

# **Job 1:1-6**

## **December 5, 2010**

### **Introduction**

#### **I. A Perspective on Job**

Typically, we see Job as a book dealing with suffering...and it is that...but more importantly it is a book that shows us that God does not act the way that we think He should act. When we suffer, our knowledge proves inadequate for us to understand fully what is happening to us. Our suffering forces us to our knees before God or to revolt against Him; in either case, there are no simple answers. As we go through the book, consider this passage:

**Isa 55:8-9**

**8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

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#### **II. Background**

The book of Job is technically anonymous. Some believe that Job wrote it himself later in his life while others have attributed it to Elihu, Moses, Abraham, and just about any other wise man who existed before Moses. The author is clearly well educated and very devout to Yahweh. The book as we have it is written in Hebrew, but some scholars believe that it might originally have been written in another language and then translated. Given the archaic Hebrew used in its writing and the references it uses, the book is considered to have an early date for its writing; many think that it is the earliest book in the Bible, although some liberal scholars have indicated that the book might have been written as late the Second Century BC.

Job's name means "afflicted" or "prosecuted." For three thousand years, it has been the best case study of anyone undergoing personal difficulty. Job is also mentioned twice in the fourteenth chapter of Ezekiel with two other wise men, Noah and Daniel. He is also mentioned in the NT in the book of James (5:11) and commended for his patience.

The book of Job belongs to OT poetic section, which also includes: Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. Many of the prophets are also composed primarily of poetic writings. Indeed, in the Hebrew Bible, Lamentations follows the Song of Solomon in order of books and can be included with these ones already mentioned. Basically, the book of Job is one great and dramatic poem. The beginning (1:1-2:13) and ending (42:7-17) are generally considered prose while the rest is poetic.

Even though Job has economic, family, social, and medical problems, the book really deals with his suffering on a theological basis. In his case, it takes God to

help Job through these issues, and only when God is done with him does he see healing.

For those of you who enjoy Tolkien's works, he wrote the Jerusalem Bible, a Roman Catholic version, translation of Job.

### **III. The Opening Verse: Job 1:1**

#### **Job 1:1**

**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.**

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We cannot be precise in locating Uz. Many think that it is a land adjacent or close to Edom or perhaps even a part of it. This thinking comes from possible identification of other peoples name and from other places in the OT where a land of Uz is mentioned, as in: Lam 4:21 and Jer. 25:20. However, we cannot be sure that this is the same place. Also, Elihu was of Buz (see Job 32:20) who is mentioned as a brother of Uz, who might be a potential predecessor of the nation (?), in Gen. 22:20-21; they are identified as Abraham's nephews. Others believe that Job is also the king of Edo know as Jobab in Gen. 36:33. Some modern scholars argue that the data supports another location in north Israel, but all are basically guessing.

Job is described as "blameless and upright" three times in the first two chapters, the next two being uttered directly by God. How would you like to be called "blameless and upright" by God in the Bible?

What did he do to be described this way? (Hint: Who decided that he was "blameless" and "upright"?) Does this mean that he is perfect and sinless?

How did Job "fear" God? How did he shun evil? See Proverbs 3:5-7.

#### **Prov. 3:5-7**

**5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.**

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Later in the book, remember that Job is suffering because he is blameless and upright in God's eyes and is not being punished for his sins.

### **IV. Job is Wealthy! Job 1:2-3**

#### **Job 1:2-3**

**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.**

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- 1:2 Having a lot of children in the OT agrarian society was considered a blessing, as in Psalm 127:3-5.
- 1:3 Riches were also considered one of the blessings in the OT. The numbers given for his herds are astounding for those times. For example, in Judges, only a relatively small numbers of donkeys were cited as showing one as being exceedingly wealthy, and he had 500, as is:

**Judges 10:4**

**He had thirty sons, who rode thirty donkeys. They controlled thirty towns in Gilead, which to this day are called Havvoth Jair.**

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- 1:3 Again, as the “greatest man among all the people of the East,” we see high praise.

**V. Strong Family/Worship Life: Job 1:4-5**

**Job 1:4-5**

**4 His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, 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 send and have them 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.**

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- 1:4 This is apparently an indication that his children were also wealthy and that they cared for each other. They appeared to have great joy in being together.
- 1:4 Did they invite Job to these parties?
- 1:5 Today, most of you are probably not offering sacrifices for your children, other relatives, or friends. What might you do instead of offering sacrifices?
- 1:5 Recent times have been hard for the US. Why they are hard, what should we do? When times are going well, what should we do?
- 1:5 In the Masoretic text (traditional Hebrew), the Jews modified the text of this verse, changing “cursed” to “blessed,” but noting the change in side comments and other records to make sure that they change was noted.
- 1:5 Job’s consistent sacrifices show how committed he is to God.

**VI. A Devil in Paradise: Job 1:6**

**Job 1:6**

**6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them**

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We see that the situation for Job and his grown children was nearly idyllic. They had wealth, possessions, and fun. They appeared to have everything that we might want in our families. Now we will see a change.

What is Satan doing in Heaven? If God cannot abide evil, how could He put up with Satan being in his presence given the utter wickedness of that being?

Consider this situation:

### **I Kings 22:19-23**

**19 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. 20 And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' "One suggested this, and another that. 21 Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 22 " 'By what means?' the LORD asked. "'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said. "'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.' 23 "So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you." 19 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. 20 And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' "One suggested this, and another that. 21 Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 22 " 'By what means?' the LORD asked." 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said. "'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.' 23 "So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you."**

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How can God be good and allow the above to happen? If you do not know the answer to this question, studying the book of Job will help you to answer it!

The NIV uses "angels" in this verse as its interpretation of the phrase "sons of God" as in the Hebrew. By Revelation 5, we have both angels and men apparently in their spiritual bodies in Heaven. Psalms 89 refer to the Holy Ones. The NT refers to Christians as sons of God through our relationship to Him through Jesus Christ. So, it is a little difficult to limit this verse totally to angels alone, but they are undoubtedly part of the entourage present in Heaven.

In Hebrew, Satan is "the Satan," meaning "adversary" and is a title not a personal name. Devil means accuser. Presumably Satan/Devil has a personal name, but if so, it is not given in Scripture.

## **VII. Preparing for Disaster**

How can you prepare for disaster? If God wishes to test you, what might you do to be ready for it? If the devil wants to devour you, how can you apply the following two verses?

### **1 Peter 5:8-9**

**8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.**

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