

# Job: Jesus is the Living Redeemer

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We are entering into the wisdom books of the Bible as we continue down Route 66. As we turn to the book of Job, we learn a whole lot more about Satan, the enemy of God. So far, we have seen Satan appear in Genesis with the fall and the curse, and we have seen him appear with David in the census. But now, we have a direct conversation with God and Satan in regard to God's servant Job. The first conversation with God and Satan is in Job 1:6-12.

## Scripture

***"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that***

***he has, and he will curse you to your face." And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord."***

## **Job: Upright and Blameless**

As we start Job, it is important that we need to understand that before we start talking about the conversation with God and Satan, we learn a lot about the person, Job. He is upright and blameless. He fears God and he turns away from evil. He has all different types of animals: seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys. He has many servants. He has ten children: seven boys, and three girls. They all get along really well. Job absolutely does everything in his power to take care of his children. He offers burnt offerings, and he consecrates them. He makes these sacrifices just in case one of his children sin and curse God. He is a blameless man. He is wealthy. He is the richest and most well-known man in the East. It seems like he was a great guy, a guy who is blameless before the Lord.

## **Behind the Scenes: God Offers Job to Satan**

Then, we go behind the scenes. We see this conversation going on with God and Satan, and God initiates a question to Satan: Have you seen My servant Job? There is none like him. Then, God describes Job, he is upright, he is blameless, he fears God, and he turns away from evil. Satan responds with You put a hedge around him; of course, he acts this way...look at how You have blessed his land, look at all You have given him; look at his family. Take things away from him, and he will curse You to Your face. Now, this is so important because this is what the whole book is really about; a challenge from Satan to God, basically saying the only reason Job is following God is because of what He has given him, not because of who God is. You have heard the phrase, "she married him for his money"; meaning, she did not marry him for who he is. Basically, the accusation here is Satan saying to God that if You take all this stuff away, take the people away from him, he won't really follow You. He really

doesn't love You and care for You because of who You are. So, God allows Satan to go to work, with the exception that he just cannot strike Job down.

- **Tragedy Strikes**

The next thing you see is the sheep are gone, the donkeys are gone, the oxen are gone, and the camels are gone. Then the servants are gone. Tragically, all ten children die. Job mourns and he weeps at the same time, but says the Lord has given and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord! Job passes the first test.

Then, we go behind the scenes again and see God and Satan having another conversation. God says again, have you seen My servant Job? He is upright, he is blameless, he fears God, and he turns away from evil. Despite what you have done to him, he has held his integrity. Satan again challenges God saying of course, he has, You have put a hedge around him. Satan says skin for skin! If you touch his bone and flesh, He will curse You to Your face. So God allows Satan to go to work, but Satan cannot kill Job. Behind the scenes, we see that Job is now covered with sores from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet.

Now, I think there is an application that needs to be made here that is really important. We are able to see behind the scenes; Job is not. It is sort of like a movie. In the movie, you see the evil guy, the bad guy, and you see the plot. You see everything that is going on. You know his tricks. Then, here comes the good guy. You root for the good guy, "Don't fall for it! This is the bad guy! Don't you see what he is doing?" That is sort of the context here. In reality, the application can be made for us as well. On the other side of the cross, we know that Satan has been cast out of Heaven, but we are not privileged to see behind the scenes. In Ephesians 2, we still Satan, who is the prince and power of the air, ruling this world. We see in Ephesians 6 that we do not fight against flesh and blood, but the spiritual demonic forces. We know that Satan comes around like a roaring lion. The point is no matter what your situation is, whether it be a health issue, family issue, financial crisis, a lost loved one, whatever it might be; you can be in a situation and looking at God and feeling all alone, feeling like there

is no one else on the planet that is going through what you are going through and the pain is unbearable, but we need to keep in perspective that even while we feel all alone, we are not. We need to see and understand that there are beings, demonic forces, who are watching us behind the scenes. We also need to know that there is a sovereign and good God that is also watching us from behind the scenes to see what we will do in the middle of that trial. And maybe, just maybe, in the midst of a situation where we have no idea why it is happening to us, there is a bigger story going on.

Now, even though we are not privileged to go behind the scenes again to see this conversation between God and Satan, we definitely see Satan at work. Job has lost everything, he has sores from head to toe, and now all of a sudden, the wife comes on the scene. Someone told me to make a good joke about now, but I will not do that, okay! With that being said, the wife comes on the scene and we see that Satan has literally wiped out everyone except the wife, and the wife falls right into Satan's hand. Here they were, the most well-known couple, the richest couple with all this livestock, their children are now gone and the wife tells him to do exactly what Satan wants Job to do. She says to curse God and die. But Job is faithful. He is strong. He again passes another test. He does not sin with his lips.

## **Well Meaning Friends**

Then, these three friends come on the scene. Now, these three friends do well at first. They come to counsel and help Job, to sympathize with Job and mourn with Job. As they come and see Job, they literally start mourning; they are hurting and they stay silent. I think that is a good thing to do. There are times when we are with people who are hurting and we really can't give any answers to help them, sometimes we just need to be silent and mourn and cry with them. That is all we can do in that situation. But then, these three friends start to speak and it goes downhill. In Job chapter 3, Job is basically lamenting his birth. He says I wish I wasn't even born! He goes on to say that I wish I had just died when I was a baby and just been done with this! Why am I living? Why is this happening to me?

- **Retribution Principle**

Then, the three friends started using what we call the retribution principle. The retribution principle could be something that was taught during a day; I would say it is also biblical. It is a principle that says if you follow God, you are going to be blessed. If you are disobedient to God, you could be cursed. As we enter into the wisdom books of the Bible, I think it is also important to know there are general principles that are given but do not apply to every single situation; meaning that even if what the friends were saying is true, it did not apply to Job. You see, the principle is true. We see it when God strikes down Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin. The principle can be true. We see it when the Israelites are blessed when they are following the Law, and they are cursed when they are not following the Law. But the principle is not true for Job, and I think that is so key. We get the report that says cancer or we lose a loved one, and it makes us think, what have I done; what sin did I commit? But it is clearly taught in Job that Job did not commit any sin to bring about the situation that he is in. We need to have the freedom to understand that when we are going through trials and situations, whether it is a disease or a loss of a loved one or whatever it might be, it does not necessarily mean that we have committed a sin to put ourselves in their situation.

But these friends of Job counsel, and they are absolutely determined to put this principle on Job. They are determined to find a sin that he has committed so that he can repent and get his blessings back. Their pride is blinding them in this situation. Just think about a situation when you have been in the hospital, or the funeral home, and you do not know what to say. You do not know what to do. You cannot relate to the person in their situation, and so you start thinking...*I just do not know the right verses to say right now. I'm not the pastor. I do not know if I am qualified to handle this. I have never been in their shoes.* So as you approach the person, you just do not want to say anything to make things worse, so you just don't say anything at all, out of fear. Now, there is a balance there; you need to have humility, but we know God and we have Christ in us, so if they are a brother or sister, we can help.

But these three friends go the other extreme. They think they know everything there is to know about God. They think they are wise beyond measure and they think they know exactly what is going on with Job. They think they are being used by God, but their pride has blinded them and they are actually being used by Satan. Now how is that? The point that they are trying to make is to just repent; repent of sin and you get your blessings back, Job! But remember the accusations Satan gave to God. The only reason Job is following God is because of what He had given him, and the only reason Job would be repenting is to get back what he had lost. It would not be because of who God is, not because he is broken over sin, but just to get his stuff and his people back. That is not true repentance. That is another application for us. We don't repent to get something or someone back; we repent because we know who God is! We see our sin, and want to be with Him. That is true repentance.

## **Job Appeals to God**

Now, Job is strong. He stays righteous and he does not repent. But we do start to see him struggle in this book. In Job 9 and 10, Job struggles because he knows that God is God and he is man, and he wants to communicate with God! He wants to present his case before God, but he doesn't know how. He knows that his days are numbered; God's are not. He knows he has human flesh; God does not. He knows that he is under the rod; God is not. He needs an arbitrator, he needs a mediator, and he cannot figure out what to do. He is frustrated because he wants to present his case because he believes he is righteous. As the book goes on, he is talking to his friends and he is also talking to God. As Job continues further and further, he becomes increasingly bold about how righteous he is. He wants a court case, he wants God, the Judge, to hear him out; he is righteous! As we get to chapter 29, Job is thinking these are the good old days; this is everything I had. Job 30 says this is all that has happened to me. In Job 31, he starts listing all these different sins. He says I have not done this, I have not done this, and I have not done this; and if I have done it, put wrath on me God. Do it! That is a big statement to make...Then, even though he does not abandon or curse God, he is

starting to become self-righteous, saying God, I still believe in you, but I believe you sort of made a mistake with me. I am righteous.

## **God Answers Job**

Then, Elihu, Job's fourth friend, comes on the scene and says some things that are good, but he is calling out the three friends. He is calling out Job and he is angry. The friends are angry. Job is angry. Everybody is angry. They are yelling and screaming at each other, saying horrific things to each other as this conversation goes on. All of a sudden, it gets silent, a whirlwind comes, and God shows up. You know, it is one thing to be bold, big, bad, and mighty when it comes to talking about the UK or Louisville basketball coach, or a politician in Washington, or your employer, or whoever it might be when they are not there, but it is another thing to say it with that same tone in front of their face.

Now, I am a sports nut. There is a baseball player, Robinson Cano, who used to play for the New York Yankees and he left this past year to play with the Seattle Mariners. He signed a ten year, two hundred and forty million dollar deal. The New York Yankee fans were just absolutely fired up about the situation. How could he leave our team for the Seattle Mariners? They are fired up! Then as the summer hits, the Seattle Mariners come back to New York City, and now Robinson Cano, as a Seattle Mariner, is going to play against his former team, the New York Yankees. This TV show thought it would be funny to put this life size poster of Robinson Cano in New York City and then ask fans to come to the poster and have the fans act out what they are going to do at the ball game when Robinson Cano comes up to bat. The fans get to say anything they want to this life size poster of Robinson Cano, and so these fans come up to this six foot poster and they say, "BOO! BOO! You only gave us one World Series!" They are saying all of these horrible things and they just keep on going for a minute or two. What they did not know was that Robinson Cano was behind a curtain, which was behind the poster. After a minute or two, he came out from behind the curtain. As these fans were literally right up in the face of the poster, there comes Robinson Cano. Now at that moment in time, every single fan stood there, jaws dropping and their eyes growing wide in surprise! They were saying all these horrific things about this

baseball player they used to love. Now all of a sudden, he comes out from behind the curtain and they are seeing him face to face, and they are just speechless.

- **God Questions Job**

Now Job does not boo God, but he is saying some pretty big things, then God comes out from behind the curtain, if you will. He starts speaking to Job out of the whirlwind, and in Job 38:2-3, God says, "*Who is this that darkens my counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to Me.*" If I were Job, I would be feeling a little uncomfortable right now. The first question God asked him was where were you when I laid the foundation for the earth? He will ask him seventy-seven questions and Job gets 0 for 77.

You know, I know this is a little off of the topic, but one of the things I think about with that first question is that some of these scientific atheists are just so sure that there is no God. I wonder what it would be like if just one of those whirlwinds came down on one of them and this voice came down to the scientists, "Where were you when I created the foundations of the earth?" "*Um...uh...·*" "Tell me if you have understanding." "*Um...uh...I don't know·*"

The point here is that God is just going to start nailing Job with question after question after question. Where were you when I created earth? Where were you when I created the sun and the seas and put the limits on the creation? He starts peppering him with question after question after question, about what He did and how He did it, and if Job has the knowledge to match. After that, at the end of chapter 38 and into chapter 39, there is a parade of animals from a lion to an ostrich to an eagle, where He is talking about life, how they give life, how they die, how they seek after prey, and why they do what they do.

- **Job Promises Silence and God Challenges Job**

After all these conversations with question after question, Job just says, I'm small...which is the right response, right? Job says I am small, I have spoken once, and I'm not speaking again; I am done. But God is not done



with Job. God says dress up for action like a man. He says if you are so righteous, you be the judge! How do you handle men who are spiteful? What do you? Who is spiteful? Who is not? How do you handle this situation? Then God starts talking about these huge animals, the Behemoth and the Leviathan. There is a debate on what these animals are. I could be wrong, but I believe the first one maybe is a hippopotamus, and the second one could be a crocodile. He talks about how big and bad these animals are. One of the things I love is in chapters 41 and 42 is when He talks about the Leviathan, which I think is probably a crocodile, and He says you can just treat it like a bird, right, just like a pet bird. He says oh you can just put it on a leash and show it to your girls; no problem at all, right? I love this...He says just go ahead and put your hands on it. It is no big deal. You can put your hands on it. You have control over it. And then He says to remember the battle; you will not do it again!

This reminds me of a time about ten or twelve years ago when I was down in Florida playing golf. I was in this heated golf match and wanted to win so badly! I was absolutely determined and willing to sacrifice whatever to win this golf match. I hit the ball into the swampy area, and the next thing you know this three foot alligator is right there, about five feet from the ball. Let me tell you something, no matter how expensive that golf ball was, it was not worth it! No matter how many strokes I took, it did not matter. I was not going close to that ball! I believe one of my idiotic friends took a little stick at the alligator and it just snaps, and you see four grown men in their early twenties in the prime of their life, run as fast as they can!

So what is the point God is making here? God is saying you are a man, you think you are so strong and you are not. I am God; you are not! I am over the crocodile. I am over the alligator. I am over the hippopotamus. I have complete control over them. I am over all of the animals, the lion, the eagle, the raven, the ostrich, or whatever. I have complete control over them; I have designed them. I have designed the snow, the sun, the rain, and the sleet. I have designed the sea and the earth; I have designed everything! I have designed it, I have created it, and I am completely sovereign over everything! I am God, Job; you are not!

- **Job Confesses and Repents**

When Job hears this, I love what he says...your ways are too wonderful for me. He literally falls down and repents, in ashes. Do you know what I find interesting? God doesn't answer the 'why' it happened; He answers the 'Who'. We live in a world where horrific things happen, and sometimes we just cannot give an answer why it happened. But we can know the 'Who', that is what this whole book is about. God is basically saying, do you remember the temptation? The temptation was if Job would continue to follow God if his people and his things are taken away. At the end of the book, Job passes the ultimate test. He lost everything, but after he hears the words of God, he falls down and worships God, proving his salvation, proving who he is. Even though we might want to ask the 'why' in moments of trial, in moments of tribulation, we need to hang on to the 'Who.' Who God is; that is all we need. You know, even if we get the 'why', I do not know if it is good enough because we will have another 'why'.

Now you might think I am a bad parent for what I am getting ready to say. I have a two year old and a nine month old, and the nine month old loves mommy and he wants to be held by mommy all the time. When mommy puts him down, he starts crying. Daddy can help at times too, he likes daddy, but he really loves mommy. So mommy puts our little nine month old down, and she is going to start cooking supper. The next thing you know, because mommy is not holding him, he starts to cry. At that moment in time, I am sure he has in his nine month old mind, *Why is she doing this to me?! I want to be held! What is going on here?* So thinking about this lesson on Job, (here again, I hope you do not think I am a bad dad) I think I am just going to tell him the 'why'; why we are doing this. I'm sitting down about five feet from him and I say, "I am going to tell you why your mother put you down. This is for your good. She is in complete control. You are going to be perfectly okay." I start explaining different whys. Do you think that worked at all? NO! I did not do it very long, and he is right back to crying. It was not even registering. Do you know what he wanted, what he needed? It was not the 'why'; it was a 'who'. Then a miracle happened. I picked him up, and two seconds later, he was as happy as could be.

## **Trust in the 'Who'**

I think there is an application here. So many times, we want to go to the 'why of why things have happened. We think because of who we are and our pride, we can figure it out. We have finite minds. We are human. There have been things that have happened in my life that at the time I did not understand why it had happened. A few years later, I could begin to see why it happened. I think there are situations in this lifetime where we will not figure out why it happened, but let me tell you, we can continue to rest in the 'Who'. We have minds like a little nine month old baby, only smaller compared to God. We might not be able to understand the ways of God, and that is what Job makes clear. But we can continue to trust in the 'Who'.

We live on the other side of the cross, and we know who Jesus is. This is what is so glorious about the 'Who', because when Job was crying out I need a mediator, I need an arbitrator; we know that Jesus is the mediator, Jesus is the arbitrator! When Job is crying out that You are God and I am not, and You do not know what it is like to have Your days numbered; we know that Jesus knew what it was like to have His days numbered! When He says I have the rod upon me, can't somebody take it away; we know that Jesus felt the rod for Job and for you and me! At the beginning of this book, Job was upright and blameless, feared God, and turned away from evil, and so did Jesus! Job lost his fortune, so did Jesus. Jesus, being completely God, experiencing the riches of the universe and the riches of being God, submitted Himself to be man! He is God, but submits to being man, and not being born in a palace or fancy home, but in a manger. As Jesus grows up, He feels the pain and agony of being a man, of having flesh and skin exactly like Job. And just as Job was tempted by Satan, so was Jesus! On that cross, just as Job felt deserted by his friends, Jesus was deserted from His friends. His disciples were nowhere to be found. Just as Job felt the pain of having sores from his head to his toes, so did Jesus, who was absolutely unrecognizable because of the whippings, the scourging, the nails, and the thorns. He was absolutely horrific to look at, unrecognizable! Just as Job was feeling the temptation of wanting to give up, because he had lost everything and his friends abandoned him, here

Jesus is on the cross, his followers have left Him, and the world He is dying for is mocking Him. They are yelling at Him, taunting Him, and cursing at Him. The Son, who has come to submit Himself to the Father, is now on the cross, and the Father is putting His wrath on the Son! Jesus is completely abandoned, completely alone, completely loses everything, and I believe Satan is in His ear saying just curse God and die. Jesus does die, but He doesn't die in the way of Satan. He dies being obedient to His Father, and the result of that is we now have life.

## **Persevere and be Blessed**

When we truly know who God is, we can persevere. When the Word of God has been spoken to us, we cannot help but be changed! Let me tell you what happens. When we look at Job after he comes through this, after he hears the words of God spoken, what happens? He proves that he is more righteous than Satan. He gives him credit for it. He proves that he is more righteous than his friends. He is more righteous than his friends say he is, and he is actually used by God for the forgiveness of his friends. When Job looks at God, all he can do is to put his hand over his mouth and say I am not worthy. The application is that when we understand the cross of Christ, understand what God has done for us, and understand who He is, then we realize that when the enemy comes whispering in our ear, we can say, I am righteous in Christ! When a lost and dying world starts questioning the steps of faith we are taking and talk about what we have lost for the sake of Jesus, we can say, I am righteous in Christ. Yet, when we look to God, our sovereign and good God, we should fall down on our faces and say I am unworthy!

Here is what is so good, when we know our identity and we know who our God is, we can persevere, yet at the same time, we are ultimately blessed. What happens at the end of this book? Job gets twice as much as what he had. The donkeys, camels, oxen, sheep, they are all doubled. Now, some people say yes, but his children are still dead. I would argue no, they are not. How many children does he get? He gets ten more. He does not get twenty (which would have been double), but he gets ten more. Here is why, the other ten are still alive waiting for him in Heaven. This is what I believe to be so true; when we take a look at our lives, suffering might not

ever stop until we die, but on the other end, it is going to be worth it. I think about John 16:20-22 where Jesus is talking about how He is going to give them the Holy Spirit, but He has to leave. They are going to suffer, and He compares it to a woman giving birth. When she is giving birth, it is agonizing, it is horrific, but what happens once that woman holds that child? The pain is now gone. Jesus goes on to say when I come back, I am going to give you joy; a joy that no one can ever take away from you.

Randy Alcorn, in his book, If God is Good, asks the question, "When we are on a new Earth and a new Heaven, how long will it be before we realize the suffering we went through here was worth it?" How long will it be when we are reunited with friends and family, children, moms and dads? How long will it be when the arthritis is gone, when the cancer gone? How long will it be when we see how good it is to be part of the new creation when our senses can not only see, hear, and taste? How long will it be when we are in the presence of God before we realize it was worth it? Will it take two months? Will it take two weeks? Will it take two days? Will it take two minutes? Will it take two seconds? How long will it be? Even if you are a pessimist, you have eternity to enjoy the joy that God has given you, and nothing can take it away! When we understand who our God is, we cannot help but be blessed. The result is of that is when we understand who our God is, we can persevere.

Anytime I am in a trial, one of my favorite verses is Romans 5:3-5. Suffering brings perseverance, perseverance brings character, and character brings hope. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out His love through the Holy Spirit. This is what we know; we know that we have an enemy that has been defeated at the cross. But that enemy is still roaring around. We know we still live in a sinful, fallen world where tragedy occurs daily. We know that we will have to suffer, and we will die here on this earth. But yet, we know as Christians, no matter what is taken away from us, no matter who is taken away from us, we know who our God is. He is sovereign and He is good, and we will hold on to that. I do not proclaim to know your situation, but I do know who our God is, and if you hold onto Him, He will take care of you.