

Job 1&2: Part 1 - The Agony of Job



Job (1860), Leon Joseph Bonnat

The Power of Parable



What are some of your favourite stories?

Books, Movies, etc.

We are not looking at a literal historical story.

At best a historical fiction with real people, places and perhaps events.

Stylized for a purpose.

To teach wisdom.

Simple readings of Scripture do not suffice.

Glossing this text yields only saccharine or twisted interpretations.

To enter this text means to pay attention to both it and ourselves.

This is meant to make you flinch.

This is why Jesus told parables.

They are not true stories

but often these parables reveal a truth that is both clear and disturbing.

They disarm in order to disturb.

They disturb in order to awaken.

This is the way of Jesus.

This is the way of the book of Job.

This is the way of the Bible.

The way of God.

Attend if you dare.

So Who Was Job?

We often think of this



"Job," by Jan (the Elder) Lievens, 1631

but the story starts like this...



1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. 2 He had seven sons and three daughters,³ and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.



4 His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

The Setting

⁶ One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

⁹ "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. ¹⁰ "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹ But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

¹² The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."



The Superbowl of the Spiritual World

Will Man Curse God and truly lose their way?
Or will Humanity trust God unquestioningly?

The answer will prove to be neither.

But we will take our time to get there.

Round 1

Loss - Money



Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

When have you lost financially?
Robbed, Cheated, Conned, Ripped Off?
Financial disaster, loss, bankruptcy?
Debt, Fear of not making ends meet.

Loss - Family



¹⁸ While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

²⁰ At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship

When have you lost someone you loved?
Tragedy

Round 2



Job (1905) - Sir William Orpen (1878-1931)

2 On another day the angels came to present themselves before theLORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him.² And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

³*Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason."*

⁴*"Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. ⁵But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."*

⁶*The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."*

⁷*So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. ⁸Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.*

Unmitigated Pain

When was your greatest physical pain?

Responses to Suffering

Losing Faith



This is hinted at in the text.

From Round 1:

²⁰*At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹and said:*

*"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will depart.*

*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised."*

²²*In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.*

From Round 2:

⁹*His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!"*

Turn your back on God.

Disillusioned, Disappointed, bitter, angry

Hitchens, Dawkins - Atheism

Agnostic - the "I don't Know" which really is code for "Who Cares?"

Both Pain & Comfort can wield these realities.

Simple Faith



¹⁰He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

Keep Trusting God and worshipping him.



Is That It?

How does this sit with you?

We can certainly understand these responses and the variations of them.

But this is not where Job really goes.

This is not what God wants of us or for us.

There is something more.

Deeper Faith awaits us in this story

But not yet...

One of the Hints to the answer is on the Table of Communion.

The Agony of False Accusation

Betrayal, Abandonment

Physical, verbal, psychological abuse.

Separation.

Witnessing the suffering of others.

Death.

This is our food and drink.

The Body and the Blood.

The very Presence of Jesus.