

# Commentary Notes - Job

by Walter Beuttler

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*Walter Beuttler's sermon on the Book of Job explores the complexities of suffering, faith, and divine providence through the lens of Job's trials and responses.*

**Topics:** "Suffering And Faith", "Divine Providence"

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## Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the Book of Job, highlighting its authenticity through numerous references in the Bible and its purpose to address the mystery of suffering, refute the idea of suffering as divine retribution, and provide an example of patient endurance. Job, a man of great piety, faced severe trials including loss of possessions, disease, despair, accusations, and silence from God, yet he triumphed through unwavering faith. The message of the book emphasizes the relationship between divine providence and suffering, the need for human impotence to realize divine omnipotence, and the inadequacy of human experience, tradition, and merit.

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## Transcript

### A. THE BOOK OF JOB

1. Although the name of the author of this book is a matter of conjecture, its authenticity is evidenced by the fact that it is quoted some 57 times in the other books of the Bible. Almost every important doctrine is found here.
2. The object of the book is:
  - (1) To throw light on the mystery of suffering, especially that of the righteous.
  - (2) To refute by a demonstrative experiment the popular philosophy that suffering is necessarily divine retribution for personal sins.
  - (3) To provide for all time both an example of the possibility of patient endurance while suffering affliction and a source of strength to which God's saint may repair in times of acute distress (Jas. 5:10-11), physical, mental, and emotional.
  - (4) To reveal to the afflicted soul that our present circumstances are related to "the end of the Lord" (Jas. 5:11), and are but the scaffolding of God to work out his design for our future (Rom. 8:28-29).

## B. THE MAN "WHOSE NAME WAS JOB"

1. He was a chieftain of the land of Uz (probably the name of a man passed on to the land between the Euphrates and Damascus), of high rank and great wealth, in fact, the greatest man of the East.
2. He was also noted for his great piety to which both the witness of God and the activity of Satan bear eloquent testimony.
3. He was tried in a most severe manner by:
  - (1) Unprecedented misfortune of long duration.
  - (2) A most painful and loathsome disease.
  - (3) The despair of his wife.
  - (4) The cruel accusations of his friends.
  - (5) The insulting language and actions of youth.
  - (6) The baffling silence of God.
  - (7) The cunning power and wiles of the devil.
4. Stripped of possessions, deprived of children, afflicted by an incurable disease, abandoned by relatives, accused by his friends, calumniated by Satan, Job in the end had reached a height of triumph commensurate with the depth of his trial.
5. As a consequence of his ultimate triumph, Job became a light to many who have groped their way through the dark recesses of a most complex labyrinth of most perplexing circumstances, insuperable difficulties, and problems admitting of neither explanation nor solution.

## C. THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

1. The sharpest thorns grow on the same tree with the loveliest flowers.
2. There is a relationship between divine providence and the mystery of suffering, particularly that of the righteous.
3. God must bring man to "the end of the Lord" (Jas. 5:11) by bringing man to the end of himself.
4. Man must be brought to the realization and confession of human impotence in order to bring him into an experience of divine omnipotence.
5. Job's experience demonstrates:
  - (1) The inadequacy of human experience (Eliphaz).
  - (2) The inadequacy of human tradition (Bildad).
  - (3) The inadequacy of human merit (Zophar).

6. As sickness is not necessarily an evidence of sin, so health is not necessarily a sign of divine approbation.

7. Trials and sufferings are employed by God to further our education in God from the hearing of the ear to the seeing of the eye, i.e., from mere information about God to a vital association with God for there is a knowledge of God second hand, which is insufficient to bring us to a true knowledge of God in personal experience.

8. Of paramount importance in this education is the learning of the ways of the Lord in the crucible of trial and suffering:

(1) By which God, though through the instrumentality of Satan, brought Job down from sitting in the gate in influence and honor (29:7-10) to sitting on the ash heap of humiliation, ignored (2:8, 19:16; 30:1, 9-10) and a stranger to his own people (19:13-15).

(2) By which God, notwithstanding the power and intrigue of Satan, restored Job and blessed his latter end more than his beginning (42:2).

#### D. THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN

##### 1. The fact of his personality

No effort is made to prove Satan's existence, nor is there any allusion to his origin. His existence is taken for granted and his activities are so interwoven with the story of Job, that Satan's existence is self-evident.

##### 2. The fact of his personality

Personality is a complex of characteristics that distinguishes a person as such, major components being intellect, sensibility, and will, without necessarily possessing corporeity, i.e., a material body.

##### 3. The nature of his personality

Satan is a spirit personality like that of the angels of God (1:6; Eph. 2:2) without corporeity for "a spirit hath not flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39).

##### 4. His personal activities

Although he is without a material body (as is God, John 4:24; Luke 24:39), he can hear, speak, and see (1:7-8) as does God (Psa. 94:9). He moves about (1:7), observes (1:8, 10), and debates with cunning intelligence (1:9-11).

##### 5. His depraved character

The description of Satan's activities exhibits the depravity of his character by his hatred of God (1:11) and exposes the malignity of his wicked heart by seeking to destroy a godly soul without cause (2:3).

#### SATAN'S ASSAULT, 1:1-2:10

##### A. THE CHARACTER OF JOB, 1:1-5

##### 1. How is Job described in:

- (1) 1:1? Personally, as possessing a godly character.
- (2) 1:2? Domestically, as married with a large family and possessing a great household of servants.
- (3) 1:3? Materially, as being the most prosperous man in the entire East.
- (4) 1:4-6? Religiously, as a man of great piety who, with meticulous faithfulness, performed religious functions.

2. What may be observed from 1:2? That material prosperity is not necessarily inimical to true godliness.

3. Observe some characteristics of Job's devotions, 1:5:

- (1) As "he rose up early in the morning," they had obviously priority over other interests.
- (2) They were performed with meticulous conscientiousness --an individual offering was made for each one.
- (3) They were performed with consistent regularity--"thusdid Job continually."
- (4) They were performed with faith in the efficacy of atonement thru burnt offerings.

4. What does 1:5 reveal about Job?

- (1) He had a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of his family.
- (2) He had a reverential fear of God arising from his recognition of the holiness of God.
- (3) He had an awareness of the sinful state and propensities of the human heart.
- (4) He had an awareness of the divine attribute of omniscience.
- (5) He had faith in the efficacy of sacrifice to expiate the sin of man.

#### B. THE FIRST SCENE IN HEAVEN, 1:6-22

1. Who are "the sons of God" in 1:6? The angels of God (38:7) who presented themselves on what might be called "Audience Day" before the Lord to report on their activities.

2. Comment on Satan's presence in 1:6:

- (1) Satan has access to the presence of God which he uses as the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:9-10).
- (2) These accusations may be either true or false, but they are so often false that his ordinary name in the New Testament is "the slanderer."
- (3) Either Satan intruded himself upon the assembly of "the sons of God" to calumniating God's children with Job foremost on his mind, or, as seems more likely in the light of 2:1, he was obliged to present himself also to render an account of his activities.

3. What does 1:7 reveal concerning Satan?

(1) The fact of his personality as an angelic being and possessing faculties of communication employed with consummate skill and shrewd intrigue.

(2) His restless spirit and feverish haste (in Arabic "heat of haste" for "walking up and down") engaged in incessant activity and unwearied vigilance which bodes no good for any soul, much less to the faithful servants of God.

(3) The sphere of his activity, namely the earth as the abode of men which he crosses and recrosses ("to and fro--up and down") as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8).

4. Ascertain the essential components of Job's character as deduced from 1:8:

(1) The fear of the Lord by which he:

a. Maintained a habitual attitude of intense aversion to all evil (Prov. 8:13).

b. Shunned all association with every kind of evil (Prov. 16:6).

c. Made a determined refusal to commit evil whenever the opportunity or temptation presented itself (Isa. 7:15-16).

(2) Confidence (faith, trust) in God because of his fear of God for "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence" (Prov. 14:26). Since the fear of the Lord keeps one from doing evil, condemnation cannot undermine confidence in God "for if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (I John 3:21).

(3) Uprightness, i.e. strict adherence to moral principles in his manner of life which involved walking before God:

a. "In truth" (I Kings 3:6), i.e., not in mere pretence of outward show (Mark 12:38-40), "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (II Tim. 3:5).

b. "In righteousness" (I Kings 3:6), i.e., in conformity to divine standards of right and wrong so as "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).

c. "Uprightness of heart" (I Kings 3:6), i.e., right motivations behind right acts arising from right thoughts, "For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7).

(4) Perfection, i.e., wholehearted and sincere in his loyalty toward God. He was not of a double heart ("a heart and a heart" I Chron. 12:33, margin). A perfect heart involves:

a. Walking in accordance with God's laws both written and spoken (I Kings 8:61).

b. Serving God with a willing mind, not just under duress in fear of the consequences of failing to do so (I Chron. 28:9).

c. Desiring God with a heart that is ever postured God-ward which equates seeking God, not postured away from God which equates forsaking Him (I Chron. 28:9).

5. What, concerning Satan, is observed in 1:9-11?

- (1) Satan's reluctant admission of Job's godliness. ("Does Job fear God for naught?").
- (2) Satan's base insinuation, namely, that the piety of Job proceeded from merely mercenary motivations.
- (3) Satan's fixed determination. The A.V. margin reads "hast thou set thy heart on" for "hast thou considered."
- (4) Satan's audacious challenge. It was audacious in that:
  - a. He challenged God in the full council of heaven which had listened to the challenge.
  - b. He thus obliged God to accept the challenge that all heaven might know the calumny of the accuser and the integrity of Job, and above all, that a son of Adam can and does worship God for what he is and that without motivation of self-interest.
- (5) Satan's diabolical plan. He selects God's choicest saints for his special target with cunning discrimination, well knowing that their fall would occasion the fall of many others.
- (6) Satan's confident prediction. Satan did not possess foreknowledge of Job's reaction or he would never have put him to the test.

#### 6. What is to be learned from 1:12?

- (1) That Satan cannot touch God's people without permission from God which should be a great consolation in times of adversity.
- (2) That Job's trial was absolutely necessary to vindicate God before the angels and so silence the calumny of Satan calculated to damage the reputation of both God and Job.
- (3) That God mercifully places a limitation upon the malignity of Satan's wiles as he roams about the face of the earth in search for an object of his hatred.
- (4) That God frequently protects His people against Satan's efforts to overthrow them without their being aware of it.

#### 7. Comment on the confrontation between God and Satan:

- (1) If Satan can find his way into the assemblies of God's sons in heaven, it need hardly surprise us to detect him among the congregations of God's children on earth.
- (2) If so eminent a saint as Job did not escape impeachment by the Devil, it should not seem strange that lesser saints should also be accused with or without justification.
- (3) If God permitted Job to be put into the Devil's power as Peter was allowed to be put in Satan's sieve (Luke 22:31), it can be expected that ordinary Christians will also be subjected to trial.

(4) If God set a limit on Satan's power in dealing with His servant Job, He will not accord unlimited authority to the adversary when he comes to try those who are less able to withstand his assaults.

(5) If Job was sustained when passing through the fiery trial, so will all who, like Job, are sincere in heart and strong in faith be upheld in the day when they are in the crucible of divine testing.

## B. SATAN'S FIRST ASSAULT, 1:13-19.

### 1. Observe Satan's tactics in:

(1) 1:13 - The subtle adversary is cunningly careful to wait for a time best suited to take Job unaware, a day of festivity when he least expected trouble.

(2) 1:14-15 - The suddenness of Satan's blow was calculated to trigger Job into an impulsive denunciation of God, saying in haste what he could later regret in leisure--after the damage was done.

(3) 1:16 - The rapid succession of diverse blows from diverse directions was intended to deprive Job of time for reflection and the assumption of a defensive posture to ward off the attack.

(4) 1:17 - The increasing pressure from increasing losses, not only in number but also in value, would tend to have the effect of undermining Job's faith, questioning his God and breaking down his resistance.

(5) 1:18-19 - The last blow was the worst of all and was confidently expected by Satan to overwhelm Job with unbearable personal grief and sure to cause him to expose his presumed hypocrisy by renouncing his faith and denouncing his God with reproachful invective.

### 2. Comment on Satan's assault in 1:13-19:

(1) Satan is fully cognizant of the fact that the character of man is generally revealed in the hour of sudden crisis. With no time to think, what is in the heart will suddenly break out, especially under the pressure of great anguish and pain.

(2) Satan has power not only to employ wicked men to accomplish his purpose, but also to employ the elements of nature.

(3) Satan chose a time when Job enjoyed the security of material prosperity which the adversary would suddenly turn into unprecedented calamity.

(4) Satan's onslaught was without any pity as stroke fell upon stroke by a merciless adversary solely bent on his victim's destruction.

(5) Satan's avalanche of disaster by which he attacked the citadel of Job's integrity was most cunning in its connivance; it had all the appearance of the work of an

angry God employing natural means.

(6) Satan's finger is, nevertheless, discernible in the rapid succession of totally unrelated events focused upon one individual and the escape of a single messenger from each disaster arriving while each previous messenger was still speaking.

### 3. Note Job's reaction to the messenger's reports in 1:20-22:

(1) Instead of rising up against God in rebellion as Satan had wanted, Job fell to the ground in submission to the sovereignty of God.

(2) Instead of turning from God in his sorrow and grief as Satan had intended, Job turned to God in worship.

(3) Instead of charging God with injustice as Satan had expected, Job kept faith in God's righteousness.

(4) Instead of rejecting the hand of Providence as Satan had thought, Job accepted what it brought.

(5) Instead of cursing God as Satan had predicted, Job blessed the name of the Lord.

(6) Instead of defeating Job by substantiating his accusation as Satan had planned, Job defeated Satan and vindicated God.

4. Comment on the secret of Job's strength in withstanding Satan's vicious onslaughts as seen in the following statements of Job:

(1) "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away" (9:21):

a. Job acknowledged God's rights of ownership of all things and, therefore, His right to take away as well as to give. Job possessed great riches, but his riches did not possess him.

b. All that we have is still God's, for we ourselves belong

to God. Perceiving this does not diminish our loss, but it calms the resentful and rebellious spirit which is the source of so many of our emotional miseries.

c. Whether God gave or took away, Job retained an unwavering confidence in the wisdom and righteousness of the absolute sovereignty of God.

(2) "Blessed be the name of the Lord" (1:21):

a. Job had an implicit confidence in the unimpeachable integrity of the name of the Lord for, in the final analysis, the name of the Lord is what he is.

b. If all that God is could be expressed in one word, that one word would be his name. Many names of God are used in the Bible because such one word does not exist. Neither could such a word be formed.

c. An infinite God cannot be expressed in a finite word any more than God can be reduced to a mathematical equation.

(3) "Blessed be the name of the Lord" (1:21): a. Job's confidence in the name of the Lord was mingled with the worship of that name. This worship in confidence was Job's best and, perhaps, only defense against the deadly temptation of bringing God into question because of circumstances that appear to be the very negation of his promises.

b. When this questioning of God is pursued to its logical conclusion according to the natural mind, it will inexorably lead to placing God in the position of a defendant, Satan as the prosecutor and ourselves as judge and jury, with disastrous results. At the extreme end of that trial lies the repudiation of God, a state of infidelity with the consequences of damnation--and the triumph of Satan.

c. Worship of the name of the Lord in the hour of deep distress thwarts Satan's attempt to discredit God by bringing Him to trial. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Psa. 18:10).

d. Therefore, and especially at such a time, one should remember his name, Jer. 23:27; call upon his name, Psa. 99:6; contemplate his name. Psa. 52:9; and trust

in his name, Isa. 50:10. e. The literal rendering is "may the name of the Lord be blessed." According to Satan, Job was to have cursed God to His face. Instead, Job throws water in Satan's face by blessing the name of the Lord openly and resolutely.

5. Comment on the following verdicts of God:

(1) "In all this Job sinned not" (1:22) - Satan wanted Job to draw natural inferences from the external phenomena of his varied misfortunes by inductive reasoning and

thus cause him to sin by reaching conclusions that would impugn the character of God.

(2) "Nor charged God foolishly" (1:22) - Job proved greater than his calamity. He did not accuse God of injustice nor utter a word which in any way reflected on the character of God. Job kept the door of his lips--and with it his integrity.

### C. SATAN'S SECOND ASSAULT, 2:1-10

1. Comment on the statement:

(1) "Again there was a day," 2:1 - Satan bides his time awaiting another opportunity to try again where he had failed before.

(2) "Satan came also--to present himself," 2:1 - Satan too seems to have an obligation to give an account and, perhaps, to obtain permission for his activities.

2. Comment on 2:2:

(1) God did not question Satan in order to obtain any information he did not already possess, but to focus attention upon the issue.

(2) The opening gambit gave God the advantage of the initiative by putting Satan on the defensive and compelling him to admit to his activities and expose the nature of his schemes.

3. Note three new elements present in 2:3:

(1) Job held fast his integrity, i.e., Job adhered to his moral and religious code notwithstanding the severe pressures of his circumstances.

(2) Satan had moved God against Job, i.e., Satan had goaded God into taking action against Job by means of the pricks of his arguments.

(3) God moved against Job "without cause," i.e., Job had done nothing whatsoever to merit such action by God. But God was obliged to silence Satan's accusations by

consenting to means capable of destroying Job's integrity.

4. What, in effect, is Satan's argument now in 2:4-5?

(1) That the limitation previously set by God limited Satan to insufficient means in testing Job.

(2) That an adequate test would have to include an attack on Job's body.

5. Comment on the limitations set by God in both tests: God is mindful of the limits of his people and will not tolerate means of testing of greater severity than is absolutely necessary.

6. Evidently Satan possesses what power, 2:7-8? To employ physical affliction as a means to turn men not only away from God, but also against God.

7. The words of Job's wife in 2:9 raises what questions?

(1) How did she know that Job's integrity was under attack, a fact which even Job himself did not know ?

(2) Why did she tell Job to curse God, an outcome so confidently expected by Satan?

8. Supply the answer to these questions: In her despair she unwittingly lent her tongue as Satan's instrument to give Job the final and overpowering blow to destroy his integrity and thus assure Satan's triumph over God.

9. What effect must the words of Job's wife have had on him? Her seeming infidelity and blasphemous exhortation must have driven him to the brink of despair by adding more inward conflicts to his well nigh unbearable outward sufferings.

10. What is apparent from 2:9? That Satan tempts men to put the worst possible construction on God's dealings and prompts to the worst possible means of relief.

11. Job's reply to his wife constituted what in 2:10?

(1) An unshakable conviction that present miseries do not obliterate nor cancel past mercies.

(2) An invincible faith in the flawless exercise of divine providence whether good or evil.

12. Again reference is made to the fact that Job did not sin with his lips, 2:10. Why?

(1) Because under such pressures inner failure would at once be signaled by the outward manifestation of uttered words.

(2) Both God and Satan listened, each in expectation of the vindication of their own position.

(3) When Job did speak, he spoke to the chagrin and defeat of Satan and to the delight and triumph of God.

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