

Life Lesson 100
The Book of Job
Text: Job

Introduction

We've learned a lot about God in the books of the law and the books of history. They certainly contain lots of exciting stories! Today we are moving into the next section of our Bible library, the books of poetry. They are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

The first book of poetry, Job, may have been the very first Bible book ever written down, and contains an important lesson for us. It's a long story-poem, although it doesn't rhyme like the kind of poetry we read usually does.

The Story

Job was a godly man, and a wealthy one. He had seven sons and three daughters. He had many servants and thousands of cattle and sheep and camels.

One day Job's name came up in a heavenly conversation. The angels were presenting themselves before the Lord and Satan showed up, too.

"Where have you been?" God asked Satan.

"I've been walking up and down around the earth," Satan answered.

"Have you noticed my servant Job?" God asked him. "He is an upright man who loves me and hates evil."

"He just serves you because you have blessed him," Satan answered. "If you take away all the things you've given him, he'll curse you to your face."

“All right,” the Lord answered. “I will give you permission to take away the things I gave him. But you may not hurt him or take his life.”

Did you notice that the devil didn’t overpower God in order to tempt Job? God, Himself, brought up the subject of Job. He gave Satan permission to try him, and then placed boundaries on what he could do.

Some people think that the devil and God are in a war. They think the devil is as powerful as God. We’ve already seen in this story how that idea isn’t true. Satan can only do what God allows him to do.

Satan went right to work on Job. A messenger came running to Job with some terrible news.

“Your oxen were plowing and your donkeys were grazing nearby when the Sabeans came and stole them. They killed all your servants. I’m the only one left alive,” the poor man cried.

While he was still telling Job about this bad news, another messenger came running up.

“Fire from heaven fell and burned up your sheep and the servants who were watching over them. I’m the only one who escaped.”

While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came up and said, “The Chaldeans attacked and took away your camels and killed your servants. I’m the only one they didn’t kill.”

While he was still telling this news, still another messenger ran up with the worst news yet.

“All your children were at the house of your oldest son having a party. A great wind came up and blew the house down. It killed everyone in the house except me.”

Poor Job! in the matter of a few minutes he lost all his belongings and all his wealth. Worse than that, he lost his entire family. Do you think he cursed God as Satan said he would?

“I came in to the world with nothing,” Job said. “I’ll leave it with nothing. The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Job realized that God didn’t owe him riches or a family. He was thankful for the time he had God’s blessings, but he was ready to give them back to God without bitterness.

Again there was a time when the angels presented themselves to the Lord in heaven. Again, the devil showed up.

“Did you notice that Job didn’t curse me, even though you took away all that he had?” God asked. “He still loves and serves me with all his heart.”

“That’s just because you kept me from hurting his body,” Stan answered. “If you let me make him sick and miserable, he’ll curse you.”

“All right,” God replied. “You may do what you will to him. Just don’t take his life.”

So Satan made Job break out with boils. Big painful sores were all over his body. Even one boil can make you miserable, and Job was covered with them. He had boils from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

Job’s wife wasn’t a help to him.

“Why don’t you just curse God and die?” she said.

“You are speaking foolishly,” Job answered her. “Shall we receive good things from God and then refuse to serve Him when things are hard?”

With everything that happened, Job still did not sin by complaining against God.

Three friends of Job's came to comfort him in his sorrow. Their names were Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. They weren't very comforting, though. They told Job that he must have been sinning or these bad things wouldn't have happened.

Some people think that bad things happen only as punishment for sin. Sometimes God uses problems and troubles to correct and discipline His children. We can see from Job's story, though, that this isn't always the case.

Another man named Elihu preached to Job, and said he must still be sinning or these troubles wouldn't be continuing.

The four men talked to Job, but they didn't really know what they were talking about. They just made Job feel worse instead of better.

But there was Someone who knew the right thing to say. God, Himself, spoke to Job out of a whirlwind. The main thing God told Job was that he wasn't supposed to know why the trials came upon him. If Job knew what was going on, he wouldn't have to have faith. Job needed to surrender totally to the Lord and trust in Him.

Later God gave Job more wealth than he had before. He also him more children. His three daughters were known for their great beauty, and Job lived to see his great, great, grandchildren.

The Life Lesson

Why do bad things happen to us? It's true that sometimes God uses bad things to get our attention, to keep us from going the wrong direction in our lives. Sometimes, though, we have to say, "You are God, and I trust You. Everything comes from You, so this must be a part of Your plan."

Remember, it wasn't the devil just tormenting Job. God allowed him to do it and set limits on how far he could go. We don't need to be afraid of Satan, because God controls him and won't let him harm His children.

Job didn't get mad at God. When bad things happen to us, we shouldn't get mad, either. God has a reason, and we can trust Him.

Review Questions

What is the first book of poetry?

Job

What was Job like?

He was a good man and loved God.

Where did the conversation about Job take place?

In heaven.

What did Satan say when God pointed out what a good man Job was?

Satan said Job only loved God because God had blessed him so much.

What did God give Satan permission to do?

To take away the good things that Job had.

What happened to Job?

All his possessions were stolen or killed and his sons and daughters died in a windstorm.

Did Job turn away from God?

No.

What did Satan do to Job next?

He gave him boils all over his body.

Did the boils make Job curse God?

No.

Did Job's three friends make him feel better?

No, they made him feel worse.

Was Job better off at the end of the story than at the beginning?

Yes, he had more riches, and he knew more about God.