

## PREACHING THROUGH THE BOOK OF JOB

"I call this book, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written. Our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—Man's destiny, and God's ways with him in the earth. There is nothing written, I think, of equal literary merit." — *Thomas Carlyle*.

If you are a lazy reader, you will pass up Job, and thereby miss some of the most beautiful and helpful material in the entire Old Testament. Its form as Hebrew poetry, its dramatic arrangement, and the depth of the problem it faces, all combine to place Job very far out of the class of light reading. You must give it more than ten minutes at a time, and you must give it thought. You will be glad you did.

The Book of Job is the poetic, dramatic presentation of the problem of suffering faced by a real person under real circumstances. While the children of Israel were toiling in Egypt, between the time of Joseph and that of Moses, Job lived among the descendants of Esau in the edge of the Arabian desert. The problem he faced is one that comes to everyone in some measure: why do the righteous suffer?

### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK

- Chapters 1-2 Prologue in prose. The characters are introduced, and the nature of Job's affliction is told.
- 3-31 The body of the drama in poetic form.
- 32-37 Elihu concludes the friends' arguments.
- 38-41 God speaks. Is this problem the only thing in all God's doings which Job cannot understand?
- 42 Epilogue in prose. Job humbles himself in worship and is restored.

Each of Job's friends speaks in turn. They argue that suffering is always a result of sin. Job must repent, they say, and he will be healed.

Job replies to each address. He protests that he is innocent. This cycle is repeated three times.

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### Sermon Outlines Provided:

- "Between God and Man" (Job 9:1-4, 10-12, 16-20, 31-35)
- "If My Soul Were in Your Soul's Stead" (Job 16:1-5)
- "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" (Job 19:25-27)
- "Mine Eye Hath Seen Thee" (Job 42:1-10)

### Other Suggested Sermon Topics:

- "Hasty Fruit" (Job 15:31-33)
- "Can a Man Be Profitable to God?" (Job 22:1-5)

## QUESTIONS OVER JOB

1. How did the Lord describe Job's character? (1:8)
2. Who were Job's three friends? (2:11)
3. According to Eliphaz, what is man born for? (5:7)
4. What did Job call God in 7:20? (7:20)
5. How did Job view his length of life? (9:25-26)
6. What did Zophar think was the cause of all of Job's problems? (11:13-20)
7. How totally did Job trust God? (13:15)
8. What did Job ask about life after death? (14:14)
9. What was Job's belief about his Redeemer? (19:25)
10. What did Zophar say about the wicked and the godless? (20:5)
11. What did Job say that he had observed about the wicked? (21:7)
12. How did Job point out that sinfulness was not the cause of his troubles? (23:10-12)
13. What did Job say concerning his truthfulness and righteousness? (27:5-6)
14. According to Job, what is the value of wisdom? (28:12-22)
15. What did Job expect but then receive? (30:26)
16. What was the covenant Job made with his eyes? (31:1)
17. According to Elihu, what is God's action toward man based upon? (34:10-12)
18. Out of what did the Lord answer Job? (38:1)
19. Describe Job's last days. (42:12)

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BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

(Job 9:1-4, 10-12, 16-20, 31-35)

INTRODUCTION —

There is no finer prophecy of the things that Christ brings to man than the longings of the Patriarch Job. The shape of Job's emptiness is the shape of Jesus! (Illus. — Archaeologists at Pompeii found hollow places in the lava. They poured plaster of Paris in some of the hollows, and the plaster took the form of human figures that had been covered and then leached away.)

- I. THE UNIVERSAL LONGING FOR A MEDIATOR.
  - A. Job 9:33 "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us."
  - B. Moses was asked to speak for God to Israel, lest they die in God's presence.
  - C. God provided the priesthood to represent men to God, and the order of prophets to represent God to men.
- II. THE GAP BETWEEN GOD'S JUSTICE AND MAN'S FRAILTY.
  - A. Job 9:2 — "How should man be just with God?"
  - B. Romans 3:20 — "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."
  - C. I Corinthians 6:11 — "Such (sinners) were some of you, but ye were washed, ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God."
- III. THE GAP BETWEEN GOD'S STRENGTH AND MAN'S WEAKNESS.
  - A. Job 9:4, 10 — "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? . . . Which doeth great things past finding out."
  - B. Philippians 4:13 — "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."
- IV. THE GAP BETWEEN GOD'S BEING AND MAN'S UNDERSTANDING.
  - A. Job 9:11 — "Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not:

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he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.”

B. Christ came as the revelation, visible and tangible, of God who is love.

C. Man’s perception of God is seen, not in describing Him, but in reflecting His nature, love for love.

### V. THE GAP BETWEEN GOD’S CALLING AND MAN’S HEARING.

A. Job 9:16—“If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.”

B. II Corinthians 5:19—“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation.”

C. There are many evidences that God is, but the greatest possible evidence is the person of Jesus Christ.

### IV. THE GAP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN IN JUDGMENT.

A. Job 9:32—“He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.”

B. I John 2:1—“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

C. Romans 8:34—“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

### CONCLUSION —

I Timothy 2:5-6—“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all.”

The umpire (“daysman” for whom Job longed) mercifully favors the weak.

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IF MY SOUL WERE IN YOUR SOUL'S STEAD

(Job 16:1-5)

INTRODUCTION —

Job puts his finger on the pulse of the world's troubles.

I. "MISERABLE COMFORTERS."

A. In his suffering he longed for sympathy—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

"The touch of human hands—that is the boon we ask;  
For groping day by day along the stony way,  
We need the comrade heart that understands,  
And the warmth, the living warmth of human hands."

— *T. Curtis Clark*

B. Instead he was given unfeeling moralizing and philosophizing. They made him exhibit A in a philosophical discussion.

C. Miserable comforters in the earth—Labor to capital, and vice versa—each a "problem" to the other. The racial problem. Youth problem. Returned veteran. Juvenile delinquent.

II. "I ALSO COULD SPEAK AS YOU DO."

CONDEMNING WORDS WITHOUT FEELING.

A. Words are cheap when one doesn't understand. The petty thief flares up, "Have you ever been hungry?"

B. Scotch professor Blackie chides lad for not holding paper in right hand, then learns he has none.

Thus is introduced:

III. "I WOULD STRENGTHEN YOU WITH MY MOUTH."

A. Perhaps partly the usual conceit that oneself would do better than other.

B. Mostly, sympathy would be born of suffering. "There is, in the experience of sorrow, a power to help others which can be bought at no lesser cost."

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1. Illus.: The paralytic in Canton says, "If I ever get out, I'll call on them, for I know what it means."
  2. Of it there is born tenderness and strength.
  3. "Before I brand a brother with envy or with shame,  
I'll whisper to my heart, 'He comes the road I came.'  
If any sue for pity—Though friend he be or foe—  
I'll whisper to my soul, 'He goes the road I go.'"
- C. He has not only traveled the path, but traveled it well.
1. False idea that much experience makes a sound adviser. Five-time divorcee offers to write on "How to keep a husband."
  2. Suffering leaves some embittered and incapable of spiritual good. (Job's wife.)

### IV. I WOULD SPEAK TO YOU OF CHRIST.

- A. Others are miserable comforters—"Thieves and robbers." Confucius moralized, Buddha spiritualized, Socrates philosophised. None could sympathize—carry the load for us.
- B. Christ could condemn. "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone" (John 8:7).
- C. Instead He invites, comforts, strengthens.
  1. "We have not a high priest that is not touched with a feeling . . . (Heb. 4:15).
  2. He has not only gone the way before, but He has gone successfully. "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

### CONCLUSION —

Accept His comforting, sustaining power today.

## I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH

(Job 19:25-27)

INTRODUCTION — Bold faith speaks for itself.

- A. "Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?"
- B. "Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not. Things too wonderful for me, which I understood not."

### I. JOB MADE HIS OWN PLEA.

- A. The need of a redeemer.
  - 1. He is a vindicator (describe).
  - 2. Otherwise one becomes free only by avenging or repaying.
  - 3. None else understands — all lay false charges of conscious evil.
  - 4. None else believes — he cries for the opportunity to speak permanently.
- B. The Redeemer lives.
  - 1. Faith leaps out of the darkness.
  - 2. It appeals to God — there is none other to help.
  - 3. It sees personal quality of God in His self-revelation.
- C. He will stand at last upon the earth.
  - 1. The longing for immediate fellowship with Him is not to be denied.
  - 2. Since man cannot achieve Heaven, God condescends to earth.
- D. I shall see Him and not as a stranger.
  - 1. God has seemed to be far and aloof.
  - 2. His love and man's longing will find a meeting place.

### II. THE SPIRIT HAS WRITTEN HIS OWN MESSAGE.

- A. It appears in the revelation to patriarchs and prophets.
- B. Christ is accurately described in the longings of those who know Him not.

### III. THE MESSAGE OF THE REDEEMER IS FOUND IN CHRIST.

- A. The need of the redeemer.

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1. The reasons assigned to Job, plus the burden of accumulated sin.
  2. Cleansing from the burden of known sin.
  3. Fellowship in spite of sins not known in ourselves.
- B. The Redeemer lives.
1. "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58).
  2. "Lo, I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20).
- C. He did—and will—stand upon the earth.
1. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14, see 1:1-18).
  2. He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-11).
- D. I shall see Him.
1. The seeing is both personal and universal: "Every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7).
  2. It will be a time either of supreme joy or supreme anguish.



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MINE EYE HATH SEEN THEE  
(Job 42:1-10)

INTRODUCTION —

- A. The age-old quest: "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8).
- B. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18).
- C. God has given many partial revelations of Himself.

I. "MINE EYE HATH SEEN THEE."

- A. Job saw God partly in his own suffering— The purposes of God are not exhausted in material things.
- B. Others saw God—partly in Job's response to his suffering.
  - 1. He insisted on the being of God, who seemed far away.
  - 2. He declared the goodness and justice of God, despite experience.
- C. All men can see the overweening power of the Creator. Seven reasons why a scientist believes in God:
  - 1. By unwavering mathematical law we can prove that our universe was designed and executed by a great engineering Intelligence.
  - 2. The resourcefulness of life to accomplish its purpose is a manifestation of all-pervading intelligence.
  - 3. Animal wisdom speaks irresistibly of a good Creator who infused instinct into otherwise helpless little creatures.
  - 4. Man has something more than animal instinct—the power of reason.
  - 5. Provision for all living is revealed in phenomena which we know today but which Darwin did not know— such as the wonders of genes.
  - 6. By the economy of nature, we are forced to realize that only infinite Wisdom could have foreseen and prepared with such astute husbandry.

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7. The fact that man can conceive the idea of God is in itself a unique proof.

(Build on the greatness of God.)

### II. THE RESULT OF SEEING GOD IS THE END OF PRIDE IN ONE'S OWN INTELLIGENCE AND GOODNESS.

#### A. Job—

1. Comparing himself with himself he could be pleased with himself.
2. Not so, having seen God.

#### B. Ourselves, becoming acquainted with Christ

1. Ends the pride that makes difficulty in the church.  
"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).
2. Ends the self-satisfaction that keeps one out of the church.

#### C. Some, seeing themselves, are despondent.

1. They likewise need to "see God."
  - a. Moses thought he could not do the thing that God required. God responded, "I AM that I AM. I Am hath sent thee" (Exod. 3:14).
  - b. Jeremiah—"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord" (Jer. 17:7). Smile of faith amidst the tears of sorrow.
2. Some withhold self from Christ because of lack of faith in self. He asks us to have faith not in self, but in Him.

### CONCLUSION —

Result of Job's self-abnegation was acceptance and restoration.