared God when God blessed him so richly indicates that his love for God was not for possessions. But the devil goes on like this, "But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to the face!"

Well, if the devil is right in his thinking, that Job serves God for what he can get out of it, then if all those things are taken away from Job, he should end up cursing God. I can follow that logic.

Now notice these words, "So the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.'" Now let us note something here: Satan can only go as far as God allows him to go. And could we not conclude that God allows Satan to go as far as he does for a purpose?

And so, with God's permission for Satan to touch Job's possessions, he immediately leaves the presence of God. Can't you just see Satan scamper back to earth as fast as he can, and with a bright gleam in his eye! Finally, God has taken that cursed hedge which He has placed around Job away, and now he has permission to touch his possessions. Finally, finally Job will fall into his hands. What a paying proposition this trip to heaven was.

CONCL: There we have the beginning to the book of Job. We have looked at Job's life briefly. We have seen in scene 1 a man who is blameless and upright. A family man. A man who

took family life responsibly, and a man blessed by God with many possessions. We have been allowed by a window in the Bible to see what was happening behind the scenes. Behind the scenes God Almighty has raised a question with Satan. "Satan, have you considered MY servant Job." And Satan says, "Yes I have. There is no glory in a servant like that. He serves You for what he gets out of it. I would not talk so big about somebody who served me merely for what they can get out of it. Just admit it. If You did not hedge him in and treat him like a little kid, in a short time, I tell You, he will curse you to the face."

Let me conclude by saying that in every Christian life here this morning, there is an earthly physical scene, and a spiritual scene. I wonder sometimes, how differently we would react to certain circumstances if we saw what was actually going on behind the scenes.

Let me ask this morning, is there someone here who has been disappointed by God? You thought if only you did such and such God would do such and such. Have you been let down by circumstances, and because you did not get what you wanted, therefore you have given up on some dream? You have concluded that God does not truly work all things together for good. It may be so for others, but not for me. Not really. I am best off if I just lay low and don't try too much. God has good things for others, but not for me.

Sometimes in counseling, when people express certain things I say, "Now just a minute. Think about that for a moment. Where would that kind of thought come from, from God or the devil?" For example, "I am no good for anything. I will never amount to anything. What can I do" etc... We have just heard of a suicide. How far must such a person not have bought into the devil's thinking?

This morning would be an appropriate time to think back and see where or how far we have bought into the devil's thinking without realizing it. Maybe, like those in that church in Vancouver, some of us find ourselves thinking we are doing God's work when we are actually destructive tools of the Devil. Let us identify our own thinking and then do what Job did, "Fear God and shun evil." No greater way of resisting the devil than that.