

# **Job**

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon  
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2009

## **Intro**

- Sometimes people ask tricky questions- why did God create the devil? If God is all powerful why does He not put an immediate end to evil? Why do good people suffer? Why do evil people often not suffer?
- Theologians have wrestled with these questions for years. Often when life is good we tend to avoid such questions, but when we are going through tough times these questions can begin to surface.
- Job went through a horrific time in his life and as a result wanted answers to some of the questions others might shy away from asking- why does God allow the righteous to suffer?

## **Read Job 1:1 - 3:1**

## **Background**

- Job- prob. Oldest book in Bible except Gen 1-11
- Probably happened before Moses & Abraham- no mention of Israel or Mosaic laws etc. Even though speaks at length about issues of sin and judgement etc.
- There are references to early happenings in the bible including possible references to the flood and dispersion of Babel, but a definite reference to Adam's sin (Job 31:33; where Adam is mentioned by name and an allusion to the fig leaves).
- Name Job not common later but found in documents dated 2,000 BC (time of Abraham & earlier).
- Place names referred to in Job are listed in Gen 10 table of nations, which dates to just after Babel dispersion.
- There is an absence of polytheism in the tribal groups/nations mentioned which are not descended from Abraham, however by the time of Abraham polytheism was commonplace and worship of the Lord rare.
- Job lived 140 years after his suffering (Job 42:16) and had 10 kids before (Job 1:2) so he exhibits the same longevity as the early patriarchs in Genesis.
- Land of Uz- Uz originally a son of Aram, son of Shem, son of Noah (Gen 10:23). Probably Edom (Esau's descendants later settled there), near the Dead Sea. Although now quite arid it was very fertile in the time of Abraham (see description of nearby place Zoan in Gen 13:10). Lam 4:21 indicates that Edom was called Uz prior to the Edomites settling there.

## **Structure**

- Intro (1-2); Job's anguish (3); 3 Discourses with the 'comfortors' Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar (4-14; 15-21; 22-31); Elihu's discourse(32-37); God's reply to Job (38-41); Job's restoration (42).

## **Job's Integrity during suffering**

- Q. What would it take for us to curse God? Losing possessions? Health? What would it take for us to hold back in our worship to God? Would suffering make us deny the faith?
- Satan accused Job of only being in it for the blessings; take them away and Job would surely curse God to His face (1:1-family & possessions; 2:5 his health). Even his wife encouraged him to 'curse God and die' (2:9) when she saw the misfortune

he went through.

- Job does the opposite of curse God- he blesses God (1:21). We may not understand, but will we still bless God's name?
- Mourns and grieves (1:20a) then falls down & worships (1:20b). We need to mourn at times in our lives, catharsis- not bottle up emotion- the Holy Spirit releases people to weep when they have held back. But we need to mourn in faith and not despair as the world does- 1Thess 4:13- we do not sorrow like those who have no hope. Maturity is still being able to praise when we have mourned.
- Job's suffering was not normal- the level of suffering we are presently experiencing is also not normal- Satan is behind it- just as there was a reaction in the heavenlies to Job so too there is a reaction to us- Satan would love to take us out, but we must submit to God and resist the Devil & he will flee from us (James 4:7). Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing (1:22). Our verse for the year- 'Be strong and of good courage for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them' (Josh 1:6).
- Job commended by God- 1:1 'blameless & upright, feared God & shunned evil'. God agrees with this summary- 1:8; 2:3. He is commended in James 5:1 and Ez 14:14,20. In extreme trial Job kept his integrity and remained loyal to God 'for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health'. Will we?

### **Job's Struggles during suffering**

- Job seemed to be doing okay until the 'comforters' arrived. They sat with him in silence for a week and said nothing. Job must have guessed by their silence that they were thinking he was guilty of some hideous sin. When, in extreme grief, he opens his mouth to curse the day of his birth (notice he does not curse God) they begin to suggest he must be guilty of some terrible sin. This goes on for 3 rounds with each putting their 'spiritual' opinions forward.
- Sometimes it is our friends & family that inadvertently hurt us the most, especially when they are trying to help in tough times. God rebukes the false advice Job's friends give (Job 42:7,8), but Job's healing still comes when he prays for his friends. Bitterness must be rooted out for healing to come, even if, like Job, we are in the right -Mt 5:44- pray for enemies (and fumbling friends).
- We need to be gentle with those suffering- God is acquainted with grief (Is 53:3). He understands those who suffer- like the woman caught in adultery and offers a way through. The Pharisees were quick to judge but Jesus came for the sick. When people are grief-stricken they say foolish things- his 'comforters' were theologically responding to the content but unable to speak to Job's broken heart. Sometimes we need to bypass what people are saying with their mouths (e.g. swearing, cursing) and speak, as Jesus did, to the heart. Our commission=to bind up the broken hearted (Is 61). There are so many grieving Atheists, still grieving over the death of a loved one, that need God's gentle touch of healing and hope; but we can miss it if we only engage the brain and not the heart. Jesus spoke to the hearts of the lepers through a physical touch of healing- the Spirit will lead us in each situation.
- Job questioned God's logic in allowing the righteous to suffer. God replied (chaps 38-41) in affirming His wisdom, power and care for all creation from the stars to all creatures great and small. Job then realises he is not qualified to question God's actions as he only perceives a fraction of reality. Although God does not give a direct answer He does give an answer 'Trust me, I think I'm big enough to know what I'm doing here'. There are some things we will never understand this side of heaven, but like Job, we must trust that God knows what He is doing, even when we don't.

**Job's Faith during suffering- Read Job 19:25-27**

- Job placed his faith in God's ability to atone for sins (1:5- sacrifices for his sons). His faith was in God even during the bleakest times of his suffering.
- We must never move on from the preaching of the cross- this is where our healing comes from- sozo- saved, healed and delivered. No matter what we face we must preach christ and we will see the breakthrough in our lives and in this land.
- Job 42:10,12,13- Job had 7 sons and 3 daughters to replace the 7 sons and 3 daughters he lost and God blessed him with twice the possessions. God restores the years that the locusts have eaten. Faith is the key that unlocks the blessings of God (salvation, healing, provision), but faith is believing that which we do not see -Heb 11:1- Job believed even when he had nothing to show for it, and he saw the breakthrough- so shall we!

**Conclusion**

- Times of suffering are opportunities to exercise faith and integrity even when we do not understand the greater picture as God does.

*Ministry time- surrendering to the cross of Christ*