

AUGUST 21

If you haven't celebrated yet, you need to. You are beginning your 18th book in the Old Testament, not to mention you are nearing the end of your 7th book in the New Testament. The benefit of reading The One Year Bible will be evident soon enough. In books like Job where there is little action and a lot of talking, it is hard to stay interested (or awake). The New Testament will help, but alas, it too is more declarative. Still, the variation will help. And also, the Reading Notes are meant to help us do this together and keep our eyes on loving the Lord, following Him and staying focused on making disciples in the harvest.

So find something that gets your endorphins going and let's go.

Job 1-3

If you've never read Job (the "o" is long), this will be fun and work rolled into one. In Job, we gain insight into some behind-the-scenes spiritual reality, and some deep teaching about God.

Here are some things about Job that might help as we read.

First, Job seems to have been written after the flood and before the time of Abraham. One of the ways to get this is Job's age at death. Job lives 140 years after all of this happens. Looking at his life at the beginning of the book, it seems that to acquire this much wealth and stature as a wise man, Job might have been in his 60s-80s. From the flood to Abraham, the ages of people continually declined. If Job was 210-250 when he died, this would put him around the time of Serug (Genesis 11:23), Abraham's great-grandfather. Also, it describes the Chaldeans as a nomadic attacking band. By Abraham's time the Chaldeans were building cities and settling down to become the Babylonians.

Second, we are given an incredible glimpse into the problem that Job doesn't see. We get to see God's interaction with an angelic order that patrols the earth and is responsible for reporting to Him. Remember the prophet Micaiah in 1 Kings 22:19 and the angelic gathering? Satan appears among these angels, possibly as the leader, given the responsibility to serve or oversee the dominion of man. That God speaks to him suggests his leadership. In the NT we know that Satan is the leader, but God's interaction with Satan also shows a conflict and contest between them. God's righteousness in working with humanity and bringing us to forgiveness and salvation is being deeply scrutinized. Ironically, Satan (literally, accuser) shows the sin of men to God and demands justice. God is showing Satan something about puny wrecked humans that will eventually fully justify Satan being cast into the lake of fire.

And just to say, this conflict is still ongoing and very real in our world today. The final strike in this conflict will be in the Tribulation where it says in Revelation 12:11, *And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.* In Job we see that what becomes loved more than life, is God Himself. That love, in the final analysis, is the only reason Job hung on.

Third, who wrote Job? Who knows, but it seems that the writer was pretty close to the events. A good guess would be Job himself in those 140 years he lived after this. Another good guess is Moses as he sat in the wilderness for 38 years watching people die. In the final analysis, God wrote it.

Finally, to understand Job, you need to understand at the beginning that Job was right, and his friends were wrong. At the end of the book, we read, *After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."* (Job 42:7) These guys will say stuff that sounds good, but it is wrong because of their insistence that Job was

being punished for sin. Job had not sinned. He never curses God, but he does step out of bounds later in his misunderstanding of God. God corrects Job, but is mad at the other guys.

Job 1

Vs. 1-5 Job was very rich, righteous and blessed. His adult kids even liked each other. He wasn't just a legend among men, but he had a very serious love for God. Interestingly, since Noah died near the time when Abraham was born, Noah and his son Shem would also have been alive during the lifetime of Job. What this shows is that there was still a living testimony of the words and works of God on the earth.

Vs. 6-12 Think about this stuff.

V. 6 *Sons of God* refers to angels. If you want some stretching, look at the references in Genesis 6:2-4 and Deuteronomy 32:8. I think the ESV, RSV and the Septuagint have the correct rendering of Deuteronomy 32:8, and it makes sense with the rest of the Word. Deuteronomy 32:8 is also referring, I think, to Satan's angelic principalities.

V. 8 Just for trivia, there are four times God says *my servant Job*. Also, for future reference, look at what God says about Job, that there is no one *like him on the earth*. This will help us understand a couple of verses in Ezekiel. Why is God pointing out Job to Satan?

So, what would you say Satan is saying to God? It looks like, "Job worships You because You bless him." The test would be to see if Job still worships God when everything is taken away. How many people do you know who stop going to church and stop reading their Bibles when things go bad? I know of pastors who have done this.

God raised Job up for this event. Job had been especially prepared. Satan points to God's blessing on Job, but God had also built deeply into Job. In a way, Job is the same, yet the opposite of Pharaoh. Look at what Paul says in Romans 9:17, *For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."* God had raised Job up for this hour, as a lesson to us and to the principalities and powers. Yet, unlike Pharaoh who resisted God, Job will fight for what he knows to be true of God and then humble his heart.

Notice that God had to give Satan permission. That is a very deep and important point.

Notice that God is allowing this to happen to show something to Satan. *So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.* (Ephesians 3:10) By the way, those *rulers and authorities* in Ephesians are also the bad guys.

So, God has given us a view behind the scenes of what is to become a tragic earthly drama. As we enter into this, it is good to remember that God has more than one or two things going on in His created order. On the angelic side of things, there is a drama being played out. God challenged Satan and Satan made an accusation. God had no hesitation bringing this disaster on Job because it worked for good. In the end, we'll see that this was also for Job's good. The point is to trust in God. Job will ask a great question in a few verses, "Why doesn't He kill me?" Whether it's suicide, "mercy killings," or any other question about life, the answer is the same: Trust that God is good and wait on His will. God works all things for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose. God has the right and the freedom to use us for many things in His purpose, even to be, as Paul said, *a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake.*

Not all can wrap their heads around this, but disciples must be able to submit to God using us for His purpose. Our love for Christ and our following of Him in the harvest can't be dependent on His earthly blessing to us. We love because He loved us, and He opened our eyes as sons and daughters to see the spiritual reality around us. Paul said, *For I consider that the sufferings of*

this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Our treasure is in heaven. This is where we work. But God remains the same loving Father.

Vs. 13-19 The worst day ever. Notice the alternation of causes, human and natural (actually, supernatural). What effect do you think this had on Job emotionally? What did it show? Notice all the people who had to die for this drama to be played out. Remember, dying is how we are ushered into God's presence. God's presence is the place of ultimate blessing. His presence is only a bad place to be if you're not ready to be there.

Vs. 20-22 Job passed the test; he worshiped. Notice that Job says *the Lord has taken away*. That's good theology, and we see how deep it is because we know what's happening behind the scenes.

V. 22 What an amazing verse.

Job 2

Vs. 1-3 What incredible verses. God again directs Satan's attention to Job, and He even says that He was incited against Job without a cause. Among other things, God claims responsibility for Job's calamities. It is not just that God isn't done with Job; it is more like He isn't done with Satan. And of course, humiliating, mutilating and destroying humanity is right up Satan's alley.

Vs. 4-6 Think of this challenge in terms of Revelation 12:11 cited above.

Vs. 7-8 And of course, the real challenge here is that Job didn't die. He lingered on and suffered, and the good times and the hardest challenge from Satan were yet to come.

Vs. 9-10 Isn't it funny (scary) that Satan's words to God that Job would curse Him (1:11 & 2:5) would come out of his wife's mouth in the form of a suggestion to Job? Job's friends will also become messengers for Satan. We surely need to be careful with our mouths.

Note again that Job saw the "evil" as coming from God. Thankfully, we understand something deeper, but Job didn't have the benefit of reading what we just read.

Job passed again, but the worst was yet to come. A person can bear a lot of weight and stress and despair, and sometimes you can even throw more on top with little effect; but if the right people come and begin to "kick him in the shins" (emotionally or otherwise), he often can't bear that.

Now, from this point on, there is no further mention of Satan, except that we know he's at work behind the scenes. It appears that the point has been made to Satan, and now God will be correcting Job, his friends and us.

Vs. 11-13 Enter the friends. You won't see the impact of these guys until tomorrow and then it will make your jaw drop.

Eliphaz seems to be the oldest and the leader, not only because he is named first and makes the first answer in every round, but when God gets mad, He gets mad at Eliphaz.

Seven days of mourning must have meant that Job looked pretty bad to them, like death warmed over.

Job 3

From now to the very end of Job, this is all written as poetry.

Vs. 1-10 Notice the uses of the word *let*. It seems that Job might be cursing the day of his birth and the night of his conception.

Vs. 11-26 Guess what word organizes Job's thoughts here. What interrogative does Job keep using in this section? I think there is a progression from wondering why he didn't die in the womb to why he was still alive suffering. Living in suffering is apparently what Job feared would happen.

Many people live in suffering in all sorts of different circumstances. Sometimes you might see the good of it, but often you don't. A person suffering with a terminal illness or in a nursing home, day after day, year after year, doesn't see much purpose or hope in their suffering. Why not just end it? This is why the book of Job is so important. God will not point to His love in correcting Job. He will overwhelm Job with His wisdom. What Job will learn is that the wisdom of God is true, mighty, and loving; and therefore, it shouldn't be criticized or doubted. That kind of absolute trust has to be our foundation too, and yet we have so much more than Job did. We know Christ; we have the Spirit and we have the Word.

1 Corinthians 14:1-17

So now Paul is finally getting to what he has been building toward in chapters 12 and 13. Chapter 14 is the only chapter in the NT that is expressly written about the purpose and organization of a "worship service." But notice in the entire chapter the word "worship" is only used one time and it will surprise you who worships.

Vs. 1-5 It should be obvious that the gift of tongues was being misused and Paul was trying to correct not only this use, but their understanding of gifts in their public meetings. In Acts when tongues was used, there were unbelieving Jews present who understood that God was being praised in human languages they understood, but that should have been impossible for the speakers to have known. Those who spoke in tongues in Acts, where the gift was being used for its intended purpose, were speaking to God, praising Him. In those situations in Acts, God used the gift to show the stubborn that He was doing something new and going to the Gentiles with the gospel. Now in Corinth, people were speaking in tongues and no one understood them at all.

Notice the expression *builds up*, which is one word in Greek. In other translations it is the word *edify*. That will be a key word, expression and concept in this chapter.

Vs. 6-12 Verse 12 is the point. This is an interesting way to think of the service and defining what it means to build up or to edify. It is building up the people in the church.

Vs. 13-17 And read vs. 18-25 to get Paul's conclusion of this portion and to get another view of the service and the range of meaning for building up. Tomorrow Paul will show the purpose of the gift of tongues from the Old Testament.

As we work in the harvest making disciples, one of the important things we do in serving Christ is serving one another to build each other up for the work in the harvest. Working in the harvest is never easy. If we don't hold up and encourage one another, who will? Sometimes we come out of the fields broken and beaten. Sometimes we walk into the clearing on Sunday, tired, discouraged and feeling hopeless. Sometimes we gather together, but we are getting lost or feeling like giving up. We are given to each other as the church in the harvest to edify or build up one another, to cheer, to encourage, to strengthen, and to motivate one another, and to remember and sing about the love that saved us.

Psalm 37:12-29

Just for fun, underline the word *wicked* when you find it. Underline other words that repeat or stand out to you. It is probably best to think of this as the ultimate victory of justice and God's ultimate vindication of *the righteous*. In Esther, we got to see the good guys win, and Haman and the bad guys lose. God's victory and promises are not dependent on us seeing them fulfilled. God is Himself, His promise.

Vs. 12-13 This is the plotting of the evil. God already knows their thoughts and knows how He will punish them.

Vs. 14-15 This is the action of the wicked. We saw this in Esther. What the wicked planned fell back on them.

Vs. 16-17 It is better to live contentedly with what the Lord gives us, with our hope set on Him. This reminds me of 1 Timothy 6.

Vs. 18-20 We know, of course, that this heritage may be future and our *abundance* may be what the Spirit creates in our hearts as we suffer for Christ, but God doesn't fail. I was reading this morning, *Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'* (Matt. 25:34) That is absolutely unshakable, but everything on earth is very shakable.

Vs. 21-22 Jesus also said that because wickedness would multiply, most men's love will grow cold. Who is it who can afford to be generous and secure as the world is going to hell? Only those who know the love of Christ and serve Him in the harvest. Verse 22 sounds like Matthew 25:34-46.

Vs. 23-24 What an amazing promise, but notice there is a condition. Many believers fall and stay hurt. Jesus said, *the one who endures to the end will be saved*. I think the salvation mentioned is salvation from the damage that comes from giving up and straying from the Lord.

Vs. 25-26 While this is a general promise, we are seeing Job go through a season where this doesn't seem to apply to him. There are also exceptions now on the earth as we speak. There are believers suffering who, like Job, do not know why, but there is a reason in God's wisdom why this must be. God is still true to His Word.

Vs. 27-29 This is David's conclusion and word of edification to those he was giving testimony to.

V. 29 I'll bet Jesus knew this verse and this psalm.

Proverbs 21:25-26

It's interesting that the sluggard *craves*, but doesn't work. Yet, while it doesn't say the righteous are rich and are working from the crack of dawn until midnight, they are content and able to give to those in need. Do you get the difference? It is more about the true desires of the heart and where a person finds completeness. Completeness in God makes a person whole and gives them what they need to share with others in the harvest. See Psalm 37:21 above. Isn't it interesting that we are reading both of these passages on the same day? You just gotta love The One Year Bible!