

WHO IS LIKE JOB?

Job 1:20-22

TEXT: *At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Many question the actual historical existence of Job. They say that there could be no one of such noble character during the sufferings that are recorded in this amazing book. They like to relegate this account to some kind of parable useful for teaching and for training people to be patient under all trials.

Those who think this way, however, must take issue with Ezekiel, the inspired prophet of God who writes about Job as a man whose place in world history is as real as were Noah and Daniel: *The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its men and their animals, even if these three men-Noah, Daniel and Job-were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD.* Ez 14 Or they must argue with the Apostle James who writes: *Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.* Ja 5 And of course, Jesus Himself, whom Scripture calls "the Word Incarnate," testifies to the verbal inspiration of Scripture by God the Holy Spirit.

So what can we learn from this amazing piece of history that focuses our attention on a single man who probably lived sometime during, if not a little before, the days of Abraham who lived around 2000 BC? Today we ask: WHO IS LIKE JOB? I. They are those who know that Satan is behind all wrongdoing; and, II. They are those who know that the Lord is in control of our lives.

We know from Scripture that Satan is behind all wrongdoing in the universe. Peter warns us: *Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.* 1 Pe 5 But since we cannot see Satan or his demonic hoards, he is easily misunderstood. Many do not even believe in his existence. Many others think that Satan is some sort of ancient symbol of all that is evil. Others think that Satan is someone with whom they might shoulder up to, to gain power, wealth and influence. Since their hearts are darkened by sin, they imagine that it would be to their advantage to be on his side. But Jesus tells us that Satan is consigned to eternal hell, *the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* Mt 25 Hell is not created for humans. That's why Jesus won forgiveness of sins on the cross for all humanity. But any human being that does not believe in the name of Jesus will forfeit his forgiveness and will spend eternity in hell, *the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* Mt 25 The ONLY thing Satan can do to hurt God is to keep humans from knowing and believing this.

Job was one who knew and believed in the Lord, his Redeemer. That faith was reflected in his life. Already, before there was a Jewish nation and the ceremonial laws God handed down to the Jews for their worship and instruction, Job was teaching his

family of the Lord's salvation, teaching them to worship and sacrifice in the name of the Redeemer. That Scripture calls Job "blameless" and "upright" tells us that by his faith in God's Redeemer, the future "Jesus," God had declared him righteous. And that faith by which God had declared Job righteous in His eyes, was also evident in his life as a relatively "blameless" man in society.

Then an amazing thing is revealed. Unbeknownst to Job, the Lord points to Job as an example of God's grace and goodness: ***The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."*** Job 1 That God would say ***there is no one on earth like him...*** suggests one of two things: either Job is the last believer on the face of the earth at that time, or, Job stands out even among the righteous as one He would use to bring glory to His name. While the first suggestion was once said of Noah, I choose the second reason for God's reason for saying, ***Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil...*** because of the events that follow. Unbeknownst to Job, the Lord is going to use him to bring glory to His saving name. There can be no greater honor than to be used by God to bring glory to His saving name.

Again, unbeknownst to Job, Satan calls God a liar: ***Does Job fear God for nothing? ... Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands ... But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.*** Job 1 Here is the reason why even good Christians suffer. It is because of Satan who despises God and all that is good and true. And it is because you are here to glorify and praise Him even in hardship and distress. Like Job, YOU are, as Paul writes: ***God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*** Ep 2 What an honor this is to be "God's workmanship!"

So like Job, we do not blame God as the ungodly do for any of our sufferings on this earth. It is because of Satan who first brought sin and death into this world. Like Job, we humbly declare: ***Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.***

This isn't easy, however. Suffering and hardships at the hand of Satan and sin never is. That's why we yearn for the eternal Kingdom that is ours through Jesus and is to come. That's why many Christians find our comfort in proclaiming the words of Job in that famous passage: ***I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes-I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*** Job 19 But what "yearning" for heaven would there be if there were now hardships and crosses for us to bear in this life? This was Satan's argument: ***Does Job fear God for nothing? ... Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands ... But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.*** Job 1. Let's be honest about ourselves. When is our worship and praying most intense: when things are going well for our family, and us or when we are hit with a sudden and unexpected

catastrophe? When do we pick up our Bibles and page through the Psalms searching for words of help and comfort? Is it when our life is so comfortable and easy that the words "Thank you Jesus" are an easy thing to say? Or when we are so troubled that our "thank you Lord" is replaced with fervent prayers of "**Lord, I believe; help me in my unbelief!**" Mk 9

Know this: it doesn't matter! Paul writes: **... the (Holy) Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.** Ro 8 Read the entire book of Job and you will see that Job had his moments of severe depression. But as our text says: **In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.** Job's faith was still in God's hands. So is yours. And this is what Satan would have you forget and disbelieve.

Satan will always be Satan. But you and I must let God be God. For we know what kind of God He is by the gift of His Son Jesus who gave Himself to be our Redeemer. This we can never forget. We can let this God of grace and mercy be the Lord of our lives since we can trust that all things, even the things that Satan would do to cause us great trouble and distress, will always work together of our good. For that is His promise written in Scripture, and that is what is revealed in the life of this famous Christian named Job.

When considering the question, WHO IS LIKE JOB? we do not look at Job's sufferings, but at the faith we both share. For we know where all trouble and sin comes from, and we know our Redeemer through whom we know that God is in control of our lives until our Redeemer returns. Amen.