

March 18

Scriptures: Read Job 1 & 2

Key Verse: "... 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."
(Job 1:21)

Overview

The first two chapters of Job tell of Satan's attacks in attempting to cause Job to curse God. We first learn, however, that Job is a truly righteous man, "blameless and upright." He is also described as "one who feared God and shunned evil" (1:1), which is the biblical description of wisdom (28:28). He was blessed with a large, happy family and much wealth. He was the spiritual head and priest of his home (like the patriarchs in Genesis). He offered expiatory sacrifices on behalf of his children, in case they sinned against God. He was concerned about his children's relationship to God and interceded on their behalf. Even at this early point in redemptive history, Job understood that without the shedding of sacrificial blood, there was no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22).

All created beings are subject to God, for He is the Creator. This includes Satan, whose name here is literally translated "the Adversary." His subordination is evident in that he was obliged to give a report of his activities to God, and he could not tempt Job without God's permission. God put limitations on the work of Satan by first ordering that he not lay his hand upon him (1:12); and in the second instance, Satan is ordered to spare his life (2:6).

God's pleasure with Job is made clear at the heavenly counsel meeting where God brought glory to Himself through the example of Job's uprightness. By drawing Satan's attention to His servant Job, God is actually inviting Satan to challenge Him. Satan responds with scepticism about Job's motives and challenges God that if Job's prosperity and protective hedge were gone, he would curse God. God knew that Job's heart was pure and that he could withstand Satan's temptations, for God will not allow His children to be tempted beyond what He knows they can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). What Job had to bear, however, is far beyond what most believers today could bear, and this gives evidence to Job's great love, respect, and dedication to God.

After Job's ten children all died on the same day, and he lost every possession, he was naturally terribly grieved, but he withstood Satan's temptation and passed the test; cursing God was far from his mind; rather, he blessed God, and in so doing God put Satan to shame. Job's words are remarkable and have become famous in recognition of the sovereignty of God (key verse, 1:21). Job understood that since God was the true owner of everything he had, including his children, then God could take away at any time that which belongs to Him, and this is the basic principle of stewardship.

Believers must not allow circumstances to govern their feelings about God. We are to love, serve, and worship Him no matter what happens, even if our whole world seems to collapse. We can trust God to work all things out for our good and His glory.

For the third time, we read of Job being praised for his righteousness, but this time God adds, “still he holds fast to his integrity,” since Job did not succumb to Satan’s temptations. We also learn that those terrible things which happened to Job were “without cause” (2:3). Often times, people ascribe tragedy and suffering to sin in one’s life, but as we see with Job, this is not always the case. Job’s suffering was as a test of his faith, which in the end would make him an even better person with a fuller understanding of God.

Satan would not admit defeat. He continued to charge Job with hypocrisy, saying that if God removed His protection from Job’s healthy and vigorous body, Job would curse God for allowing him to suffer. Once again, God permitted Satan to tempt Job but limited him, in that he was not to take Job’s life. A faithful believer can rest assured that his or her life is indeed in the Lord’s protective hands.

Even though Job suffered greatly with a terrible and seemingly hopeless skin disease, he still remained true to God. Once again, the Lord was victorious over Satan. Notice that Satan did not remove Job’s wife but used her as an added means of temptation. She also had suffered the loss of her ten children, and with Job’s financial losses, she lost her place of prestige in the community. Her reaction, unlike Job’s, was one of bitterness against God. She advised Job to curse, God and hopefully die, for she likely thought he would be better off dead than to go through such suffering and terrible physical pain. It is sad when a person has lost hope, and worse when they have lost confidence and trust in God. Believers must keep strong and keep trusting the Lord, for He is faithful to His children, as Job was soon to learn.

Prayer

O God, help us to become like Job, blameless and upright, fearing You and shunning evil. Please keep our loved ones from harm. We humbly worship You. Blessed be the Name of the Lord!