

The Bible From 20,000 Feet Part 6: Job 1-25

Tuesday Night Bible Study, July 15, 2008

--OUTLINE:

- SATAN ASSAULTS THE THRONE OF GOD WITH LIES
- FAITH DURING SUFFERING SILENCES CRITICS AND DEMONSTRATES THE REALITY OF GOD IN OUR LIVES

--INTRO:

- Job probably lived sometime between the tower of Babel and Abraham
 - one indication that he lived during this time is that there is no reference to God's covenant with Abraham or the Mosaic law
 - the "burnt offerings" mentioned in Job 1:5 most likely were of the same kind offered by Noah (Genesis 8:20) and Abraham.
- Job lived in the land of Uz which was northeast of Canaan between Canaan and Ur where Abraham was from.
- the author of Job is unknown, but most scholars conclude that it was written near the time of Solomon when other Hebrew books of poetry were written (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon)
 - if the author lived at this time then they would have only been able to record the conversations in Job's life through divine revelation.
 - Ezekiel and James both validate the authenticity of Job (Ezekiel 14:20, James 5:11)

--SATAN ASSAULTS THE THRONE OF GOD WITH LIES

- Job was a righteous man of great wealth, similar to Abraham.
 - he was "blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil." (Job 1:1)
 - Job 1:3: "his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East."
- Job 1:6-12 gives us a brief glimpse into a mysterious event in the spiritual realm that led to the trials in Job's life.
 - the conversation between God and Satan that is described could be a simplified, human translation of a more abstract spiritual reality.
 - one interesting side note is that in the spiritual realm we see battles between good angels and bad angels (Daniel 10:20) and yet in this scene the head of the demonic forces is face to face with the the Head of the good angels in what appears to be a peaceable exchange.
 - in reality it was anything but peaceful... words carry spiritual substance (the Word of God is the "sword of the Spirit"), and Satan assaults the throne of God with his lies... he has the audacity to approach the throne of God with his arrogant lies...
 - before Satan fell from heaven he was the arch cherub who served God at His throne (Ezekiel 28:14) and then deceived himself into believing the lie that he could take God's place.
 - then Satan plunges the entire human race into the fall by deceiving Adam and Eve into believing the lie that they could be like God
 - and now what Satan says to God in this passage amounts to an attack on the very heart of God's plan to save us from the results of the fall.

--by this time Satan can see God's master plan of salvation taking shape... as many links in God's plan of salvation are already in place...

--the symbolic covering God provided for Adam and Eve's nakedness after the fall

--God's unconditional covenant to defeat Satan

--God's unconditional covenant to preserve the world after the Flood (and if Job lived after Abraham...)

--God's unconditional covenant to establish a nation through Abraham

--God's unconditional covenant to bless all nations through Abraham's descendants (Christ entered through the nation of Israel to bless all nations with salvation)

--God reveals the heart of His plan of salvation through Abraham's life... we are saved by faith apart from works (the apostle Paul even used Genesis 15:6 as a proof text for his explanation of the gospel in Romans)

--Job 1:6-11: "Now there was a day when the sons of God [*a term for angels*] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 7 And the LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' So Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.' 8 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?' So Satan answered the LORD and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!'"

--Satan attacks the very heart of God's plan of salvation...

--Satan tells God that he went "to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." (Job 1:7)

--the passage doesn't say why Satan walked back and forth over the earth, but God knew what Satan was thinking and then tells him "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?" (Job 1:8)

--by God's statement we can infer that Satan could not find anybody on the earth who had faith in God.

--the word fear in this passage essentially means faith.

--Nelson's Bible dictionary states that this kind of fear is "a feeling of reverence, awe, and respect."

--Psalms 111:10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

--Satan then challenges God's appraisal of Job and essentially states that Job's faith isn't genuine and therefore God's plan of salvation isn't genuine.

--a paraphrase of Satan's train of thought could be something along the lines, "this plan of salvation of yours that is based on faith will never work because I just went searching throughout all the earth and could not find one example of faith. You think that Job has faith, but his faith isn't real...it's only propped up by all the blessings you've given him. Take away his blessings and his faith will disappear!"

--FAITH DURING SUFFERING SILENCES CRITICS AND DEMONSTRATES THE REALITY OF GOD IN OUR LIVES

--after Satan assaults the throne of God with his lies, God then chooses Job to prove Satan wrong...

--Job 1:13-22: "Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; 14 and a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 when the Sabeans raided them and took them away — indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!' 16 While he was still speaking, another

also came and said, 'The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!' 17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, 'The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!' 18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!' 20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 **And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."** 22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong."

--it may seem unfair that God allowed Job to go through extreme suffering because of Satan, but there was a greater purpose that God had in mind...

--God used Job as a model of faith for the billions of people throughout history who have read the Bible! When you think of all the lives Job has ministered to it sheds a whole new light on his suffering.

--in Ezekiel God esteems the example of Job right along side Noah and Daniel...

--Ezekiel 14:19-20: God said to Ezekiel, "Or if I send a plague into that land and pour out my wrath upon it through bloodshed, killing its men and their animals, 20 as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could save neither son nor daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness."

--Job's model of faith...

--Job didn't see his life through the circumstances of the present but rather he saw the beginning and end of his life in God's hands and trusted that He was in control of what happened in between.

--Job 1:21: "And he said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.'"

--the perspective of faith is the polar opposite of the perspective of the flesh that Satan tries to exploit...

--the flesh only looks at the present without seeing what came before the present and what will happen after...without seeing the evil that created the present temptations or the consequence that follows the temptations!

--when things seemed like they couldn't get any worse then another wave of adversity strikes Job...

--Job 2:1-10: "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." 3 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? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause." 4 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" 6 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life." 7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. 9 **Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"** 10 **But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?"** In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

--Job's wife turned out to not have genuine faith, but even in the depths of suffering Job's faith proved to be the bedrock of his life!

--Job's trial continues when he searches for answers and only finds the flawed reasoning of his friends who say that his suffering is a result of sin in his life while being totally ignorant of the events in the spiritual realm that led to his suffering. (Job 4 – 25)

--Job 19:13-25: Job laments, "He has removed my brothers far from me, And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. 14 My relatives have failed, And my close friends have forgotten me. 15 Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants, Count me as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight. 16 I call my servant, but he gives no answer; I beg him with my mouth. 17 My breath is offensive to my wife, And I am repulsive to the children of my own body. 18 Even young children despise me; I arise, and they speak against me. 19 All my close friends abhor me, And those whom I love have turned against me. 20 My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth. 21 "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, For the hand of God has struck me! 22 Why do you persecute me as God does, And are not satisfied with my flesh? 23 "Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! 24 That they were engraved on a rock With an iron pen and lead, forever! 25 **For I know that my Redeemer lives...**"

--without any answers Job proclaims, "**Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.**" (Job 13:15)

--even though Job questions God and can't understand why He is allowing everything that has happened to him He still has faith and trusted in God... and in time God restored Job's life so that his blessings after his trial were double what they were before. (Job 42:10)

--when we are going through trials and suffering just think of how Job endured and how all along God was working a greater purpose...

--the greater purpose could include the simple purpose of praising God in the midst of suffering to silence critics and demonstrating the reality of God in our lives... shining the light of the gospel into the world through our example!

--shining the light of the gospel through being a "letter of Christ" – a living epistle!
--2 Cor 3:3: "you are a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."

--it's easy for critics to echo the words of Satan and write off people's faith as being only as deep as their blessings.

--but when you see a Christian who is going through suffering and still praising God you can see that faith is the unshakable bedrock of their lives!