

God's Megaphone: Pain and Providence in the Book of Job, 1

Behind the Scenes of Your Suffering

Job 1,2

Sunday Evening Bible Study

January 5, 2020

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world” –
C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

Introduction to the Book of Job

1. Author: Probably an eyewitness, but not Job.
2. Date: Probably during Patriarchs (Abraham–Jacob, c. 1500 BC). Why? a) wealth measured in cattle, not gold; b) No mention of tabernacle, temple, Jerusalem, c) no priesthood.
3. Location: The Land of Uz; East of Judah, on the edge of a desert, fertile ground (modern Jordan?)

Why Should Job Be in the Canon?

1. Jesus approved of the fixed OT canon and quoted from it (though not from Job).
2. Paul quoted from it: Ro. 11:35 cites Job 35:7; 1 Cor. 3:19 cites Job 5:13.
3. James quoted from it: James 5:11 cites Job 6:11

How are Job and other Old Testament believers saved?

1. “Blameless” (1:1) does not mean sinless (14:16).
2. In the eyes of man, no one could reasonably accuse of external wrongdoing.
3. In the eyes of God, even Job knew he was guilty of damnable sin. (13:26; 14:4,16,17; 7:17).
3. New Testament examples: Paul (1 Th. 2:10) and Elders (Titus 1:6,7).
4. Jesus distinguished between external and internal blamelessness (Mt. 5:21; 23:27).
5. The New Testament is clear about salvation:
 - 5.1 We are saved by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8,9).
 - 5.2 Through faith alone (Galatians 3:6-11).
 - 5.3 In Christ alone (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2: 5,6; John 14:6).
6. If we can only be saved by faith in Christ, how were those who lived before Christ saved?
 - 6.1 No one was “before Christ”! (John 8:58).
 - 6.2 Old Testament saints were saved by grace alone (Exodus 33:19; 34:6)
 - 6.3 Through faith alone (Genesis 15:6)
 - 6.4 In Christ alone (Genesis 3:15; Dt. 18:18; Acts 3:22f; 7:37).
 - 6.5 Based on passages like these and Hebrews 11:13; 26; John 8:56; Romans 3:19-28:
 - We trust in what God did on the cross, they trusted in what God would do on the cross.
 - We trust in “the Lord” for salvation, they trusted in “the Lord” for salvation.
 - We trust in the coming Messiah, they trusted in the coming Messiah.
 - We don't trust in our works, they didn't trust in their works.
 - We trust in God's fulfillment of a promise, they trusted in God's promise.
 - We don't practice rituals (i.e., Lord's Supper) to earn salvation, they didn't practice rituals (animal sacrifice) to earn salvation.
 - We practice rituals because we are saved, they practiced rituals because they were saved.
7. Does this mean people today can be saved without hearing about Jesus?
 - No. This is a faulty comparison. The Old Testament saints *did* hear about Jesus (lit., “Savior”) Christ (“messiah, anointed one”) and they trusted in him.

The Problem of Pain

1. Attributes of God:

- 1.1 Omniscient: Smart: Knows all things
- 1.2 Omnipotent: Strong: Able to do all things
- 1.3 Benevolent: Good: Loves his children
- 2. But evil and suffering exists. Therefore:
 - 2.1 God is smart and strong but not good
 - 2.2 God is smart and good but not strong, or
 - 2.3 God is good and strong but not smart, or
 - 2.4 God does not exist
- 3. Faulty premise: Love insulates the beloved from pain and suffering; pain has no purpose. The issue in Job's day:
 - If God is good and if I am good, God will bless me with health and wealth.*
 - Therefore: If I have health and wealth it is a sign that I am good.*
 - If I am poor and sick, it is a sign that I am bad.*
- 4. Reality: Good people often suffer, wicked people often prosper.

Behind the Scenes of Your Suffering (Job 1,2)

1. Job's Character (1:1-5)

- 1.1 Blameless: No one accused him of wrongdoing.
- 1.2 Upright: He didn't deviate from God's law.
- 1.3 Feared God: Revered and humbly submitted to God.
- 1.4 Shunned evil: Avoided things God hates.
- 1.5 Was Job sinless? No (Ro. 3:23), but when he sinned he sought God's remedy.

2. Job's First Test: Prosperity—wealth and health (1:2,3)

- 2.1 Children
- 2.2 Livestock and agriculture
- 2.3 The test of prosperity (Ezekiel 28:5; 2 Chronicles 26:16).
- 2.4 Common wisdom: If God is good and I am good, my life will be good. So if anyone should have a "good life," Job should.

3. Job's Second Test: Poverty—The loss of wealth and loved ones (1:6-22)

- 3.1 Satan: literally, "the adversary or accuser"; created as an angel, but who rebelled.
- 3.2 In heaven, he tries to turn God against people (Rev. 12:10).
- 3.3 On earth, he tries to turn people against God (Gen 3:1; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19)
- 3.4 Accusation: "Job worships you only because you buy his love not because you are worthy of praise."
- 3.5 Sabaeans from south: Wicked people destroy farming operation.
- 3.6 Fire from heaven: Natural disaster destroys sheep-livestock operation
- 3.7 Chaldeans from north: Wicked people destroy camel-livestock operation.
- 3.8 Mighty wind: Natural disaster destroys Job's children
- 3.9 Job's Response: Passes the test with good theology (20-22)
 - 1. Who is man? Helpless creature who is born and dies.
 - 2. Who is God? Sovereign creator who gives and takes.
 - 3. What is worship? Ascribing worth to God for who he is, not what he gives.