

Studies from Job

By Alice S. Mooneyhan
Introduction from Paul's Epistles

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with god through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of god. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of god is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" - Romans 5:1-5.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" - Romans 8:28.

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" - I Corinthians 9:27.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" - II Corinthians 4:17, 18.

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" - II Corinthians 12:10.

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" - Philippians 4:11-13.

These citations show how Saul of Tarsus entered into the Lord's "grace and glory training school," in which he obtained a degree in the knowledge of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ - John 1:17. There was also the opportunity of obtaining his "Master's degree" later, under the tutoring of the Holy Spirit, in the school of practical experience. In Romans 5:1-5 notice especially the words "faith," "grace," "glory," "tribulation," and "patience." Faith is the only requirement for entrance into this school. The Apostle Paul, who was a "post graduate" of this school, prayed for us that we also might become apt students in the same school of divine grace - Colossians 1:9-11.

Job 4 and following JOB - A MAN OF FAITH

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east" - Job 1:1-3.

Job had been through God's "grace and glory training school." In chapter one, we see that Job had put into practice the principles which he had learned in that school. He had studied theology; for he had learned that no man can approach God except on the basis of blood sacrifice. He continually offered such sacrifices unto God in behalf of his own children. Job was an honor student in the realm of social welfare, and he became an active member of his community always interested in others, seeking out the needy, helping those who were in trouble, feeding the poor, and defending the oppressed. He was also successful in agriculture and animal husbandry, for he had flocks and herds, camels and asses. He had learned the spiritual law, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" - Matthew 6:33. God had blessed him and prospered him in all things. But Job had not yet received his "Master's degree."

So there came a time when the Lord decided that it was time for Job to go back to school. This time his course of training was different. He was enrolled in the school of adversity. In this school he learned what it was to be destitute. He also became acquainted with sorrow and grief, with bodily affliction, and persecution by his enemies and also by his friends.

The story is told in chapter one, how he lost all of his substance in one day including his ten children. This was the worst blow of all. When the news of all these calamities came to Job, he "arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" - Job 1:20-22.

In chapters one and two, which are a preface to the book, we are given a glimpse into the spirit world where God is supreme in all things. We see that Satan is the chief trouble maker for man. But we learn also, that he is limited by God's authority, so that the troubles which God permits to come upon us, work for our good (Romans 8:28); and the trial ends, when the desired results are obtained in our lives.

Job 9 and following

God testified to Satan that Job's calamities came upon him "without cause" on Job's part; and yet, God allowed Satan to afflict "Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" - 2:7. When Job's wife suggested that he curse God and die, he replied, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" - 2:10. To add to Job's sufferings, Satan sent three of his allies who came ostensibly to comfort Job, but remained to mock and condemn him. And though they sat for seven days in utter silence, yet that was more comfort to Job than all their words which were nothing but accusations against him.

In chapter three, Job opened his mouth; but, instead of praising and blessing God as before, he cursed the day of his birth. This chapter expresses another phase of Job's character. The Scripture says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" - John 3:6. In our human birth, we were born of the flesh; but, when we are born again, we are born of the Spirit of God. We see two natures were manifested in Job. In chapters one and two, the new man was speaking words of faith in God. In chapter three, the flesh is speaking, because it is suffering pain. Any vinedresser knows that the branches must be pruned quite closely, in order to bring forth more fruit. Afflictions and persecutions cut back our flesh, that the spirit might bear fruit unto God. The Father is the Husbandman (John 15) and knows all things. He does not willingly afflict any, but that is the necessary way for us to bring forth much fruit unto His glory. "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came" - 3:23-26.

In chapters four to twenty- five, there is a prolonged conversation between Job and his three friends, which sometimes develops into more than conversation - it becomes vilification. Eliphaz the Temanite was the eldest son of Esau, Jacob's brother. Bildad the Shuhite may have been a descendant of Shuah, a son of Abraham and Keturah whom he married after Sarah's death. Zophar the Naathite could have been a progenitor of Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria in the time of Elisha. Eliphaz had attended the school of experience. And though the proverb says that fools will learn in no other school, yet actually fools never learn; for they make the same mistakes over and over. Eliphaz contended that Job was a sinner, by which he had brought this affliction upon himself. Job's answer to this accusation is found in 13:15 - "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Job 15 and following

Bildad had received his training in the school of tradition. He accused Job of even greater sins than the other friend had done. Job himself had learned a great deal in the school of tradition. There was no Bible to read at that time. (The book of Job is, no doubt, the first portion of the Holy Scriptures ever written). However, the story of creation was handed down from father to son. Adam heard the first prophecy of Christ the promised Deliverer, in the Garden of Eden - Genesis 3:15. Adam lived until the birth of Lamech, who was the grandfather of Shem (Noah's second son). Shem lived until the birth of Isaac, who was the grandfather of Eliphaz the Temanite.

These men, who were contemporaries of Job, had heard from their forefathers the story of the fall of man and of redemption through the slaying of sacrifices. They knew the story of Cain and Abel, the first children born to Adam. The story of the flood was also familiar to them, and the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark. All the people on the earth in Job's time were descended from

the sons of Noah and related to one another, and were well acquainted with the history of their fathers who lived to a great age. Job believed the story of creation, the fall, and redemption through the promised Deliverer - the Seed of the woman. His testimony is given in 19:25 - "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." Zophar had been to the school of man's wisdom, which never points the pathway to God. He agreed with the other two friends, that Job was guilty of some heinous crime and would suffer and die because of it. Job had been taught in the school of wisdom which is not found in the natural realm, but in the spiritual. In chapter twenty-eight, Job gave an eloquent discourse on wisdom, ending with the words, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" - 28:28.

No one can fully understand the man Job, until he himself has suffered under the chastening hand of our loving Father. Sometimes Job speaks inspiringly of the Lord and of His goodness; then again, his words are most bitter in his extreme suffering. But, even in his darkest moments, the Lord comforts him by lifting his thoughts to the invisible and eternal realm; and his soul is refreshed, such as we read in chapter twenty-three. "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: On the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him: But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" - 23:8-10.

In chapter twenty-nine, Job turns his thoughts to the former days when he lived in peace and prosperity and his children were still with him and the blessing of the Lord was upon him. He recalled his tireless efforts in behalf of the poor and needy, and his continual interest in the welfare of others.

Job 24 and following

He reviews also his public life in which he commanded the respect of all men, young and old, princes and nobles. He was a judge in the gate and a king in the army. His counsel and his wisdom were sought by all.

Chapter thirty displays inward conflict, his present suffering, and his deep humiliation, into which his calamities had plunged him. Instead of honor and respect which he had formerly commanded, he is now abhorred by the basest of men whose children spit in his face and push his feet aside.

He is the song and the byword of fools. In the bitterness of his soul, he cries out to God at the injustice of his suffering and accuses God of being cruel to him.

In chapter thirty-one, Job opens wide the door to his private life and declares to all that he is without stain or blot. He lays all that he holds dear upon the altar of his own righteousness, and challenges the world to bring any accusation against his moral character. He grows vehement in his protestations of his fair and righteous dealings with all men. In his extremity, Job expresses a longing to appear before the Almighty with this charge written against him by his adversary, that he might defend himself as a prince before the Judge who would clear him. "The words of Job are ended" - 31:40.

BREAK ME, O GOD

I want to be like the rock of Horeb
Broken to the will of my God -
Broken as the pitchers of Gideon's men
Under the chastening rod.
Break me, O God, like the alabaster box,
That blessings might greater be.
Break me as the bread in the Master's hands,
That Thou canst make use of me.
Break me, O God, to Thy holy will,
Let me bow and never complain.
Knowing that the Master useth
A heart purified by pain.
Knowing the Master needeth
The broken heart, contrite.
Break me, God, and use me,
To show forth Thy holy light.
Edna Posvers

Job 32 and following

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" Job 23:10. Chapters thirty-two to thirty-seven are the official report of Job given by a divinely appointed observer who discerned by the inspiration of the Almighty and spoke by the Spirit of God who made him. Job justified himself rather than God, during his training in the school of affliction. He had developed a case of "near-sightedness," which is indicated by the fact that in chapters twenty-nine to thirty-one he had used the personal pronouns - "I," "me, and "my," - about two hundred times. Once Job had said, "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" - 23:10. But the process of refining was not yet finished; for the boiling pot had brought to the surface, self-praise (chapter twenty-nine), self-pity (chapter thirty), and self-righteousness (chapter thirty-one).

Because of this, Elihu gave his opinion as one who spoke on God's behalf - "My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end" - 34:36. In his indictment of Job, he charges him with no less than two dozen infractions of rules in his deportment, one of which is rebellion - a very serious charge in God's training school. Elihu gives some profitable instruction for all students who are in this same school of affliction. As a messenger from the Lord, Elihu makes it very clear that God delivers from diseases and afflictions upon one basis alone - upon the ransom which He has found (at Calvary). No good works of man could ever be accepted as the basis for such deliverance. Elihu further declares that sins are forgiven upon that same basis - the price paid by the Redeemer of men. Elihu answers the question of why the righteous suffer - "That He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man" - 33:17. He states that God does not lay upon man more than is right, lest he enter into judgment with God - 34:23. Elihu proceeds to turn Job's eyes from himself back to God, who is greater than man and deals with man not only in mercy. As a witness of God's instant control over all His creation, a storm came up while Elihu was yet speaking; which, no doubt, was an outward manifestation of the whirlwind and confusion of Job's mental condition. But, praise God, "The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm" - Nahum 1:3. After this the Lord, the Head Schoolmaster, takes over the remainder of Job's training. "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge" - 38:1, 2.

Job 38 and following.

The Lord confirms the words of Elihu, and challenges Job to compare himself with the great Architect and Builder of the universe. "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof?" 38:3-6.

The Lord turns Job's attention back to the beginning when He created the heaven and the earth - "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" - 38:7. In this verse we seem to catch a strain of the harmony of all creation, as of a great symphonic orchestra together with the celestial choir of morning stars and the shouting of the sons of God (the angels), all giving honor and praise to the God who created them.

In chapter thirty-eight the Lord mentions many phases of His inanimate creation, as One who not only has intimate knowledge of everything, but also shows that He has instant (push-button) control over all things. They all serve and obey Him. The earth and the sea, the light and the darkness, the clouds and the rain, the thunder and the lightning, the stars which He knows by name (Psalm 147:4), the hail and the snow, all are His. Beginning with verse thirty-nine of this chapter, the Lord shows Himself the great Caretaker of His animate creation. From the greatest to the least, every creature is dependent upon his Keeper who is Lord of all creation.

Here we will digress and remind ourselves that Job is not only a representative of each individual whom God receives, loves, and chastens, but he is also a figure of the nation of Israel. They not only received blessings from the Lord, but they have been in the furnace of affliction.

In chapter thirty-nine, we can trace the identity of Israel and some historical characters connected with her in these typical creatures. The lion is a hint of the powers that be, who have been allowed to rule over Israel, beginning with the king of Babylon (Daniel 7). The raven figures the natural creation which has been used of God to serve His purposes in preserving His people

(I Kings 17). The wild goat represents Israel in their God-given faith which enables them to triumph over all their enemies. The hind speaks of Israel's utter helplessness, and of their dependence upon God for protection. The Lord alone knows the time of their restoration and fruitfulness. The wild ass pictures the rebellion of the nation against God, which has caused their chastisement (Hosea 8:9). The unicorn seems to be a hint of the Grecian Kingdom (Daniel 8), from which came Antiochus Epiphanes who was a figure of the false prophet of the latter days. The peacock and the ostrich together symbolize the apostate church which will be prominent in Israel's future. The peacock represents pride, the ostrich the foolishness and self-exaltation of the false church. Her beautiful "feathers" are described in Revelation 17:4. The horse represents the strength of man, which will be the instrument in the destruction of the apostate church by the hand of the Lord (Rev. 17:16, 17). The hawk is a hint of the wicked spirits in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12) always seeking for prey. The eagle foreshadows Christ and His armies who shall come to judge the great and small (Revelation 19:11-21).

Job was given the coveted opportunity to defend himself as a prince before the Judge. His boldness and bravery had turned to weakness and corruption in the Presence of Omnipotence. Then the Lord proceeds to rebuke not only Job, but anyone who dares to question His ways and His doings - "For He giveth not account of any of His matters" - 33:13.

"Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it" - 40:1, 2. "Woe unto him that striveth with his maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? Or thy work, He hath no hands?" - Isaiah 45:9. "Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me. Wilt thou also disannul My judgment? Wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee" - Job 40:6-14.

Job 40:15-24.

In the descriptive language concerning behemoth, the great land animal, we trace a correspondence to the second beast of Revelation thirteen which came up out of the earth. By the statement, "He is the chief of the way of God," we understand that God has created him for the very purpose of deceiving the Christ-rejecters of the last days. "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" - II Thessalonians 2:8-12.

In Job forty-one, the Lord continues the humbling of Job (and of Israel), with questions which show the insignificance of the creature and the greatness of the Creator. The Lord has created nothing which He cannot control, and He makes all things to serve Him. "None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before Me? Who hath prevented Me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is Mine" - 41:10, 11. This great creature of the sea is described at length, and his invulnerability is emphasized. This sea monster represents the first beast of Revelation thirteen, which came up out of the sea (Gentiles). He is the one who will exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" - II Thessalonians 2:4. In the last verses of Job forty-one he is aptly described as - "Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride" - 41:33, 34. Daniel tells us that he shall magnify himself against the God of gods - "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done ... And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas

in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" - Daniel 11:36, 45.

Job forty-two.

After this grueling seventy-two-question test was ended, Job was ready to give up. He could not defend himself against the Almighty who had all the answers. All Job could do was to confess his nothingness, which he did. "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that Thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" - 42:1-6. And wonder of wonders! Job had the right answer also. He passed the test and received his "Master's Degree." ("I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" - Matthew 11:29).

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" - James 5:11. All of Job's bitter complaints were blotted out in the compassion and tenderness of the Lord who sees the end from the beginning, and "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" - Ephesians 1:11.

In Job's deliverance and in his intercession for these friends, he is also a type of Israel; who, after their repentance, will become a kingdom of priests unto God in behalf of the nations.

The End

STEPPING-STUMBLING STONES

In this vale of tears and trials -
Filled with test each rugged mile -
How the evil one attempts to slack our pace,
Placing stones o'er which we stumble;
We can spare ourselves a tumble
Only as we journey on in heaven's grace.
I have learned one lesson duly,
Learned it slowly, learned it truly,
How to treat each subtle hindrance to my way:
By God's help surmount it fairly;
So today I'm standing squarely
On the stone o'er which I stumbled yesterday.
Heights of grace will not exempt us
From the wiles of him who'd tempt us,
But our eyes need not be blind to his device.
Stumbling stones that keep us guessing
Can be turned into a blessing
If we're willing to plod on and pay the price.
Satan tried to keep me worried
As through life I rushed and hurried,
Tried his best to keep me bound with doubt and fear;
But God's grace to me was granted,
Now my feet are firmly planted
On the stone that had me worried yesteryear.
I will never fuss or grumble
Though I chance to trip and stumble
On some stone that Satan places in my way;
I'll just simply rise above it -
Make a stepping stone out of it -
That will lift me nearer to Eternal Day.
Thus my pathway will grow brighter

And my every burden lighter
Till triumphantly I walk life's final mile;
I'll surmount the last temptation
Standing on my firm foundation
Built of all those stumbling stones of yester while.
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