

International Sunday School Lesson
Study Notes
October 12, 2014

Lesson Text: Job 19:1-7, 23-29
Lesson Title: My Redeemer

Introduction

The Apostle James wrote, “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11). James was right when he wrote, “Ye have heard” because Job was one of the most popular and famous stories of Jewish tradition. Why? Because it was the story of a righteous man and a loving God. It was a story of a man who seemingly lost everything only to find out he had everything in the God he trusted.

Job was a real person and an historical character. There is nothing fictitious about this man or this story. He is mentioned by the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:14, 20) and by the New Testament Apostle James (James 5:11). The Apostle Paul directly quotes from Job twice in the New Testament (Romans 11:35; 1 Corinthians 3:19).

Job’s name means “persecuted one.” Although the book of Job does not name its author, it bears the name of the main character, Job. It is highly unlikely that Job is the author because the book’s message is based on Job’s ignorance of the events that occurred in heaven as they related to what he was going through. Suggestions of authorship include Moses, Solomon, one of the Major Prophets, or Elihu, one of the characters in the book. Truth is, no one knows for sure.

While the date of the writing of Job is uncertain, it obviously is one of the oldest books in the Bible. Job’s life span of nearly 200 years would be comparable to that of Abraham and the patriarchal period (Job 42:16-17). Although Job knew about Adam (Job 31:33) and the world wide flood (Job 22:16) there is no reference to the Law, the Exodus from Egypt, the Red Sea crossing, the land of Canaan, or any of the Kings of Israel. The time of writing is best placed in the patriarchal period.

The story of Job begins in Job 1:1-5 with a record of the man Job and his family. Job’s story begins with the words, “*There was a man in land of Uz, whose name was Job*” (Job 1:1). The land of Uz may have been located northeast of the Sea of Galilee towards the Euphrates River (Genesis 36:28; Lamentations 4:21). Job is described as a man who was “*perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil*” (Job 1:1). He was blessed with

seven sons, three daughters and all the riches anyone could have wanted. He was serious about his relationship with the Lord and his families standing with God (Job 1:4-5).

When you come to Job 1:6, the scene changes. The reader is lifted from the land of Uz to a scene in heaven that explains everything. Job was going to suffer because God was contesting with Satan. Job never knew that, nor did any of his friends who will come to offer the opinions and suggestions to Job. Job, like everyone who suffers, struggles throughout this book to get to the place of trust and faith in God. That God was worthy of Job's trust is proven in this book as Job ultimately rests in nothing but faith in God's goodness and the hope of His redemption.

Job and His Complaint (Job 19:1-7)

Job had three friends who came to comfort and restore him while he was in his suffering. These three friends assumed that Job was suffering because he had committed sin (Job 4:7-8). Their names are Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. After an initial period of silence was observed, three cycles of alternating speeches between Job and his three friends took place.

Our lesson text in Job 19 is Job's response to Bildad's second speech in which he ruthlessly attacked Job by telling him to stop complaining and come to his senses (Job 18:1-21). Bildad's harsh words and false conclusions about Job only added to Job's misery. Job needed sympathy and comfort and he wasn't finding it in his friends. So in his misery he speaks out in bitterness.

Verse 1-2

“Then Job answered and said, How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?”

When Job spoke these words his friends have already counseled him five times. Eliphaz had spoken twice, Zophar once, and Bildad twice. After Bildad's speech in Job 18, Job's sharp reply is no surprise. When Job responded to Bildad, he asked, “How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?” He was responding to Bildad's words recorded in Job 18 but the word “ye” suggests he was responding to a combination of all that had been said to him in the five previous discourses.

The word “vex” means “to cause grief, to afflict or cause torment.” If you read Bildad's first counsel to Job in Job 8, it is evident that he sang the same tune in Job 18 in his second conversation with Job. For Bildad, who was obviously a traditionalist, the explanation for Job's suffering is found in the wisdom of the ancients. Like Eliphaz, Bildad believes that suffering is the result of some sin, either on the part of Job or his children. Therefore the solution to Job's

problem must be repentance. Bildad's intentions may have been good, but his approach leaves much to be desired. Because of his stubborn traditionalism, Bildad can only understand Job's searching questions as blasphemy and can only exhort repentance. But Job has not denied God. Job isn't perfect, but his questions reflect the honest doubts of a sincere believer.

Job felt like Bildad's words were "breaking him to pieces." In other words, the "words" being spoken to him by Bildad and his companions were failed to say anything helpful to Job. It is very troubling and discouraging to be facing difficult days and have those who should and could be a help to you only add to your misery.

Verse 3

"These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed *that* ye make yourselves strange to me."

As previously mentioned, Job's friends have delivered five speeches to Job at this point in the story. The words "these ten times" is not meant to be an exact count but rather a figure of speech to inform his friends of how negatively their speeches are affecting Job. Also, the phrase "ten times" is used several times in Scripture to mean continually (Genesis 31:7; Numbers 14:22).

Job's friends have "reproached" him. The word "reproached" means "taunt, insult, or wound." They were "not ashamed" or embarrassed about what they had said and the fact that their conclusions had made them "strange" unto Job. The thought in Job's friends being "strange" unto him is that he no longer viewed them as his mentors or men who he could trust to accurately discern a situation.

Job's use of the word "strange" seems to indicate that at first his friends were honestly there to help. They sat and listened and had a genuine desire to help. But over the course of time Job's friends had become bold and determine to convince Job of their opinion and conclusion. Job already felt abandoned by God (Job 19:7-12), his acquaintances and friends (Job 19:13-14), his servants and guests (Job 19:15-16), and now his counseling friends had "made themselves strange" to Job. They had become hard, uncaring, and uncompassionate toward Job.

The words of this verse indicates there is a strange alienation between Job and his friends. This should never be the case between believers. We are of the same household of faith. We have the same heavenly Father and share the same inheritance and grace. When one of us suffers, we all suffer (1 Corinthians 12:26). We are to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Question: Has anyone ever made your situation worse by their counsel? Have you ever made someone's situation worse by your counsel?

Verse 4

“And be it indeed *that* I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.”

Job is not confessing that he has sinned or that the conclusions of his friends are accurate. He is stating these words for arguments sake. Job is saying, “If I have erred, if I have sinned, then that’s my problem. What’s it to you?” The word “remaineth” literally means “passeth the night.” It’s a word that was used to describe someone unpleasant or undesirable staying all night with you. Job is saying, “If I’ve erred or sinned, then I’ve got to live with it.”

Job doesn’t have a problem with his friends coming to comfort and console him. He needs that. What he does have a problem with is his friends coming and playing God with his life (Job 19:22a).

Verse 5-6

“If indeed ye will magnify *yourselves* against me, and plead against me my reproach: Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.”

Once again Job uses the word “ye” to refer to all three of his friends. To Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar Job says, “If you are determined to magnify or keep focusing on what you believe to be sin in my life, and if you plead or continue to argue and put my situation in the worst light possible, then know or observe and listen to what I am about to say again.

“Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.” Here comes Job answer to his friends. All his afflictions were from the hand of God. It was “God” that “overthrew” Job. “Overthrown” means “to be cast down from a high place.” God had taken away Job’s substance and his family. God had also “compassed” him “with his net.” Job sees what is happening to him as ordained by God. Jeremiah the prophet describes his grief and lamentation in the same manner when he says, “*He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked*” (Lamentations 3:9). The word “crooked” in Lamentations 3:9 is the same Hebrew word as “overthrown” in Job 19:6.

Job mentions a “net” in reference to Bildad’s conclusion in Job 18:8 that Job was ensnared in a “net” of his own making. The “net” Job mentions in Job 19:6 is under God’s control. A “net” is something ordained, prepared, and put in use for the purpose of bringing something within its control. Again, the prophet Jeremiah writes, “*From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth*

against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day” (Lamentations 1:13).

This has been Job’s position all along. From the very beginning of his calamity and his discourse with his friends Job acknowledged that his afflictions were from the hand of God.

Verse 7

“Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but *there is no judgment.* “

Job said, “I’m shouting that I am unjustly charged but no one is listening to me.” Job “cried out” means “he cried to be *heard*. Job “cried aloud” which means “he cried for *help*. Although Job cried to be *heard* and although he cried for *help* there was no “judgment.” The word “judgment” means “a proper verdict.”

Notwithstanding his repeated cries requests; and which were repeated time after time, that there might be a hearing of his cause, that his innocence might be cleared, and justice done him, and vengeance taken on those that wronged him; there was no time appointed for judgment, no court date set, nor any to judge. Job’s case was never put on the court docket.

Job and His Conviction (Job 19:23-27)

Verse 23-24

“Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!”

Job is so frustrated by his inability to convince his friends of his innocence that he believes after he has died people will still think he suffered because of sin. His words here suggests that he thinks the end of his life may be near. Job wants some type of lasting testimony of his innocence. He wants his “words” “written” and “printed in a book.” That speaks of something durable and lasting. Since there seemed to be nothing in the present to cause Job to hope that would happen, he turned his eyes toward the future. Job wishes that someone would write down his innocence “in a book” so future generations would know. As we all know, Job got his wish. The Lord preserved Job’s words for every generation.

“My words” refer to the substance of what Job had tried to convey to his friends. Job wanted the “words” that spoke to his integrity against the accusations of his friends to be “graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock

for ever.” An “iron pen and lead in the rock for ever” calls for even more durable material with which to record Job’s story. All of these words suggest Job’s intense desire for a permanent record of his innocence to be available for all to read and know.

Verse 25

“For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:”

These verses are crucial to understanding Job’s position but they are also difficult to understand. As Christians, we read these verses from our biblical knowledge of Christ’s redemptive work for us and His bodily resurrection. Keeping in mind that Job probably lived in the patriarchal age, he may not have known the full meaning of all he said. Nevertheless, Job’s understanding of God went far beyond the idea that someone or something was out there. He speaks of a “redeemer.” The concept of a “redeemer” was not in place in Job’s day but we do not doubt the ability of God to take Job to this pinnacle of faith.

Job also says, “I know” which means his knowledge of God and what God was doing in his life went far beyond that of his friends. “Know” means “to see or perceive.” Job has the assurance that there must be justice in the world and he sees God as the One to bring that justice. Job believes God will one day avenge him of the false accusations of his friends.

The word “redeemer” is the Hebrew word *goel* {gaw-al}. This word belonged originally to the area of Jewish family law where land and property could be bought back in the event it was lost through debt or death. It is a beautiful Old Testament concept. The story of Ruth is a classic example of the function of the redeemer. Job has failed to find anyone of his kin or his fellowman to stand up and avenge his honor or defend him. But he calls this redeemer “my redeemer.” He believes there is One who will right the wrongs after he has died. As Christians, we know that Redeemer to be Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12).

“He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” means that Job believed the Lord would come to the earth physically in the end. The words “stand upon the earth” literally means “rise over or upon the dust.” It is language which is fitting for the work of the avenger.

Verse 26-27

“And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.”

In verse 26 Job refers to his terrible physical condition resulting from his suffering. He references his “skin,” his “body,” and his “flesh.” His physical body would ultimately be “destroyed.” “Destroyed” means “stripped off.” There would be nothing left of Job’s physical body. At this point Job sees no hope for the survival of his physical body. Yet, he said, “In my flesh shall I see God.” Job believed in a bodily resurrection. Job believed that even after his “skin” was destroyed by “worms,” he would see God “in his flesh” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

“Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” “See” in verse 26b and 27a means “to see as in a vision.” “Eyes” in verse 27b is the normal word for sight. “Not another” is “one who will not be a stranger.” The avenger Job believes he will see with his natural eye will be no stranger. Commentators differ as to whether Job believed he would see God literally before he died or that he would see God after he died. While the weight of the text seems to indicate the latter, either way Job believed he would “see” the Lord.

“Though my reins be consumed within me” refers to the kidneys or the essential internal organ. This wording seems to express Job’s emotional and spiritual longing within for this day to quickly come. Though everything from the inside out of Job’s body be “consumed” or ended, he would see the Lord!

Job and His Caution (Job 19:28-29)

Verse 28-29

“But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me? Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath *bringeth* the punishments of the sword, that ye may know *there is* a judgment.”

Seven times in our lesson text, Job directs his statement to the three as indicated in the word “ye” (vv.2, 3, 5, 25, 28, 29). From his heavenly perspective of an avenger and redeemer in the future in verses 25-27, Job now comes back to his present earthly situation. He turns to his friends and cautions them to remember that although they continue to persecute him, the “sword of judgment” will one day fall upon them. “Since Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar will not pursue justice on Job’s behalf, he warns them that they should watch their own backs. Those who persecute the innocent will eventually experience judgment themselves. Though Job protests that justice is not being rendered to him, he believes that it will indeed be visited on his inept counselors.” Standard Lesson Commentary 2014-2015 (KJV).

Conclusion

After Bildad’s speech in Job 18, Job’s sharp reply is no surprise. But as we look carefully at Job’s response to Bildad’s words, we observe an noticeable

difference. For all Bildad's assumed and said, his view of God is actually distant. Bildad talks a lot about God, but we don't sense that he's talking to God. Job, on the other hand, sees God actively involved in his life, even the suffering and the losses. Job often speaks directly to God. Job says that God is the author of what is happening to him. Job makes no bones about it. He feels utterly abandoned by God and he is not afraid to say so.

Job needed a defender. He was defending his innocence in the face of his friends' accusations, and he longed for the day when his Redeemer would stand up as a witness to his innocence. Then everyone would know Job was not guilty of sin. This was not arrogance or self-confidence. Job's confidence was in God the Redeemer. Job knew that even after he was dead, his Redeemer would live on. Job also expected to see God after his death.

Job's complaints are understandable. Job's convictions are admirable. Job's caution to his friends about their coming judgment is truthful. Job's confidence in a coming Redeemer was well placed. Can you say today, "Christ is my Redeemer?"

Amen.