

The Book of Job

“Does Job Fear God for Naught?”

Lesson #3 for October 15, 2016

Scriptures: Job 1&2; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Genesis 3:1-8; Philippians 4:11-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Philippians 2:5-8.

1. In the first two chapters of Job, we learn of a dimension of reality completely outside of anything we know here on this earth. How could we know anything about councils in heaven? There is a war going on in our universe; whether we recognize it or not, we are a part of it.
2. That war which began in heaven has come down to this earth because we read in Revelation 12:12 (*GNB*): “And so be glad, you heavens, and all you that live there! But how terrible for the earth and the sea! For the Devil has come down to you, and he is filled with rage, because he knows that he has only a little time left.”
3. Have you felt Satan’s rage? In what ways?
4. Read Job 1. Job was living an idyllic life. Everything seemed to be going well for him. But, completely unknown to him, he was being discussed in the councils of heaven. No doubt, Satan had done everything he possibly could to get Job to sin even before that day. But, then Satan appeared before the heavenly council, and God asked him an uncomfortable question: “Did you notice my servant Job?” (Job 1:8, *GNB*) Of course, Satan and God both knew the story of Job. But, in order to save face before the “sons of God,” Satan accused God of showing favoritism to Job and claimed that was the reason Job served God.
5. God proceeded to give His judgment of Job. Satan also made a judgment about Job; but, Satan’s judgment was going to be proven to be wrong. Satan chose to accuse God and Job of not playing fair. In his exceeding selfishness, Satan believed that Job was like himself! He claimed that if God would stop protecting Job, Job would curse God to His face. So, the question: Was it true that Job was just a fair-weather friend of God? Or, did Job actually love God as his best Friend because that was the right thing to do? And because he had come to know God very well? Did God visit Job? He had no Bible, no pastor, no church, etc.
6. Why do we serve God? Do we serve Him because it is the right thing to do? Do we serve Him because we appreciate His character and what He has done for us? As sinners, our motives are never perfect; but, can we get to know God well enough so that, like Job, our trust and faith in God cannot be shaken?

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but **a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved**—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming (MS 173, 1902).—Ellen White, *4SDABC* 1161.6. [Bold type is added.]

7. Read Job 1:13-22. Wouldn’t you have had a heart attack right there? Do you think Satan was surprised to see Job’s response after completely wiping out his wealth and destroying his children? Did Satan and his evil cohorts enjoy that rampage of destruction? Weren’t

they quite certain that Job would give up?

8. What does it mean to “charge God foolishly”? The *Good News Bible* translates that passage, “Job did not sin by blaming God.” (Job 1:22) As we know, God’s government is based entirely on love. God Himself is love. (1 John 4:8,16) God asks only a response of love in return. He gives us freedom of choice. As we noted in our last lesson, He refuses to compel or force anyone to love Him. In fact, He “cannot” force anyone to love Him because that would be contrary to His character. God wants us to serve Him because it is the right thing to do. (See COL 97.) What does that imply? God never asks us to do anything or to believe anything that is not ultimately for our own best good. Do we really believe that? Do we think of that every time we are tempted by the Devil? We should absolutely reject the principles of Satan’s government.

Satan insinuated that Job served God from selfish motives.... He attempted to deny that true religion springs from love and an intelligent appreciation of God’s character, that true worshipers love religion for its own sake—not for reward; that they serve God because such service is right in itself, and not merely because heaven is full of glory; and that they love God because He is worthy of their affection and confidence, and not merely because He blesses them.—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, 500.13.

9. Read Job 2:1-3; compare Job 1:6-8. Once again, the council in heaven met. Both Satan and God knew that God was right about Job so far and that Satan was wrong. But, Satan wanted to take the battle up another notch. He wanted to attack Job physically. And incredibly, God gave him permission to do that, short of killing Job. If Job were killed, then the experiment would be over, and neither side could prove its point.
10. Were the “sons of God” who gathered for that counsel already aware of the story of Job? Were they not keenly interested in that battle between God and Satan over who was telling the truth? If they were not aware of Job’s case before the first council, they certainly must have been aware after that. Remember that this earth is the theater of the universe. (1 Corinthians 4:9)
11. God would not allow Satan to kill Job although Satan would probably like to have done so. But that, of course, would have finished the demonstration. By that time, the case of Job had become a universe-wide issue! What do we know about councils in heaven? (Daniel 7:10; Revelation 12:7-9)
12. So, how do you think Satan felt about being repeatedly defeated and proven wrong before the entire universe? How do you think the “sons of God” viewed the activities of Satan and his associates during that experiment?

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,

will draw all unto [69] Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* 68.2-69.0. [Bold type is added.]

13. In the book of Job, we are going to see that Satan’s charges against Job and against God were repeatedly proven to be false. Job’s responses to Satan’s attacks must have stunned Satan and his angels. It was an amazing testimony before all who were aware of it. How did Job develop such a relationship with God that he was able to withstand all that we read about in Job 1&2? How many “Jobs” do you think there are in our world today?
14. And it is not only the attacks in Job 1&2 that are incredible; his closest friends continued to attack him through most of the rest of the book!
15. Is the case of Job so unusual that it is way beyond our personal experiences? Or, can we learn something about our own battles with Satan from Job’s experience? Consider James 1:13-15. Where do most of our temptations come from? Very few of us end up being the focus of a conversation in heaven because we are so righteous.
16. Further along in the book of Job, we are going to learn that in addition to all his sores, even his breath was offensive. Read Job 19:17 (GNB): “My wife can’t stand the smell of my breath, and my own brothers won’t come near me.” Do you blame any of them? Think of all the tragedy his wife went through.
17. Could a book be written about the trials of Job’s wife? Did she listen to all the accusations of Job’s three friends and later of Elihu?
18. Did any of the people who suffered or died in the book of Job do so because of their own sins? No! They were all sinners; but, they had not committed some horrific sin or sins that would have warranted their deaths. That is another proof that sin has bad consequences even for people who have not been the direct cause of the tragedies themselves. Sin kills and damages innocent bystanders. How often do drunk drivers kill innocent people?
19. Read Job 2:3 and Job 2:9. It is interesting to notice that God and Job’s wife both said that he was “still as faithful as ever.” But, Job’s wife then went on to tell him to give up and curse God. By contrast, God commended him for his faithfulness! The word *faithfulness* is also translated “integrity” and “blameless” in Job 1:1 and Job 1:8.
20. In her grief and discouragement and probable depression, Job’s wife had become an agent of Satan! And what was Job’s response? Read Job 2:10. This verse is a key to much of the rest of the book. Compare Philippians 4:11-13. Do we expect God to put a hedge around us? Do we believe that in this world of sin we should only receive good and not bad? Both Job and Paul proved that they could face almost any condition through the strength of Christ. Job had already shown that his faith was genuine. He was going to serve God no matter what came his way.
21. Satan has been so successful with the human race that we are all sinners. He had managed to tempt Adam and Eve and caused their downfall even in the Garden of Eden. Every one of their descendants has followed their example. Surely, he thought, he could find a way to cause Job to sin.

22. While Satan is not mentioned explicitly through the rest of the book, he certainly did not give up his attacks on Job. As we already know, he began his work through Job's so-called friends who accused Job of many completely outrageous things!
23. Read again Job 2:3-9. How can we develop the kind of relationship with God that Job had? Will the 144,000 who live through the final plagues and the final events of this earth's history need that kind of a relationship? Satan will be desperate to prevent it.
24. Do we worship and serve God only because He blesses us? Or, do we love Him because we have come to know Him well enough and understand His character and His government well enough that we refuse to be deceived by Satan?
25. Read Job 1:22 and 2:10. Are these two expressions equal? In any case, Job did not sin by actions or by words.
26. We are not trying to imply by any of this that Job was not a sinner. Job needed his Savior just like all the rest of us, not primarily because he was born in sin—although that is true—but because he sinned frequently himself. (Romans 5:12) In 1 John 1:10 (GNB), we are told: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make a liar out of God, and his word is not in us." Romans 3, especially Romans 3:23, makes it very clear that we are all sinners.
27. How would you compare the temptations and trials of Job with those of Jesus Himself?
28. Read Matthew 4:1-11. Job's trials were quite different from the temptations of Jesus. Satan was able to tempt Jesus on a completely different level than any ordinary human could be tempted because Jesus had the ability to exercise His divine authority and power if He chose to do so. Job, of course, was never tempted to turn stones into bread. But, both Job and Jesus completely rejected Satan's approaches and his temptations. After making his claims and accusations as recorded in Job 1&2, Satan apparently disappeared. However, he actually began to work through Job's friends. After the temptations of Jesus, Satan had to leave Him because Jesus commanded him to do so. Can we tell Satan to get behind us and to leave us?
29. So, what was Jesus's greatest temptation? He was willing to die for us even though He was tempted to believe that doing that might separate Him permanently from His Father. (See DA 753.2.) Does it really trouble us to think that we might be separated from God?
30. Read Philippians 2:5-8. Could we actually develop the attitude that Jesus had? If so, how is that possible? The more we can think and act like Jesus, the better it will be both now and for eternity.
31. There is an interesting phenomenon in these first two chapters of Job. The word translated as *curse* or *insult* in Job 1:5; Job 2:9; and Job 1:11 is actually the Hebrew word for *bless*. Why is that? The Hebrew word comes from the root *brk* and is used all through the Bible for *bless*. It is the same word used in Genesis 1:22 when God blessed the creatures He had made. It is also in Psalm 66:8 (NKJV): "Oh, bless our God, you peoples!" So, why would a word that means "bless" be translated as *curse*? Clearly, it would make nonsense out of the context if it were translated with the word *bless* instead of *curse*. It is probable that this is a sarcastic euphemism. In writing the book of Job, Moses may have felt that he could not use the word *God* and the word *curse* in the same sentence.
32. As long as we live here on planet earth, we must constantly be aware of the great controversy going on around us and in us. There are times when the things which happen to us may be a part of the great controversy and we not even know it. Think of the story of

Job. God will be faithful no matter what.

33. So, why was Job so faithful through all of his experiences? God was Job's best Friend and Job refused to curse his best Friend. Does the story of Job inspire you? Does it scare you? Do you think God's people at the end of time will suffer less than Job did? At the end of this world's history, Satan will be desperate.
34. What similarities are there between these experiences of Job and the temptations of Jesus Christ?
1. Both were tempted to the limit. Jesus, of course, actually died.
 2. Satan was determined to get each of them to sin. But, in both cases, he failed.
 3. Both of them stood firm under the most difficult of circumstances and proved that God was right in His judgment and claims about them and that Satan was wrong.
 4. They each suffered not only enormous physical pain but also the pain of being basically rejected by those who should have loved them and supported them.
 5. Jesus's greatest fear was that He would be eternally separated from His Father. Job's greatest worry was that God was no longer communicating with him.
 6. Job was abandoned and accused by his best friends. Jesus was deserted and betrayed by His closest friends.
35. We have learned about councils that met in heaven and Satan's accusations against God and Job. How many councils did Satan have with his evil angels to discuss ways in which they could get Job to sin? Think of the greatest possible temptations in your own experience. Do you think Satan failed to use every method he knew of to get Job to sin? Did Satan ever give up on Job?
36. In light of what we read in Job 1&2, would you say that God was a greater friend of Job than even his wife? Job refused to curse his best Friend.
37. Like Job's, most of our temptations are not on a theoretical or even theological level but rather are on a very personal one. He had every reason to give up on God and die. But, he did not. Does that give us courage to stand up under every kind of adversity?
38. It should be clear already in our study of the book of Job that the main issue is God's character and His capacity and ability to correctly judge others. Satan wanted the universe to believe that God had misjudged him. He was desperate to prove that God's judgment was faulty in one way or another. But, he failed. He wants us to believe that God is a Tyrant who manipulates human beings by whatever means, whether fear or even bribery, into submission and obedience. By getting to know God well enough, can we be fully convinced that He is a loving heavenly Father who was willing to die to prove the truth of His claims and the falsehood of Satan's accusations? What kind of a God do you worship?
39. How would you respond if your family members and all of your closest friends began accusing you of being a terrible sinner? How often are we asked to stand "singly and alone" in defense of our faith? (See 5T 707.2.)
40. In our minds, each one of us has a picture of God that we worship. We do not worship God as They actually are because we could not even begin to understand all that could be known about Them. We worship God as we understand Them to be.
41. The Bible describes God using many metaphors. He is called a Shepherd (Psalm 23:1), a Judge (Psalm 7:11), a Father (Psalm 89:26), a Rock and a Fortress (Psalm 18:2), and

even a Warrior (Psalm 78:65-66). There are many other things that we learn about God from other places in Scripture. But, Satan is determined to distort our picture of God. If your image of God is static and not growing over the years, are you worshipping an idol?

42. Can you even imagine going through a Job-like experience? What if you lost all your possessions and all of your children in a short period of time and your friends told you to curse God and die? Could you survive such a trial?
43. Think of how many different theological issues are raised in Job 2. Satan is clearly the accuser not only of us but also of God.
44. One of the questions that the first two chapters of Job raise is what kind of access Satan had and has to God and to the rest of the “sons of God” throughout the universe. Read Job 1:6; 2:1; Luke 10:18; and Revelation 12:3,7-9.
45. By whatever means Satan is able to get the attention of God and the rest of the sons of God, it is amazing that he is allowed to make his accusations freely before all of them.
46. What is implied by Revelation 12:7-9 where it says that Satan was cast down to this earth? We need to remember at least two facts that might help us to understand this:
 1. God is omnipresent. So, wherever Satan is, God is there and can dialogue with him.
 2. We believe that God hears our prayers. Therefore, He can also certainly hear any accusations made by Satan, no matter where he is.
47. Read Job 1:6; 2:1; and compare Zechariah 3:1. It seems that Satan had free access to heaven up until the time of the ministry, life, and death of Jesus. Now read Luke 10:18 and John 12:31. In what way was Satan “cast down” at that time? Ultimately, of course, during the millennium, Satan will be confined to this earth because no one will listen to him. (Revelation 20:1-3) What kind of “chain” could you use to “chain up” or restrain the Devil?
48. In what ways does God impose limits on Satan? He was certainly limited to the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden.
49. In our day, is God gradually withdrawing His limitations on Satan and His protection of this earth and possibly us? Is that why so many terrible things are happening around us?
50. Read Revelation 14:7. There is an interesting ambiguity in this verse. When it mentions the “hour of His judgment,” is it talking about: 1) God’s judgment of us? Or, 2) Our judgment of God? In the context, it seems clear that both are implied. Compare Romans 3:1-4.
51. Satan himself will finally be forced—by circumstances—to bow and acknowledge that God was right. (Philippians 2:10-11) Are you glad that we here on planet earth have become the theater of the universe? (1 Corinthians 4:9) What questions will you have for Job, his wife, and his children—both the first ten and the second ten—when you meet them in heaven?

© 2016, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution of all or of a portion of this material such as to a Bible study class is encouraged. Info@theox.org

Last Modified: August 27, 2016

Z:\My Documents\WPISSTG-Hart\Job\SS-3-Job-2016_10_15-Fin+.wpd