

# ***The Book of Job***

## ***The End***

Lesson #1 for October 1, 2016

Scriptures: Job 42:10-17; Genesis 4:8; Matthew 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Daniel 2:44; Job 14:14-15.

1. This lesson will start with the end of Job's story! Good stories always have great endings. That is particularly true of fiction. But, what about in real life? Unless Jesus comes again during our lifetimes, each one of us will eventually die. Is that a good ending? Even Job died at the end of a long life. But, is it God's intention that we evaluate our existence and value only in terms of this life on earth? Never! God looks at us as His children with whom He will live forever! Should we be taking that same view? In that case, our lives will have a happy ending!
2. Many stories in the Bible need to be understood in the context of the larger, great controversy setting in which they took place. We should never limit our focus of attention on just what happens on this earth.
3. Read Job 42:10-17. Most Christians have a general idea of the content of the book of Job. To many Christians it is a book about why the righteous suffer. But, these verses seem to suggest that Job's ending was a good one.
4. Read Job 42:11. Did all of those relatives and even former friends really still believe that all that trouble that came upon Job was God's fault? What did he do with all those gold rings?
5. There is no evidence in the book of Job to suggest that Job had more than one wife. Imagine giving birth to ten children, then going through the experiences recorded in the book of Job including the loss of those first children, and then having ten more children! Did Job and his wife talk to their second batch of ten children about the first ten? Did the family ever mourn—or perhaps celebrate—the lives of those first ten children? What happened to Job's later descendants? Couldn't God have selected them as His "chosen" people instead of the children of Jacob?
6. There are a lot of biblical characters who did not have such a happy ending to their lives! Think of Abel (Genesis 4:8), Uriah (2 Samuel 11:17), Eli (1 Samuel 4:18), King Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:22-24), John the Baptist (Matthew 14:10), Stephen (Acts 7:59-60), Paul, and even the disciples of Jesus! From an earthly standpoint, none of these people had happy endings.
7. But, we must admit that, superficially at least, Job's life ended well. He certainly had his share of wealth, and I am sure he enjoyed his second ten children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. (See Job 42:15-16.) Why do you think there is such an emphasis on even the names of his three daughters? What did Job say to his second batch of children about the story that we know about in the book of Job? Did he have any scars to show them as evidence for his experiences?
8. The Bible study guide suggests that perhaps Job never learned of the reasons behind all the calamities that happened to him. But, in light of the kind of communication that Job had with God before that whole experience, (See Job 29.) Job must have learned the truth

about the whole story after it was over. How else do we have the record? If God was willing to inform us of the issues that were involved even at the beginning of the book, why wouldn't He have told Job after it was over?

9. Nevertheless, we must admit that in stories like this one of Job, there were many things that remained incomplete, unanswered, even unfulfilled.
10. Some serious Bible students have compared the trials of Job with the final events in the life of Christ and with the final experiences of the 144,000 just before the second coming. There are many obvious parallels. Can you think of some of them? These were critical points in the great controversy; in each case, the Devil loses! Do you think he was/is happy about that?
11. Read 1 Corinthians 4:5. Looking at our daily experiences, is it always obvious that everyone will receive from God the reward s/he deserves? How does that fit with 2 Timothy 3:12, *GNB*: "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted"?
12. But, there is something unique about biblical history. These are not just stories told to entertain or even primarily simply to inform or educate. **They are stories told with an intentional purpose to teach us about God.** More than that, we need to recognize that biblical stories can inform us not only about the past and the present but also about the future. The Bible can speak authoritatively about death, judgment, heaven, and even hell. Remember that the wicked will finally be destroyed here on this earth at the third coming of Christ after the millennium. Shortly thereafter, God will remake this earth into a new Garden of Eden which will be the eternal home of the saved. Thus, "hell" and what some people call "heaven" will be at the same place, just at different times!
13. In light of all of that, what do we learn from a quick overview of the book of Job? Is there any hint that Job was aware of what might happen beyond this life? Did God tell him anything about the future life?
14. Read Job 19:26-27. Of course, Job did not have nearly as much information available about the future as we have. He never knew anything about the prophecies in Daniel, Revelation, or Zechariah. (Read Daniel 2:44; 7:18.) Unless, of course, God chose later to tell him personally. Job had no Bible, no church or synagogue, and no pastor or rabbi. Where did he get his information?

The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God's favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."  
Daniel 7:18.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* 342.1.

15. The good news that we can read into this story is that Job's death is not the end of Job's story. We can happily look forward to future conversations with Job in the earth made new. What do you suppose he will have to say about his life's experience? Will he focus on the difficult times we read about in the book? Or, about his many conversations with God? Or, about the rewards that God gave him at the end? Or, about other issues in the great

controversy over God's character and government?

16. Read Job 14:14-15. These verses suggest that Job did look forward to a future beyond his death. The Hebrew words used suggest a future hope, a renewal, a putting on of a new body.
17. Living in our day, we have definitive proof that there will be life beyond death. The life, death, and ministry of Jesus are our guarantee of the possibility of a future life.

The NT [New Testament] teaches that Christ has defeated death, mankind's bitterest foe, and that God will raise the dead to a final judgment. But this doctrine becomes central to biblical faith only after the resurrection of Christ, for it gains its validation in Christ's triumph over death.—John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 237. [Brackets and content in brackets are added.]

18. Review the story of Lazarus as recorded in John 11. It happened very near the end of Jesus's ministry. Jesus certainly knew that when He traveled to Bethany to console the two sisters and then, ultimately, to raise Lazarus back to life, He was sealing His own fate. The Pharisees had opposed Jesus almost from the beginning of His ministry; but, the Sadducees had not been too concerned about Him. The Sadducees did not believe that it was possible to rise from the dead; and, thus, they believed that there would be no future life. When Jesus raised Lazarus just a few miles from Jerusalem and in the view of so many witnesses, it challenged one of their most cherished ideas. Suddenly, they were just as anxious to get rid of Jesus as the Pharisees were. Nevertheless, Jesus said to Martha:

**John 11:25-26 (GNB):** <sup>25</sup> "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; <sup>26</sup>and all those who live and believe in me will never die."

19. Jesus knew that He was facing a certain death very soon. Yet, He spoke in these glorious terms about life after death. How does God look at our lives? He knows that if we are His faithful children, this life is just barely a beginning of the lives He has planned for us.
20. Think of all the answers the New Testament gives to challenging issues and questions raised in the Old Testament. What understanding would we have of the Old Testament sacrificial system without the New Testament—especially the book of Hebrews? Does this suggest that God believes in present truth? What does *present truth* mean? Think how much more light we have, now that we have not only the Bible but also the writings of Ellen White. And continual study of those revelations brings new light on a regular basis. Ellen White said:

The redeemed throng will range from world to world, and much of their time will be employed in searching out the mysteries of redemption. And throughout the whole stretch of eternity, this subject will be continually opening to their minds.—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 9, 1886, par. 24; 7BC 990.4; LDE 301.3; Mar 367.4; TMK 367.3; TA 298.2.

21. What is suggested by *progressive revelation*? Education of almost every type is a continual building on information learned earlier. That is particularly true in the areas of mathematics

and science. This concept has been traced to the 12th century and attributed to Bernard of Chartres. Its most familiar expression in English is by Isaac Newton who said in 1676: "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Learning to count, to add, subtract, multiply, and divide can lead to algebra, geometry, even calculus. Could the same thing be said about divine revelation? If we are going to continue to learn for the rest of eternity, there is certainly more to learn than any of us knows now.

22. It is interesting to note that there is no obvious reference in the Old Testament to anything more than a single coming of Jesus Christ. We know that some of the references in the Old Testament in places like Zechariah 12 and 14 are speaking about events that will take place not at the first or even second coming of Jesus, but rather, at the third coming; but, there is nothing to suggest that in the Old Testament itself. In the New Testament up through Revelation 19, there is nothing to suggest that there will be anything beyond the second coming of Jesus. But, if we read Revelation 20, we realize that at the end of his life, John was told there would be a third coming after the thousand years of the millennium. Why do you think God did not tell the people in the Old Testament about the second coming and the third coming? Why didn't He tell the people in the New Testament about the millennium and the third coming? Are these examples of progressive revelation?
23. But, coming back to the reality of the lives that we live in our day, how do we relate to unhappy endings? Are any of those unhappy endings God's intentions for us? Of course not! It was God's plan for us all to be living in the Garden of Eden! Is it ever the work of Christians to help others who are going through "unhappy endings"?
24. As we work our way through the book of Job, we will discover that there are several very important lessons that Job learned. Did his friends learn anything? Did his friends ever come back and question why he was, all of a sudden, so prosperous? They were sure that he had done something really bad that had caused God to treat him so badly as recorded in the book. As the events at the end of the book unfolded, did they ask him what marvelous *good* thing he had done to receive such a reward?
25. But, the book of Job certainly is about more than just materialistic prosperity. It is true that Job did have that at the end. But, if we are to believe what he said in the middle of the book, **he was more concerned about his relationship with God than with his physical or mental suffering.** (See Job 9:24.) Is that true of us today?
26. Would you be willing to give up your car, your house, everything you possess, even your children rather than giving up your relationship with God? Would we be prepared to ask such questions?
27. If Job were alive today and you asked him about that whole experience, what do you think he would say?
28. If you reread Job 38-41, you will see that there is a discussion about God's sovereignty. How did God speak to Job as recorded in those chapters? He certainly spoke with unquestionable authority about His power to create and control nature. Job's response is found in Job 42:1-6. What do you think led to that response? It is very important to notice that God never criticized Job for asking questions, even very provocative questions, sometimes even hinting that God was not always fair.
29. What was Job confessing? What was his repentance about? He was certainly not admitting that his friends were right in their accusations! Was Job addressing God at that

point, humbly admitting that he had raised a lot of questions earlier in the book? Did he feel that he had been too bold in his questioning of God? Compare Genesis 18:27 which records Abraham's conversation with God, pleading for Sodom. Did Abraham ever visit Lot in Sodom? Did he have any idea what was happening in Sodom and Gomorrah?

30. Some have suggested that Job 42:7-10 is a justification for retribution theology. That is a dangerous attitude. It is so easy to think that when disaster strikes, it is because there is/was something wrong between that person and God. It is so easy to think that if we are good, God will bless us and, by contrast, if we are bad, He will punish us. That was the theology of Job's friends; unfortunately, it was still the theology of the scribes and Pharisees and most of the Jews in Jesus day. What about us? That kind of thinking turns God into a manipulable Deity, something like a divine Santa Claus.

31. But, we are brought up short by reading God's response in Job 42:7-8.

<sup>7</sup> After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you did not speak the truth about me, as my servant Job did. <sup>8</sup> Now take seven bulls and seven rams to Job and offer them as a sacrifice for yourselves. Job will pray for you, and I will answer his prayer and not disgrace you as you deserve. You did not speak the truth about me as he did."

32. And while Job's friends were probably recovering from their shock, God essentially said: "In case you did not hear Me the first time, you did not speak the truth about Me as Job did." (See Job 42:7-8 as above.) In ancient Hebrew, things are often repeated to emphasize their importance and truth. What led to God's statement as recorded in those verses? Was it Job's earlier behavior? On what basis did God say that Job was blameless and upright/righteous? We will try to focus on what it was that Job said that was "right."

33. Try to imagine yourself there, observing as Job's friends brought offerings to sacrifice and to ask Job for forgiveness. Can you imagine the scene? Do you think those friends ever figured out what really happened? Or, did they walk away puzzled and stunned?

34. Job's three daughters who are mentioned in the final chapter have beautiful names. Biblical names often have significant meanings. The facts that they are named while their brothers are not named and that they received a portion of inheritance from their father are so different from the norms of their day.

35. How do you feel about starting out our study of the book of Job with the final chapter? Is that a good idea? What does it teach us about God? How many Bible students tend to stop reading the book of Job at 42:6? Are you looking forward to talking to Job? To his wife? Even to his twenty children?

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