

## I Want to Be Like Job

### Job 1:14-19 (KJV)

**14** And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: **15** And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. **16** While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. **17** While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. **18** While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: **19** And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

One reason why so many dislike the book of Job is because it seems so depressing. The poor guy is doing everything right. He's so righteous that even God and Satan have a conversation about him and how he never does anything wrong. Satan accused Job of selfishness, because he didn't have anything else that he could accuse him of.

### Job 1:9-11 (KJV)

**9** Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? **10** Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. **11** But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

There's an aspect of Satan's accusation that we can't miss here: Satan accused God of being wrong. God is the one who said, 'Look, we don't even need to have a trial for Job, because he is obviously a good person.' Satan replied, 'No, you're wrong. Job is a bad person. If you'd stop blessing him, he would show you what kind of person he really is.'

God allows Job to lose all his possessions, because He knows that Job won't fail Him. God doesn't prove Satan wrong; He allows Job to suffer these afflictions to prove that He's right. Job weeps, shaves his head in mourning, tears his clothes in grief, and feels deep sorrow for all his loss, but never curses God.

**Job 1:22 (KJV)** In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Job isn't happy about his situation, but he never blames God. I wish more people were like Job. Perhaps if we had some friends around at the time of our loss they would help.

Job had three friends:

**Job 2:11 (KJV)** Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

### **Eliphaz the Temanite**

Job's first friend is Eliphaz the Temanite. We know that Eliphaz was the name of one of the sons of Esau, whom had a son named Teman. We also know that Esau and his sons were the founders of the Edomites.

**Genesis 36:1 (KJV)** Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom.

Not only that, but one of the principle cities of Edom was named Teman. So Eliphaz, having the same name as Esau's son, and being from the city of Teman means that he was almost certainly an Edomite. As an Edomite, he was a descendant of both Abraham and Isaac.

The Edomites held land on the southern end of the Dead Sea in modern Jordan. They bordered the southern Jewish kingdom of Judah. They were known in their day as keepers of great wisdom. The Edomites were the intellectuals of their era. The book of Jeremiah even uses them as a symbol of great wisdom:

**Jeremiah 49:7 (KJV)** Concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?

So, when the book of Job says that Job's first friend was a guy by the name of Eliphaz the Temanite, we are supposed to be impressed. This guy was probably one of the smartest people around. He came from the finest pedigree. He was considered an intellectual from a city of intellectuals within a country of intellectuals.

Eliphaz hears about a calamity that has befallen his wealthy friend Job, so he decides to go visit him. He is aghast at what he sees. In fact, he can't even speak for 7 days; he just sits quietly with his friend Job. When he finally does speak, he uses his profound wisdom and education to diagnose Job's problem: It's your fault, Job.

Eliphaz is the first of Job's friends to speak. He clearly and concisely makes his argument that the righteous live forever and are not forsaken by God, so any calamity that comes upon Job must be the result of Job's sin. If only Job will confess his secret sin, then God will be merciful and forgive him. He even uses evidence that he received from a dream to prove that his insight comes from a divine source.

Eliphaz's arguments are well thought out, highly structured, intellectually impeccable, and completely wrong. God does have an interest in the activities of the righteous and the sinful, but that does not mean that God immediately inflicts suffering on everyone for minor offences. God even admonishes Eliphaz by saying:

**Job 42:7 (KJV)** And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

When we run into adversity, we tend to consult 'experts' to find an answer. You look for the smartest people to address the issue, but you never ask if they know God. Are they addressing the spiritual aspects to your problem?

We all need to look at our problems both mentally and spiritually. We can think about how to overcome a problem all we want, but the answer may not be in our intellect. The answer may not be in the medicine, the x-rays, or the chemotherapy. The answer may be in your appeal to God.

## **Bildad the Shuhite**

Most people are familiar with the story of Abraham and his wife Sarah. We already mentioned that Abraham and Sarah had Isaac and Isaac and Rebekah had Jacob and Esau, but after Sarah died Abraham got married again and had more kids.

### **Genesis 25:1-2 (KJV)**

**1 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.**

That last name is significant, because Job's second friend is Bildad the Shuhite. The name Shuhite means that he was probably a descendant of Shuah. So, while Job's first friend was a descendant of Abraham through Isaac and Esau, his second friend was also a descendant of Abraham through Abraham's second wife Keturah.

Abraham gave land to Shuah far enough away from Isaac that he thought they would not get into conflicts. The land known as Shuah was in an area we now know as northern Syria. It bordered the northern edge of the northern kingdom of Israel. It was also very close to the capital of the Hittites called Carchemish. The region was also known for its mining and metallurgy in copper, tin, and silver. It is also known for its training and domestication of horses.

In modern times, we might be tempted to equate this type of work with "blue collar" workers. While Eliphaz the Temanite was a man of intellect, Bildad the Shuhite was a man of labor. He was perhaps not a Hittite himself, but he lived with the Hittites and made his money off the Hittites. He knew how the world worked. He knew how to mine the depths and extract the riches within. Other cultures even came to the Shuhites to learn how to engage in metallurgy. The later Sumerians even adopted the Shuhite words for the entire process of

converting rock ore into finished metals. This is a man who is used to solving all his problems with fire and hammers.

Bildad makes a similar argument as Eliphaz, but he wasn't as intellectual about it. While Eliphaz implies a secret sin in Job's life, Bildad comes right out and accuses Job's children of sin. He does not have the same subtlety as Eliphaz. Eliphaz is an intellectual; Bildad is a laborer. Eliphaz implies; Bildad accuses. Bildad says that the problems in Job's life are his fault. Bildad blames the victim.

When experiencing adversity, there isn't an end to the number of people who will tell you it's all your fault. As Christians, we need to make sure that we don't blame the victim. Sin makes everyone a victim; our job is to help the victim of sin recover. We can't be like Bildad the Shuhite and say, "You deserved what happened to you because of your sin." Rather we need to remember that we are here to help the victim recover from that sin. We cannot stand as accusers.

### **Zophar the Naamathite**

If Eliphaz was an intellectual and Bildad was a laborer, then Zophar the Naamathite was an artist. The name apparently is derived from one of the daughters of Cain:

**Genesis 4:22 (KJV)** And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.

Naamah was a girl, which makes it unusual to see her listed in the genealogies of the Bible. However, some think that she is listed because of her importance to worship. Jubal, her half-brother, is known as the inventor of music, but Naamah is known as the inventor of reading and writing lyrics. So being a Naamathite, Zophar would be a writer, a musician, and an artist. While Eliphaz relied on his intellect and shunned emotion, Zophar made his living from emotion.

Bildad blamed Job's children for what happened to them, but Zophar blamed Job himself. In fact, Zophar came right out and said that what happened to Job was too good for him and he deserved worse.

Of all the things we're called to be, probably the worst is to be someone who speaks with condemnation. People who talk about how much better they are than the people they work with. People who throw everyone's sins in their face immediately.

We are called to win the lost. We can't be praying that our enemies get what they deserve; the teachings of Christ are that none of us get what we deserve. We can't blame the victims of sin, but we must show them how to be free from that sin.

### **2 Timothy 2:24-26 (KJV)**

**24** And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, **25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; **26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Is says, "...those who oppose themselves." People who are working against their own best interest. People who are taken captive by the devil. We are to be meek with those people. We are to instruct them, not condemn them.

### **Job the Proclaimer**

Job was surrounded by people who were trying to convince him that he was the one who was at fault. His friends surrounded him on all sides:

One was from south of Judah, one from north of Israel, and one was from due east and points in between (Canaan).

One was intellectual (Eliphaz), one emotional (Zophar), and one was physical (Bildad).

One was subtle, one was direct, and one was downright nasty.

Throughout all of this, Job never wavered in his resolve:

While everyone else blamed the victim, Job insisted that he was the victim.

When his wife said that he should curse God, he blessed God.

When everyone else insisted that he had some sin in his life, Job made a list of the sins he had not committed.

At the end of the story, we see that Job was right. God himself comes down and condemns Job's friends because they were the ones in the wrong. Job was not at fault and God was not punishing him. In fact, Job had to make an offering on his friend's behalf to atone for all the bad things they said about God.

### **Job the Role Model**

I want to be like Job. I want to be so sure in my relationship with God that I know that I am saved. I want to know that when bad things come into my life that I can bless God for them. But I know that I have not reached that state in my own life yet. I still get disappointed. I still ask God, "Why?"

I go to my friends and I hear what they have to say. I listen to my intellect when it tells me I need to think through the problem. "Perhaps I just need to read up on this a little more. Perhaps I need to see a different doctor." I listen to my physical body. "I just need to exercise more." I listen to my emotions. "This is all my fault and I deserve all of this."

What I should be doing is taking it to the Lord. Job never wavered in his assertion that if he could only talk to God directly, then all his problems would be worked out. He makes an appeal to God on more than one occasion and begs God to hear his case. At the end of the story God finally does answer Job. While he does not grant Job a trial because of a legal technicality, he does implicitly agree with his case because God restores Job's fortunes twice over.

Job had to plead his own case because he only had a judge (God) and a prosecutor (Satan.) You and I have a public defender (Jesus) who can get our case dismissed before we even get to trial.