

{Open Bibles to Job / Pre-introduction}

Starting Job this am has a certain irony. I'd been hoping to begin a series in Job for some time now. As you know, it's a book about suffering. And it's a book that I've spent quite a bit of time in.

But here we are starting t/BOJ on June 16th. Yesterday was t/3 yr. anniv. of Giana's last surgery, t/one that ultim. claimed her earthly life It's also F.D. That makes this day esp. diff. for me.

For t/past 3 yrs. Lois and I have in unparalled grief & suff. We recog. we're not alone. Suffering is a democracy—it's freely included in this race called "life." True for those who are savingly related to God. Today & in t/past.

Speaking of past . . . take you to a story about a man who lived a long time ago. Story about a man named Job. With that in mind, focus your attention on t/first v. of chapt. 1 as you stand together.

{Scripture Reading}

"The Greatest of Men in the Worst of Times: An Introduction to Job"

vv. 1-5 set t/stage for this story: setting t/stage . . . for impending disaster. It's about [^]

Each of us has a life story. Job is no diff. For us, that story includes happy times—and sad ones. For those of us who have suffered calamity in our life there’s always t/tendency to look back—when things were good.

One of t/hardest things for me to do is look at pictures of Giana taken during those “good times.” She’s happy, smiling; she has no idea that a devastating chapter in her life (ours) would unfold starting w/a trip to get a Xmas tree on Dec. 24, 2015. A trip that would be interr. by an encounter w/a drunk driver on a roadway not far from here.

We know t/story of Job. T/calamities that would devastate his life. But for Job there were happier times. If they had photographs back then, we could look at t/pictures: smiling Job; happy children; prosperous household.

That’s what we’re going to look at this am. Setting t/stage . . . (2parts)

I. Setting the Stage for Disaster, Part 1 (v. 1)

II. Setting the Stage of Disaster, Part 2 (vv. 2-5)

A. This is a Story About a Man Named Job

1 THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job . . .

1. The name “Job”

According to Gleason Archer t/name likely comes from an Arabic root meaning “to come back” or “repent.” Others hold that it means “to hate” or “object of enmity.”

2. As for the book that bears his name . . .

a. Considered a literary masterpiece

Martin Luther used 2 words to describe t/BOJ: “Magnificent” & “Sublime.”

Thomas Carlyle, t/19th c. Scottish essayist: “There is nothing written, I think, in t/Bible or outside of it, of equal literary merit.”

O.T. scholar R.K. Harrison writes: “Certainly it is unmatched in the writings of the Old Testament for its artistic character, its grandeur of language, depth of feeling, and the sensitivity with which the meaning of human suffering is explored.” [Harrison, 1022]

Tennyson reputedly called Job “the greatest poem of ancient or modern times.” [Talbert, 4]

b. Job is part of the OT “Wisdom Literature” which includes Proverbs and Ecclesiastes

c. Job the man is mentioned elsewhere, such as in Ezek. 14:14,20 & James 5:11

Latter passage from t/NT==>

We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

(ὕπομονή = endurance, not patience, per se)

B. Job Lived in a Place Called Uz

1. We can only speculate as to where Uz was! (Location of Uz)

Locations in ancient Edom (bordered Israel from t/S.) & Northern Mesopotamia (N. of Israel) have been suggested.

But as one commentator notes ==>

“Uz was distinguished from [Edom] in Jeremiah’s time, if not before (Jer. 25:20–21).” [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Other scholars suggest that Uz was in Bashan, south of Damascus (Syria); others say Uz lay east of Edom, in northern Arabia.

Arabic locale fits many of t/customs, geography & vocabulary of Job.

Whatever Uz’s location, it was near a desert (Job 1:19), it was fertile for agriculture and livestock-raising (1:3, 14; 42:12), and it was probably outside Palestine. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

2. The book itself was likely written in Aramaic & translated into Hebrew at a later date

It’s a book w/a rich vocab. that reveals influences from several lang.: Hebrew; Aramaic; Akkadian; Arabic; Sumerian; Ugaritic [Zuck, 8]

3. As far as how the book breaks down ==>

Simple way to see the book has been described by 1 comm. as

prologue ==> dialogue ==> monologue ==> epilogue

Prologue is in prose or narrative (chapters 1-2)

Dialogue which contains prose and poetry (chapters 3-37)

Monologue which involves G. directly speaking (38-41)

Epilogue again in narrative form (42)

4 “logues” [^]

83% of t/book is dialogue (conversation) in which there are 3 cycles of speeches whereby Job replies to each of his friends. (chapters. 3-37)

4. Did Job really exist?

There have been some who claim Job never existed, that this is a parable of sorts. For several reasons we would reject that. T/book is historical, not allegorical. BOJ is about a real person who experienced real pain & suffering before a very real G.

Harrison writes: “While the book cannot be regarded as history in the ordinary sense, there seems little reason to doubt the existence of a then historical personage behind the narrative who passed through some sort of experience involving suffering . . .” [Harrison, 1032]

T/poetic dialogue (conversations between Job & his 3 friends) are not intended to be verbatim quotes of what they said, but accurate portrayals of their conversations in poetic form.

A. This is a Story About a Man Named Job

B. Job Lived in a Place Called Uz

C. The Events Took Place a Long Time Ago

1. As far as the date is concerned: we have to talk about when these events happened and then the when they were written down

a. When did the events of Job’s life occur?

(1) Before Moses during the time of the Patriarchs (Abraham)

(a) Nine reasons:

1. The length of Job’s life matches that of those during t/time of t/OT Patriarchs.

Job may have been around 60 when the events of the book transpired & he lived another 140 years after that. (unusual longevity)

Cf. Terah (Abraham's father = 205); Abraham = 175; Isaac = 180; Jacob = 147. Job's approx. age of 200 places him in that time period.

2. Job's wealth was measured in livestock. True of Abraham &, later, Jacob (Gen. 12:16, 13:2); Gen. 30:43, 32:5).

3. The Sabeans & Chaldeans mentioned in t/book are nomadic. That wasn't true of them in later times.

4. Job was the priest of his family (i.e. no official priesthood).

5. No mention of the Mosaic Law.

6. Word "Almighty" is used of God 31x in Job (Shaddai). Typical of t/Patriarchal age.

7. Personal & place names used in t/book are those associated w/the Patriarchal period.

8. Name "Job" was a common west Semitic name in the 2d c. BC.

9. Stylistic parallels in t/book to ancient Ugaritic literature.

Evidence is weighty for events that take place during or slightly before t/time of Abraham in t/2d c. BC.

b. Then there's the date of writing

When was t/book itself written? Don't know for sure. Some have held that the book was written shortly after t/events themselves.

Views on when written range from 2100 - 600 BC.

Older scholars thought it contemp. of Job; most modern scholars, even conservative ones, date the actual writing to a later time.

Options held:

1. Before the time of Moses in the Patriarchal age. Uncommon today.
2. In the reign of Solomon. View of Martin Luther
3. In the reign of Manasseh (seventh c. BC).
4. Period of Jeremiah (late seventh c. BC).
5. The Babylonian Exile (sixth c. BC).

2. Might wonder who wrote the book

Depend on the date. Job; a contemporary of Job; Moses (common among t/Jews); Solomon; Hezekiah; Isaiah; Ezra.

Like our NT book of Hebrews, only G. knows for sure who wrote it.

3. As far as the theme of Job....

Hard to pin down a single theme in the book. Certainly it's about suff. But beyond that, it's a book about faith and faithfulness (why does a righteous man serve a holy G.?). It's a book about G. (sov.; holiness; faithfulness).

It's a book that looks forward in time to JC—the only person who ever lived that personified undeserved suffering & who alone could join all of his suffering servants into one redeemed CH.

D. This is Also a Story About a Man of Faith and Character

Back to v. 1 ==>

1 THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil.

1. Note first — Job’s Piety (x4)

1 . . . blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil.

a. Blameless (not “sinless”)

Calvin suggests t/word “integrity” (Job a man of integrity).

b. Upright — Straight or level

(1) Consistent behavior that is in line with the ways of God

One commentator notes ==>

“Whereas the previous term [“blameless”] highlights internal wholeness of character, this word implies external straightness in comparison to others.” [Talbert, 28]

c. He feared God

(1) The first time God’s name is mentioned in the book of Job

(a) Note the time — time when this story occurs

We’re talking t/time of Abraham // 2000 yrs. b4 X. Time of spiritual darkness. B4 t/nation of Israel // giving of t/Law thru Moses.

(b) Hop into the time machine with me

We’re back in t/Patriarchal age. Time of nomads & tents & camels & sheep. We’re as far on t/back side of t/cross (2000 yrs.) that we are now on t/front side of it. People are pagans; they’ve drifted away from a knowledge of God—a knowledge that was initially preserved by Noah & his family.

G. calls a man named Abraham out of a place called Ur of t/Chaldees. Gen. 11. G. promises this man a great inheritance consisting of land (land of Israel); posterity (he would become a great ppl.); blessing (thru Abraham t/ppl. of t/earth would be blessed. Sov. call!

Around same time, many mi. away, G. calls a wealthy man named Job in t/land of Uz. Unlike Abraham we're not told how G. called him. But here he is — he fears G.; t/true G. who stands as a light out of all t/false, pagan deities of t/age.

(2) We're more familiar with the phrase "the fear of the Lord"

Debate as to whether Job's "fearing God" is equivalent to Solomon's "the fear of the Lord" that we see in Prov.

For 1 thing, when you read t/phrase "Fear of t/Lord" in t/O.T. it's almost always t/fear of YHWH ("Lord" = YHWH).

Personal, covt. name of G. revealed to Moses in Exo. 3.

Here in v. 1 we have "Fearing God" ("God" = "Elohim" = generic term that can mean gods (pl.); false gods; or t/1 True God).

Job 28 you have t/phrase "t/fear of t/Lord" ("Elohim").

I think when the dust settles we're basically talking about t/same thing To fear the Lord (YHWH) in t/rest of t/Wisdom Lit. (Prov.) is not unlike "fearing G." (Elohim) in Job.

(3) What does that mean? — "To fear the Lord" / "Fearing God"?

(a) This isn't just an OT concept

Acts 9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord ...

2 Cor 5:11 Therefore, we persuade men, knowing t/fear of the Lord ...

(b) What does it mean?

Defining t/word "fear" & what it means for t/believer can be like nailing t/proverbial Jello to a wall.

Struggle is defining t/Engl. word "fear". Synonyms don't do justice: "angst; anxiety; concern; despair; dismay; dread; horror; panic; scare; terror; aversion; distress; foreboding; fright; trembling; trepidation."

Is that what we're talking about? Depends.

For the believer: "Reverential awe that results in worship and humble obedience fueled by love."

A Powerful awesomeness than leaves the worshiper changed.

For the unbeliever: "foreboding terror" (at least, it should be).

Depends on which side of G. you're on. Do you know Him thru JC?

"Reverential awe that results in worship and humble obedience fueled by love."

If you don't, then it ought to be a "foreboding terror"

Think of a super-hero. An imaginary Superman w/super-powers. He is good (like our colloquial Superman). If there were bad guys on

t/loose & these bad guys broke into your home & were threatening t/life of your family, imagine what it would be like to have Superman unexpectedly show up. You would see Superman in a very different way than t/bad guys. The bad guys would feel “foreboding terror”. You would experience a referential, joyful awe.

Good illust. on 1 hand, but a bad illust. on t/other. This Superman, if he existed, would melt before our holy, omnipotent God. We wouldn't worship this Superman. T/head of a pin in cf. to infinite space would not come close to comparing him to G.

I think it gives you some perspective. Take my SM illust. & then apply that to an immeasurable, holy, eternal, omnipotent G. who holds t/power of life & death in his hands.

“Reverential awe that results in worship and humble obedience fueled by love.”

In Gen. chapt. 20, we find Abraham in t/land of t/Philistines. He is seen that t/depravity around him & lies about his wife, thinking to himself, as recorded in v. 11 of Gen. 20 ==>

‘there is no fear of God in this place’

Deut 25:17, t/wicked Amalekites are said to have no ‘fear of God’.

Cf. our contemporary culture which has no fear of God. We live in a culture of death and a culture of moral confusion.

There is no fear of G. in America today. Our currency may say,

“In G. we trust” but in reality we neither trust nor fear Him.

People fornicate like animals; family is in disarray; we reject G's role as creator in refusing to accept t/roles he has given for sex, gender, & marriage. We reject G's role as life-giver in our modern day secular sacrament, abortion.

We can understand that in a secular nation.

We can't accept that in t/CH of JC.

If we truly feared G. we wouldn't trivialize our worship, or waste away our days. Pornography wouldn't be t/issue it is in t/CH if we truly feared Him.

“Reverential awe that results in worship and humble obedience fueled by love.”

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8:13 “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil . . .”

15:16 Better to have a little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and turmoil.

Job 28:28 “. . . Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.

1 . . . Job . . . was blameless, upright, fearing God . . .

Satan affirms that Job fears G., altho he ?s his motive for doing so =>

1:9–10 9 Then Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 “Have You not made a hedge about him and his house

and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. IOW....

1. Job's Piety (v. 1)

a. Blameless

b. Upright

c. He feared God

4th==>

d. He turned from evil (repentance)

(1) The Hebrew language implies that Job feared evil

While you can turn away from evil w/o fearing G. (ppl. do it all t/time), you can't fear G. w/o turning away from & fearing evil.

Genesis 4:7 (God speaking to Cain)

"If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Lesson for us, isn't it?

Fear of G. ought to induce in us a fear of sin & evil.

2. Got to note something right off the bat: The author is establishing Job's righteousness in light of the rest of the book

The author of Job is shouting out to us, with this 4-fold description, that Job's calamities were not due to his sin or neglect.

a. Reiterated:

1:8 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

2:3 The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.”

1. Job’s Piety (v. 1)

a. Blameless

b. Upright

c. He feared God

d. He turned from evil

Centuries after Job’s life ended, G. would bring up his name & piety again. During t/time when t/southern kd of Judah slid into idolatry. G. judged the nation just as He said He would do if they turned away from Him.

Their wickedness now terminal, G. spoke thru a prophet named Ezek. saying that even if Noah, Daniel, & Job were living in Judah at that time, they would not be able to persuade Him to deliver anyone but themselves by the skin of their own righteous teeth (Ezek. 14:14,20).

Out of all t/righteous figures found in t/OT—Patriarchs Abraham or Joseph; Leaders like Moses & David; Prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah & Jeremiah—t/3 men most noted for their righteousness that came to God’s mind were Noah, Daniel, and Job. [cf. Talbert, 29]

Job is a righteous man. But he still needed a Savior. That Savior would come 2 millennia later in t/Person of JC.

Ultimately, Job, like Abraham, was justified by faith (cf. Romans 4).

J. in John 8:56 told t/Jews ==>

“UR father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, & he saw it & was glad”

I think t/same could be said for Job.

Job isn't named among t/heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, but what was said of them didn't exclude him

13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

That's v. 1. By G's grace, we're going to get thru v. 5. We're going to do it quickly. You'll see; believe me!

II. Setting the Stage for Disaster, Part 2 (vv. 2-5)

A. Job's Three-Fold Blessing (vv. 2-3):

- 1. Job's Paternity (2)**
- 2. Job's Possessions (3a)**
- 3. Job's Prominence (3b)**

1. Job's Paternity — Children (2)

2 And seven sons and three daughters were born to him.

a. Interesting that his wife isn't mentioned here—she's only mentioned once in the entire book (2:9, in a neg. light)

b. 10 kids

Psalm 127:3–5 3 Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. 5 How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them . . .

Job's "quiver" was full

(1) Of his 10 children, 7 were sons

Imp. in that culture which was so dependant on male workers & heirs.

2. Job's Possessions — Wealth (3a)

a. HCSB

3 His estate included 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and a very large number of servants. . . .

b. This was how wealth was measured then: Livestock / Land / Workers

Charles Swindoll writes ==>

“. . . [Job] had amassed a remarkable number of possessions. Among them were 7,000 sheep. Much of the wool from the animals would have been sold. The portion held back could be woven into fabric that would be made into warm clothing for the cold winter days. The family's food would be provided from these animals and acres of crops. There were also 3,000 camels. I would imagine Job 'ran a trucking business' for the caravans that went from east to west. No doubt, his camels were for hire, and those camels became his personal transportation. There were 1,000 oxen, yoked together in pairs to plow

the fertile fields, preparing the soil for planting the seed that was later harvested for an abundance of food. And we're told there were 500 female donkeys. In that ancient era, female donkeys provided the delicacy of the day—donkey milk.” [Swindoll, 6]

In his own whimsical way, he adds ==>

“Over and above all that was a happy, healthy family of ten adult children living nearby. No diapers to change. No baths to give. No carpools. No big meals to prepare. No lunches for school. No boys with big tattoos driving sleek chariots, showing up and honking out front for the daughters. No teenaged daughters with nose rings and pierced belly buttons running around the house. All that's now behind Job and his wife. Job's got it made, and amazingly, no one was criticizing because there's nothing about him to criticize. Job had it made.” [Swindoll, 6]

3. Job's Prominence — Good Reputation (3b)

The writer simply adds ==>

3b . . . and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Reputation; Respect

29:7–8 7 “When I went out to the gate of the city, When I took my seat in the square, 8 The young men saw me and hid themselves, And the old men arose and stood.

B. Job's Practice — Spiritual Integrity (4-5)

1. The Occasion (4)

4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

a. At the beginning of v. 4 we read ==>

4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day . . .

b. What is “his day”?

See t/same construction used in 3:1 ==>

Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed [his day]

Translators add t/implicit idea: “the day of his birth.”

When we read that ==>

4 [Job’s] sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day . . .

We’re likely talking about birthday celebrations!

NIV ==>

4 His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays,

4 . . . and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.

Contrary to t/Swindoll quote earlier, it’s possible that t/sisters still lived at home (no mention of their husbands).

T/brothers would take turns hosting birthday parties in each of their houses. They were likely Baptists, because they were all about eating and drinking. (depending on what they drank, they may have been Reformed . . . or Lutheran).

Happy family. No sibling rivalries; everyone is getting along.

c. Job would use those celebrations to remind him to do something (verse 5)

2. The Intercession (5)

5a When the days of feasting had completed their cycle . . .

(Could be a cycle of feasting 4 ea .person, or t/yearly cycle of Bdays)

5b . . . Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all . . .

5c . . . for Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” . . .

5d . . . Thus Job did continually.

a. Some of the details are lacking

One scholar asks an entire series of questions in this regard==>

“Not that it is important, but the text does not say how often the brothers hosted their sisters. Was it on their birthdays? Were they established feast days? Were these parties every day of the week since there were seven brothers? Why did not the sisters invite the brothers to their homes? Were any or all of these children married? Were all the children at all the parties or just one brother at a time with his three sisters? Did Job attend all these affairs? How close to one another did these family members live? Though lacking details, the text does describe a big, happy family. They not only got along with each other but enjoyed each other’s company.” [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11,

The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 51.]

Some details are lacking, but this we know: Job's family life matched t/description of him in v. 1. Above all, he was concerned for his children's spiritual welfare.

As parents we don't stop praying for our kids; we don't stop ministering to our kids—not until, like me—our children have gained t/inheritance that is theirs in X.

What is the picture we get from vv. 1-5? When we peek into t/window of Job's life? Christopher Ash, in his excellent commentary on Job, writes ==>

“It sets a happy scene . . . The happiness consists in a good man being a great man, a pious man being a prosperous man. It is a picture of the world being as the world ought to be, a world where the righteous lead. It is a world where the prosperity gospel seems to be true.” [Ash, 35]

But we know what's coming. We know what's coming in Job's life because it's history, it's recorded in sacred writ. But for us, we don't know what's coming. You have reminders in your life of unexpected bad times that came crashing down on your good times. That's where I live.

Focus on the cross . . .