

## My Servant Job

*"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is pitiful, and of tender mercy"—Jam. 5:11.*

Although Job, undoubtedly, failed several times, he stands out in the Scriptures of Truth as a truly righteous son of God—as one of the chastened and scourged sons "whom He receiveth." Job failed in that several times he justified himself rather than God. As we go through the Book of Job in our daily readings, we will find times when Job's words were not words of a humble man in the sight of God. He says,

"I am clean without transgression; I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me" (Job 33:9).

Job was not perfect; for none but One ever was, but in Job was found great faith—great faith that enabled him to withstand a very severe test, and by considering him we can be built up and edified in the spirit. In Job 1:1 we find a brief description of this man of God—

"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."

We find Job, at the outset, a very rich and powerful man—wealthy in this world's goods—sheep, camels, oxen, asses, and many servants. And, as we read,

"This man was the greatest of all the men of the East."

Job's wealth in this world's goods and his greatness among the men of his day did not turn him in his service toward his God. Job's faith in God was to stand a severe test. He stood one day in esteem and riches—the next day he was sitting among the ashes with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. When we consider Job we can see the greatness and severity of his trial. Verses 6-8:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the adversary came also among them . . .

"And the Lord said unto the adversary, 'Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth—a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil'?"

In reply to the Lord's question, "Hast thou considered My servant Job," the adversary asks the question, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" At verse 10:—

"Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about all that he hath? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.

"And the Lord said unto the adversary, Behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

Poverty, destruction of his property, loss of his sons and daughters—all fell suddenly upon Job. The Sabeans took his oxen and his asses, and slew his servants. The fire of the Lord took his sheep. The Chaldeans took his camels. And a great wind from the wilderness took the lives of his sons and daughters.

Through all these troubles (which truly were greater than we are called upon to bear) we read that Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said,

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."

If all these troubles were brought upon us, brethren and sisters, could we stand strong and upright before our God? Could we hold fast to our integrity as Job did? We read,

"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Job through all his troubles did not complain against his God. Could we stand fast? Do we ever inwardly complain at the trials we are called upon to bear? We should take a strong lesson from the life of Job. The adversary had claimed that Job served the Lord only because the Lord had made an hedge about him, blessing all of his works, but we can see in this first chapter that Job's faith was not built upon the sand, but it was built upon the good ground that could bring forth an hundredfold. In chap. 2 we find the adversary again standing before God. Verse 3:

"And the Lord said unto the adversary, Hast thou considered My servant Job? . . . Still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

Through the first great curse Job had come forth as tried gold, and had held steadfast and immovable in his faith in the Lord, yet Job's adversary still held his ground that he could break the faith of Job,

"And the adversary answered the Lord and said, Skin for skin: yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh—and he will curse Thee to Thy face."

Once again, God said to the adversary, "Behold he is in thine hand." But God made one stipulation—"Save his life." So the adversary smote Job with sore boils from the soles of his feet unto the crown of his head. We read that he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

What a position for a man who not so long ago was described as the greatest man of the East! But the humiliation and sore distress still did not weaken his integrity; his faith toward God stood unwavering; not weakened at all by all the calamities that had befallen him.

We find even Job's wife casting her lot with the adversary. She looked back at all the calamities that had befallen him—poverty, loss of his family, and destruction of all his worldly goods, and she was not able to understand Job's great faith in God. She said:

"Dost thou STILL retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die."

But Job replied:

"Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

While Job stood high in esteem among his fellow men, his wife probably stood beside him, weakly grounded in her faith in God. She stood much as the foolish virgins of Christ's parable. When

her faith was necessary to strengthen Job—to uplift him and to stand with him in faith in this time when he undoubtedly needed encouragement—she was instead pulling against him.

She was as one of the foolish virgins with her lamp untrimmed, and out of oil—much as Lot's wife failed when it was necessary for her to show her faith and trust in God. We remember she looked back and could not turn her back on the temporal things of this life.

Here in the verse we just read, we can see Job's great faith—his strength of character—and how they stood out in this—his great time of trouble! Brethren and sisters, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Happy is the man whom God correcteth. Each one of us should look and should consider the innumerable blessings that God has bestowed upon us. All of us should remember the words of Paul, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." To the Hebrews he says:

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. . . .

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Many times we read similar words:

"Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked by Him."

And again, John, in the Revelation, records the Spirit's words:

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

We now read of Job's 3 friends—how they came with what they thought were good intentions. They had come to mourn with Job, and to comfort him in his time of great trouble, but, as we read, "While they were yet far off, their eyes knew him not," because, as we read in the chap. 16, Job's "face was foul with weeping, and on his eyelids was the shadow of death." These 3 friends sat down with him upon the ground 7 days and 7 nights, and none spake a word with him for they saw that his grief was very great.

In the succeeding chapters we read how they argued that his afflictions were enough to prove that he was a great sinner, holding concealed in his heart some exceedingly great sin. For, they said, God could not bring such things upon an upright and righteous man. They urged Job to bring out his great concealed sin and to confess it, for, said they, sin and suffering go together.

To the average man the reasoning of these 3 would sound very logical, but to a man of God it appears as folly, for didn't we just read:

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth"?

Like many of the other men of God in the Old Testament, Job stands out as a type of Christ. Job's name means, "hatred" or "persecuted," and as we look at his life it seems to be in harmony with his name. So our Lord was despised and rejected of men.

Job in his trouble looked to the day of delivery—the day of the resurrection of the dead and of the coming of the Savior. Jesus was this resurrection and life, and it is before Jesus that Job and all the faithful will stand in the day of judgment. Job's 3 friends, who came to do their best to help him, instead caused him much anguish. So was Jesus tormented by his friends; and we remember the words of the prophet Zechariah:

"What are these wounds in thine hands? Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends!"

We can see, also, how fast friends will return when one is again rich in worldly things and a great man in the sight of others; friends who had done nothing for Job through all his troubles; friends who had deserted him while he was sitting amongst the ashes.

"Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him. And every man also gave him a piece of money."

Job's faith is summed up in one of his answers to his 3 friends. Through all his troubles he could still say,

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God!"

When we, like Job, are faced with trials and disappointments we do not understand, let us recall these triumphant words of confidence and faith!

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—R. A. L.