

New Covenant Lifestyle: Lesson 3 – Understanding Job

Job is a revelatory book about the interplay between the real and natural worlds. Chapters 1 and 2 provide significant insight into the spiritual realities that affect the natural world. Chapters 3 through 37 are records of human reasoning and the remaining chapters are on God’s perspective and performance. Job is probably the most misunderstood book because most theologians do not have a covenant perspective when attempting to interpret it. You have the privilege of seeing this book through covenant eyes. So let’s investigate the foundational New Covenant truths that are revealed and reinforced by this record of actual events.

Job lived in the land of Uz, which was most likely South East of where the Dead Sea is today. This would place it near the land of Midian where Moses spent 40 years and where he probably heard the story of Job and wrote it down. Indications are Job lived to about 200 years of age and that he lived during the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Job is the first book of the Bible that was written; so, it is not surprising that it reveals key truths about the interactions between the real (spiritual) and natural worlds.

By way of introducing the story, Job 1:1 states that Job was a man of good moral character who revered God. Verses 2 and 3 record that the result was God’s blessing on him: a family of 10 children and great wealth. This book underscores the New Covenant principles that we covered at the start of this course. This lesson covers several key truths that explain much of what we see happening to Christians today. First let’s look at the real-world background to the story because it shows the interplay between God and Satan and its impact on human affairs. Start out by reading Job 1:6 – 2:10 and then continue reading this study and answer the questions.

Who came to present themselves before God (v6)? _____.

Who else came with them (v6)? _____.

Isaiah 14:12-14 describes how Satan (Lucifer) was cast out of heaven because of pride. This was before God created man. Since Satan is a fallen angel and not a son of God, what gave him the right to appear with the sons of God? The answer comes from an understanding of the principle of dominion. Adam was a son of God and should have appeared before God on this day. But because Adam had bowed to Satan and become his slave, this gave Satan the right to show up in Adam’s place. God understood this right, which is why he could not prevent Satan from attending this gathering. Adam’s treason resulted in Satan being allowed to show up in Adam’s place, thereby “contaminating heaven”. But Jesus blood is so powerful that it not only eradicated our sin, it also cleansed heaven from the contamination of Satan.

One of the most damaging beliefs currently present in the church is the incorrect understanding of the Sovereignty of God. This belief says that since God is the ultimate being, he is behind, controls or at least permits everything that happens on earth. His sovereignty means that ultimately, he is responsible. Job 1:7-11 and Job 2:2-6 are passages used to validate this belief. This thinking is man’s way of explaining why bad happens to good people. Human reasoning says that God must have allowed it since he is the sovereign being. However, the correct understanding of God’s sovereignty requires an understanding of covenant. As you now know, God’s sovereignty is limited by what he says and since he gave man dominion of the earth, God is no longer the one responsible for what happens on earth. Human reasoning sees what happened to Job and interprets it to mean that God used Satan to test Job to see if he would be faithful, to build character, and to teach him a lesson. Along with this reasoning comes the thinking that God progressively removed his protection from Job and allowed Satan to attack him; his stuff, his family and finally his own flesh. However, this thinking is opposite to the character of God. It violates the reality of the goodness of God and of His declared and unchanging will for

man – be blessed, multiply and replenish the earth. It also goes directly contrary to the truth that God is only good and never allows or uses evil to tempt, test or try people (James 1:13). So we have to evaluate this passage based on divine truth, not on what man’s reasoning says.

Understanding the principle of dominion is what gives the correct insight into these events in God’s throne room. Satan appeared before God in Adam’s place. He had received this right because Adam’s treason had placed man under Satan. The narrative tells us that, at this point in human history, Satan was still learning what the extent of his power was over man. In the years from Adam to Job, Satan had seen God bless men who offered blood sacrifices (e.g. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Job) and had assumed that God had a hedge of protection around them (Job 1:10). Satan did not realize that while the offerings enabled God to protect and bless the people, they were still legally under his power because they were born in sin, and therefore, under the curse. This story shows how Satan discovered what activated his power over men.

According to Job 1:5, did Job understand what was necessary to receive God’s protection? _____.

What did Job do to activate this protection? _____.

This protection was solely based on their looking towards what Jesus would do. They were not born again nor delivered from the curse. Their only protection was their faith in God. The story of Job shows that he had some faith in God, but it was flawed because he lived in fear and self righteousness. When God called attention to Job (Job 1:8), it was simply to remind Satan that there were men on the earth who revered him and rejected evil. Satan’s seemingly large influence in people’s lives today is not because he is powerful. In fact, Satan is very limited in his knowledge and power. His seeming abilities today are because he has been around for man’s 6,000 years and has become skilled in getting men to activate the curse in their lives. Job was subject to Satan’s power, having been born of Adam, but Satan didn’t know it. Let’s look at what the Bible says about this.

According to Job 1:12, what was in Satan’s power? _____.

It would appear that this was the first time Satan found out what he could do with his power over a man that honored God with sacrifices but still lived in fear and self righteousness. The hedge of protection that was provided by the blood sacrifices was nullified by self effort and fear. Many Christians today prevent the protection and blessings of Jesus sacrifice from operating in their lives for the same reasons.

During this first discussion with Satan, what did God prevent Satan from touching? _____.

This indicates that Job’s sacrificial worship of God enabled God to protect his physical health. However, that changed before the second discussion between God and Satan. The loss of his family and stuff resulted in a declaration of Job’s wrong belief about God.

In Job 1:21 what did Job believe and say about God that was wrong? _____.

This statement shows that while Job worshipped God, he did not see God as solely good. It is this wrong view of God that resulted in his false statement that God takes away. What was Job’s view of God’s protection? _____

Unfortunately, this is a very common view among Christians today, and they wonder why the curse operates freely in their lives. Notice in verse 22 that Job’s wrong belief was not considered sin, why? _____

In chapter 2 we see a second visit by Satan to God’s throne room. This time God points out how Job still worships him. So, Satan points at Job’s physical body and challenges what he thought God was protecting. Unfortunately, because of Job’s lack of belief in God’s protection (“the Lord takes away”), the Lord had to reveal that Job’s health was also in Satan’s power (Job 2:6). It is a fact that the curse includes sickness and disease. Satan and his demons are actively working today to get people out of resting in God for protection (enforcing their New Covenant inheritance) so that the curse can operate. If Job had understood the love of God, the plan for redemption through Jesus, (i.e. the real meaning of the burnt offerings) and had trusted that rather than his own efforts to please God, none of the disasters or sicknesses would have touched him. Understanding God’s covenant protection would have saved Job from his affliction and would have increased his blessings. This is the reason why bad things happen to good people. Wrong believing results in Satan being able to activate the curse in people’s lives. This is where the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God is so disastrous for men. Jesus has delivered us from the curse and it is our privilege to enforce that deliverance – it does not happen automatically.

Now let’s now look at seven lessons from the story of Job that are important to living in the New Covenant.

1. The curse will operate in your life if you allow it. Job shows us that there are two reasons why bad things happen to good people.

The first reason is in Chapter 1:4-5 and 3:25. Read these verses and answer these questions.

What did Job do continually? _____.

Why did Job make these sacrifices? _____.

What did Job think their sins would cause? _____.

What is the first reason that the curse came on Job (Job 3:25)? _____.

Fear is the playground of Satan. Never do anything in fear or make any decision based on fear. A common saying of Jesus to the disciples and to us today is “Fear Not”. Living fear free is a privilege of every Christian, but it is a lifestyle choice rather than an automatic benefit. We get to choose to fear not and to rest in the protection of God. According to 1 John 4:18, what eradicates fear? _____. Your protection is based in living in the reality of how much you are loved by God; which means, he only has good for you and there is no reason to fear.

Job’s counselors realized the second reason after listening to Job’s dialog in Chapters 29 to 31. In these chapters Job touts his good works and wisdom as the reasons why God should have protected him. In Chapter 29 he describes his former manner of life; how he was righteous because of his of performance and behavior. In chapter 30 he bemoans what has happened, saying that it is unjust because of his righteous lifestyle.

What are the most prolific nouns or pronouns used in chapters 29 to 31? _____.

What does Job say about righteousness in 29:14? _____.

What does Job accuse God of in Job 30:21? _____.

How about in Job 30:23? _____.

In Job 31:1-12 what does he proclaim he is innocence of? _____.

In Job 31:13-23 how does he describe himself? _____.

In Job 31:24-28 what does he state that he never trusted in? _____.

In Job 31:29-34 he declares he has never done what? _____

According to Job 32:1, what was Job's condition? _____.

In Job 31:35-40 he asks why God hasn't seen all his good works and supported him. This dialog of Job's shows us that he did not understand how dominion works. His self righteousness and self performance actually prevented God from protecting him (the second reason of bad happening). Through Job, Satan found out that when people operate in fear and/or rely on their self effort, they activate his power to destroy their wealth, family and health.

2. God is not the source of evil (affliction, sickness), Satan is. The dialog in heaven between God and Satan makes this very clear. Our study in NCT Lesson 4 – 'God is Good' is a key to understanding the record of this dialog. Because Satan is so against God, he was looking for any opportunity to attack a man that worshipped God. What did Satan think God had placed around Job (Job 1:10) _____.

Satan thought that Job was under God's protection because of God's blessings and Job's worship. Unfortunately Job's fear and self righteousness short circuited God's protection. What else did Satan think God had done for Job (Job 1:10)? _____.

What did Satan ask God to do to Job (Job 1:11)? _____.

Does God ever obey Satan or use his power for evil? _____.

What did God reveal to Satan in Job 1:12? _____.

When he found out that Job was actually under his power, Satan wasted no time in bringing the evil on Job. Satan is the source of all evil and God has nothing to do with it. New Covenant believers have perfect protection from the enemy and the curse – it is available to us because of the sacrifice of Jesus. However, the effectiveness of that protection is proportional to the relationship we have with Jesus and our resting in the benefits of that sacrifice. Knowing and receiving how deeply you are loved by God removes all fear (1 John 4:18) and living in Jesus (his gift of righteousness and abundant grace – Romans 5:17) eradicates self effort (Ephesians 2:8-10). This lifestyle removes the ability of the curse to operate in your life. Right believing leads to right living.

3. Man's thinking, based on Human Experience, Philosophy and Legality, are opposite to God's thinking. A large portion of the book of Job is given to the dialog between Job and his three friends; Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. These men come to Job to console him and they base their attempts to help him on these ways of thinking.

Eliphaz (probably the oldest) uses human experience as the basis for attempting to explain why the disaster and sickness came on Job. What phrase in Job 4:7-8 tells us that Eliphaz is basing his argument on human experience? _____.

What wrong thinking about God did human reasoning give Eliphaz (Job 4:9)? _____.

How about in Job 5:18? _____.

Based on his experience, Eliphaz calls Job foolish (Job 5:3-5) and tells him he obviously hasn't been seeking and trusting God (Job 5:8) like he should. Eliphaz's second speech in Job 15 claims that Job has condemned himself for not confessing his faults to God. His rationale from human experience is that only the wicked suffer as Job is suffering, so Job must have some hidden wickedness in him. Unfortunately this is what a lot of Christian thinking is based on today. It produced the strong but erroneous doctrine about the need to continually confess our sins.

Bildad uses logical theology as the basis for his discussions with Job. In Job 8:3 he states that God cannot be unjust, which logically leads to the conclusion in Job 8:6 that Job is obviously not pure and upright. Human logical theology makes no room for the operation of covenant relationships or divine favor. Rather it loads guilt and condemnation on people. Furthermore, it requires man to pay penance and live righteously by his own performance. What is Bildad’s message to Job in Job 8:20? _____

Bildad’s second speech in Job 18 reiterates the theological belief that Job is obviously suffering this calamity because of his wickedness. What is Bildad’s message to Job in Job 18:21? _____

Zophar uses the law to beat Job with the accusations of lying about his behavior before God. In Job 11:3 he outright accuses Job of lying. What does Zophar say in Job 11:6 about Job’s suffering? _____

People who focus on the law become very judgmental of others. Job’s response is: why then are lawbreakers wealthy. In his second speech Zophar continues his legal argument saying that the wicked will eventually reap the justice they are due. In Job 20:29 he states that God is the one who requires the destruction of the wicked, thereby implying that Job is suffering because of his wickedness.

In all three cases, Job’s counselors missed the key to the problem because their arguments are based on human reasoning. The key thing they missed is the role of the outlaw spirit being (Satan) in everything bad that happens on the earth. That is why the spirit (real) world events are presented in the first two chapters. Read Job 42:7-8. What did God say about the words of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar about God? _____

What did their human reasoning kindle in God? _____

What did God require them to do to appease his wrath? _____

4. God’s mercy in providing a man to “stand in the gap” is what delivers us for the curse. Job’s final comforter was Elihu. His words are from the point of divine sovereignty but they lack an understanding of the role of the curse (Satan’s power) in the earth. In Job 32:2, what did Elihu say was wrong with Job? _____

What did he say was wrong with the other three counselors in verse 32:3? _____

One passage that points to the New Covenant is Job 33:15-30. Elihu says that God’s desire is to give instruction to man (often in dreams) to turn him away from self-effort and pride (Job 33:17). In doing so, it will keep a man from hell and death (Job 33:18). Job 33:19-22 describes what happens to men who reject God’s instruction to reject self effort and pride. They are also prophetic of Jesus and how he would suffer in the place of man. In Job 33:23, what does Elihu ask for? _____.(Ezekiel 22:30, Hebrews 7:25)

Who is the ransom God found to deliver man from the pit (Job 33:24)? _____

What is the covenant promise God gives to the man who receives the ransom in Job 33:25? _____

In Job 34:10-12 Elihu correctly identifies that God has nothing to do with evil but that it happens because man is under the curse (subject to sin). He notes that even though Job proclaims his own righteousness (Job 35:1) no

man is righteous by his own efforts. However, there is one flaw in Elihu’s arguments; he wrongly states that Job is suffering because God is disciplining him for his pride and self righteousness (Job 36:1-21).

5. God blesses those who are righteous. Job 36:5-12 describes a God who is both righteous and just. What is his attitude towards the righteous (v7)? _____

Who are the righteous (1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21)? _____

What is promised to those who rest in Jesus and follow the promptings of Holy Spirit (Job 36:11). _____

6. Do not worry (i.e do not get out of rest) because God is our God. After Elihu completes his oration, God himself talks directly to Job (Job 38-41). What does God say about Job’s counselors (Job 38:2)? _____

In chapters 38 and 39 God questions Job about the universe and creation and whether Job knows how it all works. He wants Job to understand that he must change his thinking and trust God, for God alone knows how to make things work. What is Job’s response to God’s questions (Job 40:3-5)? _____

God proceeds to tell Job to “man up” and change his confession. God compares a prideful man to a dragon who resists all attempts against his life. God is pointing out that it is Job’s self righteousness and fear that resulted in his afflictions. As a result, what did Job say about his thinking (Job 42:2)? _____

After getting a revelation of the righteousness and goodness of God (Job 42:5), what did Job realize about himself (Job42:6)? _____

Job changed his way of thinking (repented) and threw himself upon the goodness of God. This same thing is required of every man today. Recognizing we are totally impotent without God and receiving the righteousness of faith (in Jesus) and the abundance of God’s grace (Romans 5:17) are the only things that enable God to be our God. When Job understood this reality, God immediately fixed his affliction.

7. God wants you to have a long, healthy and blessed life. After Job changed his thinking and focused on others (prayed for his friends), what did God do for him (Job 42:10)? _____

How did God restore what Job had lost (Job 42:11)? _____

According to Proverbs 13:22, where does God supply of your wealth come from? _____

How does God describe Job’s life (Job 42:17)? _____

What is God’s prophecy about your life (Psalms 91:16)? _____

The curse can only work when we operate by the works of the law, in our self-effort (Galatians 3:10). Resting in Jesus is what releases God’s blessings in our lives (Hebrews 4:9-10).