

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2016: *The Book of Job*

Lesson 3 “Does Job Fear God for Naught?”

Read for this week's study

Job 1; Job 2; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Genesis 3:1–8; Philippians 4:11–13; Matthew 4:1–11; Philippians 2:5–8.

Memory Text

“But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:10, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. God's Servant, Job
- III. Skin for Skin: The Battle Continues
- IV. Blessed Be the Name of the Lord
- V. Job's Wife
- VI. Obedience Unto Death
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week we will continue to look at the first two chapters of Job as we seek to get a greater understanding of how we fit in as the great controversy continues to rage.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. All of us live in the land of Uz as Job did. It is a place where bad things happen to good people. Uz is not just a place where suffering comes, but where it comes with no warning, no explanation, creating confusion and despair. Everybody gets to spend some time in “the land of Uz”.
3. The key question in the whole book of Job is in 1:9: “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan is saying: “Job is devoted to you and worships you because it is in his self-interest to do it. You scratch his back. He scratches yours. It's a *quid pro quo*.” Satan charges God with being naïve; that He cannot truly read the heart of His created beings.

4. If you read the book of Job through Calvin's ideas of sovereignty, God's action in heaven looks very strange, actually very confusing. It looks like a cosmic wager between God and Satan in which God is almost using Job and his family as pawns to win a celestial bet.
5. Satan says to God: "You think Job loves you. The truth is, he loves you the way children love the ice cream man, or the way Imelda Marcos loves the shoe salesman. If you turn off the faucet of blessing, watch how fast he will turn off the faucet of devotion. And he is the best man on earth. The rest of them are even worse." Satan asserts that the whole idea of a covenant of self-giving love between God and His people is a farce.
6. "Another victim in the story of Job is his wife. She appears only in Job 2:9, 10. After that, she vanishes from the story and from history. [...] However, considering all that happened, who could imagine the grief that this unfortunate woman went through? Her tragedy, that of her children and that of the other victims in chapter 1, show the universality of suffering. [...] How unfortunate that Job's wife becomes someone who challenges Job on the very thing for which God commends him. In her grief, in her sorrow, she's pushing Job to do precisely what God says he won't do. Though we certainly can't judge her, what a lesson to us all about how careful we have to be in order not to be a stumbling block to others." (Wednesday's lesson)
7. In order to understand her, we need to realize that she too lost all that she had. She lost all her children. She will now be a caregiver to a horribly diseased husband until he dies. And then, though she used to be in the wealthiest family in the East, she will be left utterly alone and destitute. In her distress, she gives voice to thoughts that have surely occurred to Job.
8. "Job 1:22 reads: 'In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong' (NKJV). Job 2:10 reads: 'In all this Job did not sin with his lips' (NKJV). In both cases, despite the attacks, Job stayed faithful to the Lord. Both texts stress the fact that Job did not sin, either with actions or with words." (Thursday's lesson)
9. Notice what Job says in verse 10: "You're talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not evil?" Job is struggling to understand God now. Is God the kind of person who sends evil? Is God really good? That's the question he faces now, down on the level of his experience.
10. Notice the phrase at the end of verse 10: "In all this, Job did not sin in what he said." It seems that is a little hint of what is going on inside him. After the first wave in 1:22, we are told that Job grieves, he worships—he falls to the ground in worship. He speaks words of blessing and praise. The summary simply says, "In all this, Job didn't sin. He didn't charge God with wrongdoing." Now, there's a little qualification. Job did not sin in what he said, but in his heart, it seems, Job has begun to struggle. He's over the initial numbness.
11. Satan is saying to God, "People are nothing more than slaves to their own self-interest. It is either pleasure or pain. But it does not make too much difference,

because the whole thing is a farce.” But God shows that this view, stated by Satan, is cynical, warped, misguided and wrong. God shows the core of the universe is self-giving, self-sacrificing love. And created beings were made to know and give that kind of love. And that is what matters more than anything.

12. It matters more, even, than pleasure or pain. Job of course has no idea of what is going on in heaven, how high the stakes are. God’s main purpose in this is not to convince Satan of something he does not believe. God is not worried about Satan. The story is really aimed at heavenly beings and us. Because for the angels and humans, how we perceive God’s character is at the core of all the attitudes and decisions in our lives. The future of the universe depends on our understanding of God’s character.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The Bible often speaks of such meetings of the heavenly family. Look, for example, in the first two chapters of Job. And if you wonder how many attend, look in the book of Daniel where it says a hundred million beings watch as the court meets. Now note how God resolves questions, particularly of the charges of Satan that are leveled against him and against his friends before the heavenly court. In the book of Job, Satan accused God, and he accused Job of being unworthy of God’s trust. Did God say, “That’s a lie Satan; this man is perfect!” God said, “You’ve raised a serious question. The only way to answer it is to show you.”

And look at the rest of the book of Job. Did Job show himself to be a trustworthy friend of God? Did he trust God because he was being richly rewarded or did he seem to be utterly abandoned and yet he still trusted God? And the book ends with God saying, “Thank you, Job, you’ve said of me what is right.” Job was God’s friend all the way through and God could then turn to the heavenly court and say, “Do you need any more evidence about the falsity of Satan’s charges and the trustworthiness of my friend Job?” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #8, “The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

If you were ever asked to explain why you obey God (assuming that you do), what answer would you give? Would you say, “I do what I do as a believer, because God has told me to and he has the power to reward and destroy.” Is that why you don’t lie and murder? “Nothing wrong in those things themselves, but it upsets God when you do that—and that is a dangerous thing to do.”

This might be all right for a beginner or for a little child, but it makes God's laws seem so arbitrary. They have no sense in themselves. That kind of obedience does not speak well and truly about our God.

Would you rather say, "I do what I do as a believer, because God has told me to, and I love him and want to please him." Is that why you don't steal or commit adultery? It is not that you see anything wrong in these things in themselves; it's just that God doesn't like it when we do that. He has been so good to us, surely we owe it to him to do the things he has asked us to do, whether they make sense or not.

Again this does not speak well of God. It might be a little improvement from obeying out of fear or desire for reward. But it still smacks of arbitrariness. It still does not speak well of God, though that is often thought to be the antidote for the first one.

Could you say this? "I do what I do because more and more I am finding it to be right and sensible to do so. How I admire and revere the one who so advised me and even commanded me in the days of my ignorance and immaturity," hastening to add, "being still somewhat ignorant and immature, I am willing to listen to this God and to heed his commandments when he asks me to do something beyond my present understanding." That says that God is not arbitrary, but that everything he has asked us to do makes such good sense, we should want to do it anyway. If you can say that, then truly God's law is not a threat to your freedom, and you thank Him for it.

James is thought to be the legalist among the Bible writers. But look at James 2:8, 12, the last on the list: "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom." (NIV) That is James; and even Luther didn't understand him that way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #12, "God's Law Is No Threat To Our Freedom" recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

I'd like to put the whole book of Job on the Bible Reference Sheet for this evening! You remember the story: God said, for important great controversy reasons, in chapters 1 and 2, "Satan, you may do anything you like to this man, except take his life. He will not let me down." Satan set out to destroy him. He destroyed his family. He destroyed his estate. He destroyed his reputation. He destroyed his health. Then he set out to undermine Job's theology, Job's picture of God. Three or four friends came to help him. But those friends did not know God very well at all. In fact, the God they worshipped was arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. If only those friends had known the larger view. If only they had known about the great

controversy. If only those friends had known what we now know from chapters 1 and 2. Think how they could have helped poor Job. What a blessing they could have been to him. Instead, Job said, “Miserable comforters are you all. You’re only making things worse.”

I wouldn’t want to be misunderstood. Is it not significant to note that perhaps the greatest distress that came to Job came from the bad theology of his well-meaning, but mistaken friends? Could it come this way in the last days? Caring theologians, who did not know God but had a very legal view of things, caused Job great distress. But he would not be deceived, even by them.

In the last days, our experience will be very much like that of Job. If we do not have the larger, whole Bible, all sixty-six books, great controversy, universe-wide understanding of God and the great controversy and the plan of salvation, we will be no help to ourselves. We will be no help to anyone else. We will be very vulnerable when Satan seeks to deceive us that God is an arbitrary, vengeful Deity. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18, “God Waits for His Children to Grow Up” recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity (ST March 25, 1897). {6BC 1082.3}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758.3}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which the flesh is heir. He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone the human reason. {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 5}

Heaven, looking down, and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to earth. Men in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and he must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven, and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of moral darkness and gloom enveloped the world, and the Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for he was the light of the world. By his presence he could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character. {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 6}

In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Romans 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity. {DA 550.6}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He

desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}