

THE BIG READ (41)

Jesus in Job

A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. The Old Testament that Jesus read contained the same 39 books as our English Bibles but was arranged in a different order.

It had three sections – the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44)

The Law (of Moses) contains the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Of the Prophets, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, gives us God’s perspective on the history of Israel from the conquest of the Promised Land until their exile from it, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Book of the Twelve, explains why the history of Israel turned out the way it did.

The final section of the Old Testament is the Writings.

Whereas the Prophets looked back to what happened to Israel and why it happened in order to call the nation to repent and return to God, the Writings looked forward to the hope that was coming to those who repent, through a King like David, and showed those who did, how to live faithfully in all of life’s circumstances as they waited for His arrival.

This means that though the books found in the Writings sections were written at different points in Israel’s history, it was after the Babylonian exile was over, that they were collected together to give the remnant hope and guidance as they waited.

3. In the Psalms, we are told that often it is the righteous who suffer.

The book of Job, the next book in the Writings, is all about a righteous man who suffers.

B. Getting Started with Job

1. Job is named after the main character of the book.

We have no idea who wrote the book, although Jewish tradition says that it was written or rewritten by Moses. It is likely this book would have been in existence for many years prior to its inclusion in the Writings section of the Old Testament.

Most of the book is poetry (only chapters 1 and 2, and 42 is prose).

2. Job’s story takes places during the time of the Patriarchs.

2. In the opening two chapters of Job we are introduced to Job and to the enemy of Job.

Job was a righteous man.

"In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil." (Job 1:1)

Job was a wealthy man.

"He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East." (Job 1:2-3)

Job was a great man and he had a great enemy.

"Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no-one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." (Job 1:8-11)

Satan seizes upon God's evaluation of Job and insinuates that the only reason Job is righteous was because of all that God had given to him.

To show that this was not the case, God allows Satan to take away all of Job's wealth.

"The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." (Job 1:12)

Job loses his wealth but this does not stop him from trusting God.

"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing." (Job 1:20-22)

Satan isn't finished with his attack on Job. He says to God that if Job had to suffer he would soon be cursing God.

"Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no-one on the earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." (Job 2:3-5)

God allows Satan to take away Job's health by giving him a painful skin disease.

"The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes." (Job 2:6-8)

Job loses his health but this does not stop him from trusting God.

"His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said." (Job 2:9-10)

By the end of chapter 2, Job is suffering greatly but he doesn't know why (because he doesn't have access to the information that we have).

3. In Job 3 to 37, we are introduced to some of the friends of Job who come to give him support in his suffering.

This long section is made up of four cycles of dialogue (4-14, 15-21, 22-31, 32-37) where Job's friends offer an explanation for his suffering.

They all have the same answer.

Job, your suffering is as a result of some sin you have committed, and as you are suffering a great deal, you must have sinned in a major way.

"Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plough evil and those who sow trouble reap it." (Job 4:7-8)

They all have the same advice.

Job, you must own up to your sins, even your hidden ones. Turn away from them and obtain restoration from God.

"But if it were I, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him... Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal." (Job 5:8, 17-18)

Each time Job's response is the same. I haven't sinned. This doesn't mean that he has never sinned, but that there is no great sin that has brought this suffering.

"Teach me, and I will be quiet; show me where I have been wrong." (Job 6:24)

By the end of chapter 37, Job's friends (including from chapter 32, Elihu) have run out of different ways of making the same point.

4. In Job 38 to 42 we are introduced to the God of Job.

"Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm." (Job 38:1)

God speaks and bombards Job with question after question, which reminds Job about who He is and that He does things that humans are unable to understand.

The point that God through this is making to Job, is that if He is in control of the universe, then Job ought to be able to trust that He knows what He is doing in his life, even in those circumstances he cannot comprehend.

Job responds by reaffirming his trust in God.

"Then Job replied to the LORD: "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:1-6)

The book closes with God restoring the health, family life and prosperity of Job. This is visible proof that God will in the end bless the righteous.

D. Jesus in Job

1. Job needed Jesus to redeem him.

Job expects that after his death he will see God.

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27)

Why?

Because he has a Redeemer who lives and he is trusting that one day He will declare every believer as "Righteous".

2. Job foreshadows how Jesus will redeem him.

But...

Jesus' righteousness was greater – He lived more righteously than Job ever could because only He was totally sinless.

Jesus' suffering was greater – He voluntarily took on Himself more suffering than Job ever knew and did this for the benefit of sinful men and women.

Jesus' trust was greater – He lost more than Job ever did including His life and His relationship with God, yet still trusted His Father.

Jesus is the greater Job, the righteous man who suffers.

Because He was the righteous man who suffered, He knows what we are going through when we suffer.

Because He was the righteous man who suffered, He can bring salvation to His people and give us hope when we suffer.