

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JOB

Valley Bible Chapel July, 2008 Tom V. Taylor

The Basic subjects in our study are these: Some introductory notes; Why good things happen to bad people and vice versa; How we may rise above our circumstances; How poor theology can mess up your life!; The promises of resurrection and the thought that there is life after this life; an eventually some notes as to how God evens the score.....and some other points as we go. Reading the book is a "must" and keeping in mind the situation is very helpful

I. Introductory Material

A. The Selection of this book....just some rambling thoughts about

1. The book in the Bible

- a. substance
- b. author
- c, date
- d. text

2. The people involved:

- a. Job: his family, prominence
- b. His friends:

- (1) Eliphaz
- (2) Bildad
- (3) Zophar
- (4) Elihu
- (5) Satan and the Lord

B. Application of the Job account in the Scriptures.

- 1. It mirrors for us the stress of life
- 2. It showsus the value of endurance
- 3. It encourages us to pray and to live with purpose

II.. Particular studies in Job

A. The trial of Job's faith...and allegiance....Job 1-3

1. The Challenge

2. The governance

--and we all wonder why this took place and how it affects us today!

3. The progression of action

(at this point to discuss Hebrew words in the category of cursing and blessing. Prepare to be confused but I will try and I think it is important)

4. Reactions to the tragedy:

- a. Job
- b. His wife
- c. His friends

5., And the great question is: How much suffering can a person take? The answer will be given as we work it out!

B. Why do bad things happen to good people and (sometimes) good things happen to those who are bad? Job 3:20-26. et al.

1. Some distinctions:

- Bad things: things that occur in a destructive or harmful or destructive way.
- Bad people: those living contrary to the direction of God (lost of observations are needed)
- Good things: things that advance the hopes and aspirations of the subject
- Good people: those who are at peace with God and there are some qualifying aspects here as well.

2. All persons are subject to the common course of life

Job 14:1 ff

- Birth
- Experience of Living
- Death

The rich and poor, the wise and foolish, and all other categories experience the same course of life and these things happen to them regardless of the moral or ethical state.

3. The nature of events and their effects are not discriminatory!

(Job 5:10, Matthew 5:45)

- the rain and the sun
- the mercies of God

--the seasons of life

--the course of nature: sometimes it just rains and the same rain that may be good for you may be trouble for someone else.

4. The assurance of the Lord for His presence with them is balanced with the statements of the persecutions that will follow them (Jon 16:33; Acts 14:20-22)
5. The enrichment of God by way of chastisement and training shows us that the "bad" things are not necessarily harmful after all. Hebrews 12; Romans 5:3; James 1:2; 2 Corinthians 2:4

C. How Do We Rise Above Hard Circumstances?

Job 9:1-11, et al

Circumstances are the things that surround us or involve us. They can be pleasant or unpleasant depending on a lot of things. Job's circumstances were definitely troublesome but he will rise above them and what is true in his experience may also be true in ours. The following points seem to be helpful.

1. Face your situation honestly. Be positive about the Lord and His protective power. Do not argue with God and, when possible, don't get into a word fight with men (people.) 9:1-19
2. Do not get down on yourself. Job is guilty at this point of self-commiseration 9:20-35
 - a. Note his introspection 20-24
 - b. See the lament 25-35
 - c. The dismal conclusion 34-35
(at this point the circumstances are winning)
3. Cast yourself wholly on the Lord 10:1-22
 - a. Recognize His authority 1-7
 - b. Accept His ownership 8-13
 - c. Trust His judgment 14ffvs 17 is a transition:
Job accepts and gains a little comfort

Conclusion: Facing the circumstances, be honest, patient (enduring) active and thankful. The Lord will provide the strength and the victory. And at this point we will look at 1 Corinthians 10:13

D. Do not allow poor theology to mess up your life
Job 4-31 (selected portions)

1. A real dilemma....the misuse--- whether accidental or purposeful---of theological ideals often results in one being worse off than better. Theology is the study of God as presented in Scripture and attested in the life of the church. It is a keen science but is often governed more by emotion and preference than careful Bible study and consideration. Job is victimized by the theology of his friends--not in every aspect but in such as he can get no help from them and, in fact, finds himself in a worsening condition. Don't let it happen to you. The main areas of poor theology occur in the disputations of Job and his three friends..
2. The presentations of his friends: A round table talk!
I Will attempt to show what I regard as error and note how Job is influenced by their thinking. His responses are mostly negative and that is fine except that it leads him to a poorer relation with his God.
 - a. Eliphaz: speaks in chapters 4-5, 15 and 22
Job responds to him in in 6-7, 16-17, 23-24
His theology is based on mysticism and he is convinced that Job has lost the favor of God due to a secret sin. He is the most blatant of the three.
 - b. Bildad speaks in chapter 8 while Job answers in 9-10; and Bildad continues in 18 while Job answers in 19. The cycle is finished by Bildad in 25 giving Job cause to answer in 26-31.
This man is an "intellectual" and presumption is main fault...he knows God better than God knows himself.
 - c. Zophar speaks twice: chapter 11 with Job answering in 12-14 and again in chapter 21 with Job responding in 22. He finds Job hypocritical and urges him to confess and repent.

Looking at the three, Eliphaz is a mystic, Bildad is

a spiritual judge while Zohar is the forerunner of the inquisitors of later years. He only speaks twice.

Elihu is not one of the three and is a friend in most every way. He speaks for God to a large and his work helps Job prepare for a dialogue with the Lord. Elihu's notes are in chapters 32-37.

3. Conclusion:

Misguided informants may make one doubt the reality of one's relationship with God and may move a listener to some alternate source of truth or help. They may distract and draw one from the Word of God to the advice of consultants who may work on purely humanistic information.

An insertion of importance is this note: Not every disagreement indicates poor theology. Sometimes it is a matter of opinion and may be held in the sphere of orthodoxy as a charitable opinion. The "poor theology" that we stress is that which contradicts of flatly disagrees with the Word of God. To say that Jesus is not the Son of God is heresy...to say he had red hair, for instance, is a point on which we may not agree but it does not make us enemies of the truth.

E. Is there Life after Death? Will we live again?

Job:14-1-14. 19:23-27

This is a troubling question due to our desire and capacity to live while we recognize the absolute finality of death. We hear stories of ghosts and people who have reappeared but on close examination they seem not to be final. To one in the position of Job it is a perplexing point until he has time and opportunity to live it out, as we say it, and he comes through with the emphatic and practical statement that he will live again in this body and in the glories assigned by God. The route to this conclusion is not so easy as we might think but it is clear and, in the end, forceful

1. Job 14:1-12..Our present limitations, inequities, and the sentence of fate are all known to God. He continues to work with us to a higher position. The bounds of life are set by God and He works in that framework.

2. Job 14:13-22: This life is monitored by God and moves to completion through triumph and disappointments as they come.
3. Job 19:25-27 shows us that beyond this there is a new life expressed in resurrection and awareness of the Redeemer.
 - my redeemer shall stand on this earth
 - I will see Him with my eyes
 - even though my body has been corrupted by death
 - I shall stand again with God(I will likely elaborate on this but it is stated so direct one cannot miss the enthusiasm it gives to life as we know it today and anticipate it in that coming glory)
4. Conclusion: The disappointments and trials of life as we know it will be ended in the renewal brought by the Creator. Therefore the earlier expressions from Job must be seen as the natural implications of death while the revelation of life in the Redeemer corrects and completes the picture. In realizing the good in this I suggest the following procedures:
 - a. look up, less in
 - b. enjoy expecting what God will do
 - c. continue life in His plan
 - d. let the hope of future life bring you greater joy and responsibility in the present life.
5. With the reality of the end of this life in view it is important that one make the proper steps in submitting to the Lord Jesus and receiving the gift of eternal life that He gives,

F. Why is Our own Righteousness not Enough?

1. Introductory notes:

What we know of our own righteousness in theological thought is that we don't have any until we are brought into the family of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moral righteousness is the subject in this discussion as Job reviews his life and works, When anyone has done as much good as he

has done, why was the situation so desperate? You and I are not likely to have the testimony Job had but we will still not be guaranteed a happy existence because of our good deeds. Acts of mercy, deeds of benevolence, general kindness and considerations are all in good order but they were not enough for Job and are not enough in our day as well. The question is "Why?" and we will try to pursue it!

The main textual material is Job 29-31. In these chapters we find something of the defining of his character and why God spoke so approvingly of him in the earlier chapters. He was a fine person! But the character he displayed did not give him immunity against the trials of life although the one described in this book is singular in character as I see it. Nevertheless it shows that man cannot aspire to victory in life on the basis of one's own works or accomplishments. The text is developed in this manner:

- 29: a summary of Job's services: impressive
- 30: a summary of the rejection by his peers
- 31: his plea of innocence---one of the most touching chapters in the Old Testament

2. Discussion

- a. The totality of need is too great! See the areas to which he refers and realize the enormity of the project.
- b. The appreciation of others is too minimal...it leaves one empty at almost every point.
- c. The expectation of Divine standards is too high!
- d. The understanding of depravity is too little
- e. So, in spite of all we do, we remain sinners and fall short of the glory of God. James 4:17 is the convicting word on this subject

- 3. Conclusion....The righteousness needed by us is that which is supplied through the work of the Lord Jesus and the Scripture puts it like this: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21. Being right with God we should then be enabled to be right with others. Our righteousness is not enough,,that which Christ provides is enough---for all who will believe.

G. How does God make it up to His own?

In some ways this is a moot point....God is no man's debtor. But there is a sense of reward with Him as in 1 Corinthians 3 and other places and here is a sense of recovery as when Israel would repent and be fruitful again. So...our wording is poor but the idea is not wrong so long as we don't impose obligatory matters on God or try to manipulate Him after our desires. Without any further confusing information, here are five quick steps--seen in the book of Job--as part of the way that God evens the account with His own.

1. He allows them to remember the past! Job 29...Sometimes we only remember the hard points of the past...but note the text...thinking on the good things of the past is a comfort to Job--his life had not been wasted...if nothing else would turn to good he has a very satisfying record of fellowship with God and service to people.
2. He allows them to reflect on their good deeds. Job 30-31
Job is not boasting but long with memory the recognition of kindness is a great assurance.
3. He responds to prayer Job 31:35, et al. Even though Job often speaks of not being able to contact the Lord we find that the Lord knows and acts appropriately. His ears are always open, His eye is vigilant; He neither slumbers nor sleeps when it comes to the lot of His people
4. He shows Himself and takes the complaint or setting in a personal way. We are not dealing with subalterns but the Lord Himself.
5. He restores in the latter end. Job 42. The proportionate amount assigned to Job may not be the eventual standard of every matter but it is indicative of God's care and satisfactory treating with justice and kindness. For a broader picture, the last chapter of Hosea is very pointed.

III. Summary and maybe a few added notes on the ministry of Elihu and the way in which God spoke and revealed Himself to Job...the revelation that ended the conflict. Alas, the notes stop here! Who knows how long added discussion may last or may not happen at all. The suspense is overpowering! But thanks to all who have worked in this class with me and may the study of the Word of God be your daily "bread and butter."

A. The Ministry of Elihu: Job 32-37

1, Who was he?

- his place in the community
- his irritations with Job
- his disappointment with Job's friends
- his patience
- his intention 32:6-10
- his declaration 32:11-22
- his review of the situation: 33
- his advice to the friends --34
- his more direct ministry to Job 35
- his assessment of God and His works and method 36
- his appeal to Job: 37

Elihu is better informed on the character and work of God. I do not think him a theophany but a wise observer and a polite theologian.

2. The Voice of God 38-40:2, ----6-41

- Questions for Job that are intended to put him in the right perspective of life and God: a a Creator and a concerned party. Read the Questions and see how simply they are answered.---chapter 38
- More questions of a more personal sort--I think 39
- The ultimate challenge 40:1-2

3: Job's attempt to avoid the issue (my opinion) 40:3-5

- The Lord challenges Job on the greatness of His work 40:6-24
- The Lord presents His mastery of the universe 41
- Job responds in humility and weakness 42:1-6

4. The Lord settles the issues: 42:7-17

- He deals with the friends 42:7-9
- The Lord restores and honors Job 42:10-17

AND A VERY HAPPY ENDING TO A LONG AND INSTRUCTIVE
STRUGGLE